

# Latvia



## Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals

Report to the UN High Level  
Political Forum on Sustainable  
Development 2018

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# 1.

## Opening Remarks by the Prime Minister

On the Centenary of the Republic of Latvia, I am pleased to present you Latvia's Voluntary National Review 2018. This is a symbolic moment for assessing our progress and looking forward. We have just completed our gap analysis towards the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the Mid-Term Review of Latvia's National Development Plan 2014-2020 that also tracks progress in achieving Latvia's Sustainable Development Strategy until 2030. Both give us solid evidence to improve Latvia's policy from 2021.

Since regaining our independence in 1991, we have transitioned to a country with high development indicators and joined the European Union (2004) and the OECD (2016). As a result, our sustainability agenda has both a domestic and an international dimension.

According to the 2017 OECD Economic Survey, the Latvian economy is growing strongly, underpinned by progress in economic reforms. Latvia is a top reformer among the OECD member states. Having made significant changes in tax, education and health care policy recently, we are now stepping up to accelerate digitalization, innovation and entrepreneurship.

Momentum towards achieving the SDGs together with multiple stakeholders has brought about opportunities and challenges. In Latvia, these include transitioning to a more innovative and eco-efficient economy that provides opportunities for all people to lead better lives here, both in our cities and countryside. As economic growth improves, it is important to ensure that it is inclusive by connecting more people to increasingly better jobs and encouraging return migration, etc.

On a global level, actions taken to ensure sustainable development in the economic, social and environmental dimensions will ultimately increase geopolitical stability, help mitigate the impacts of climate change

and reduce inequality between and within the UN member states that are so essential to improve lives for all.

Latvia's recent success is, in part, due to the government's goal oriented planning culture. We stand by the following principle: invest wisely to achieve economic growth while ensuring equality of opportunity, decent work and well-being, and doing no harm to the environment.

That is why I welcome the occasion to elaborate Latvia's approach to achieving the SDGs as a basis for further exchange of experience with other UN Members States on the challenges of priority setting to achieve sustainable development.

Māris Kučinskis  
Prime Minister of Latvia

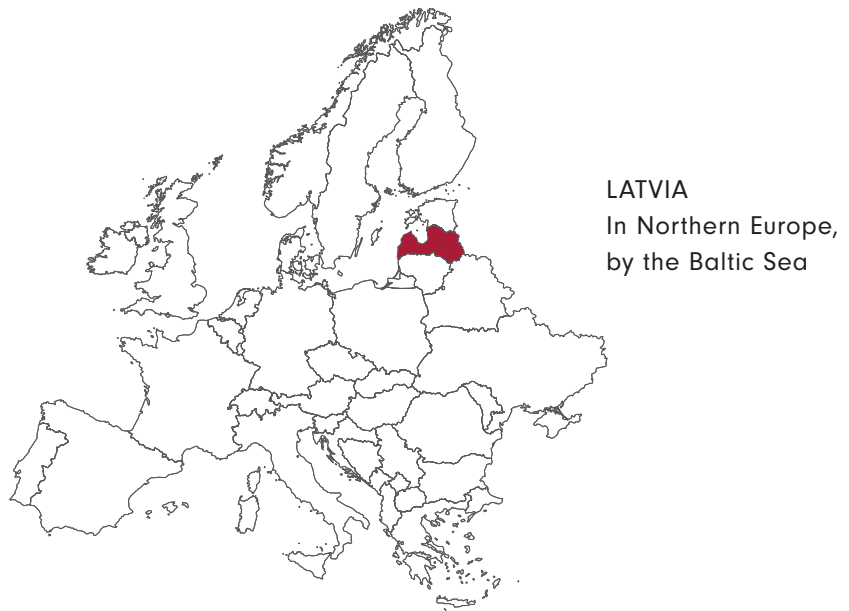


## 2. Introduction

Sustainable development planning began in Latvia in the early 1990s, when Latvia regained independence and launched its initial environmental policy with the express intent of balancing economic and social processes with environmental needs. Latvia enacted its Sustainable Development Policy in 2002 based on the 1992 Rio Declaration. Following a review of the European Union's Sustainable Development Strategy in 2006, Latvia began a new sustainable development planning process, in which people expressed their vision for Latvia in 2030 regarding all dimensions of sustainability. Because of the breadth and depth of the public discussions about the future of Latvia that took place with diverse groups across the land, Latvia's main long-term planning document Latvia's Sustainable Development Strategy until 2030 (Latvia 2030) can be considered a social contract.

The Latvian planning system is decentralized and follows the principle of subsidiarity. Specific action is initiated by the planning level closest to the respective problem to be solved. The national government only addresses issues that cannot be best addressed at the local government, community or individual level. The national and local governments support and encourage citizens' initiatives.

The important national sustainable development goals that are elaborated in Latvia 2030 are operationalised through seven year national development plans, such as the current National Development Plan for 2014-2020 (NDP2020), and sectoral policies and plans. These tie policy objectives to the government budget through a set of indicators. Latvian local governments base their development plans on local priorities, taking into account available resources. Society is involved in government decision-making processes, and also acts on its own initiative to achieve Latvia's sustainable development goals.



The time has come to analyse Latvia's goals in the framework of the United Nations 17 SDGs, taking into account changes in the concept of sustainable development that have emerged in the last decade in view of new global challenges.

Latvia's Voluntary National Review (Review) is based on two processes completed in 2017:

- 1) a mapping of the SDGs at the target level with Latvian policy, with the participation of all ministries and
- 2) the Mid-Term Impact Assessment of the National Development Plan 2020 that also tracks progress towards Latvia 2030. The impact assessment describes the degree of progress toward achieving development goals and provides insight into challenges that will require crucial decision making in the future. The higher the needs in relation to the resources available to solve them, the more frequently decisions require not only courage to address them, but also the wisdom and political willingness to choose between contending priorities.

This Review introduces Latvia's approach to achieving the SDGs, emphasizing that it is not only environmental resources that are finite. Resources available to society and governments, too, are finite. Therefore, contributions toward achieving sustainability by different stakeholders and the readiness of each individual to defend the rights of future generations are pivotal for successful outcomes.

### 3.

## Summary - Latvia's Sustainability

*Latvia - our  
home – green and  
smart, creative  
and accessible  
from anywhere in  
the world – our  
responsibility in  
the name of future  
generations.\**

#### **FOR 10 000 YEARS**

people have lived in the territory of Latvia

**100 YEARS AGO** we claimed our independence

**10 YEARS AGO**, with the involvement of the people of Latvia, we created our sustainability strategy Latvia 2030

**3 YEARS AGO** UN member states approved Agenda 2030 with 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

**Now**, on Latvia's Centenary, we examine Latvia's domestic and global sustainability challenges in terms of all 17 SDGs.

**WE UNDERSTAND** that sustainability outcomes are a result of small steps that begin with initiatives at the individual, community, social and government levels that require cooperation and, above all, willpower.

**THEREFORE**, this Voluntary National Review contributes to future discussions on Latvia's priorities from 2021.



Latvia is a Northern European country on the shores of the Baltic Sea. It is one of three Baltic States and a European Union member state.

## Latvia's Sustainable Development Strategy Latvia 2030 sets the following priorities:

**DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL SPACE** (sdg 4)

**LONG-TERM INVESTMENTS IN HUMAN CAPITAL** (sdg 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 12, 16, 17)

**A PARADIGM CHANGE IN EDUCATION** (sdg 3, 4, 8)

**AN INNOVATIVE AND ECO-EFFICIENT ECONOMY** (sdg 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17)

**NATURE AS FUTURE CAPITAL** (sdg 6, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17)

**THE SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE** (sdg 9, 11)

**INNOVATIVE GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** (sdg 16, 17)

These priorities are included in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (see sdgs in brackets). However, the Goals go a step further in expanding the concept of the circular economy.

## Towards the achievement of the three dimensions of sustainability, Latvia's ...

**STRENGTHS** are its moderate and steady increase in wellbeing, the quality of natural and cultural capital and the importance of nature and culture in the eyes of society, a high degree of digitalisation, and the strategic investments in Latvia's development since 2014.

**WEAKNESSES** are insufficient productivity, emigration, the aging of society, and territorial inequality.

**OPPORTUNITIES** are provided by transitioning to an innovative and eco-efficient economy, using the advantages of cultural, natural and digital capital, as well as by reducing income and opportunity inequality through improving health care, education, ensuring decent work, utilising the new taxation system for public benefit and ensuring adequate social support, leaving no one behind.

**THREATS** could emerge - if we were to miss early warning signals; or, if we were to avoid making decisions because it is easier to carry on with "business as usual"; or, if we were to lack integrity - if words were not coherent with our attitudes, actions, and/or spending priorities.

## Latvia's Future Opportunities

Information elaborated below is a synopsis of conclusions from Section 6 of this Review. The evaluation is done in accordance with the Mid-Term Impact Assessment of Latvia's National Development Plan 2020 that also tracks progress toward *Latvia 2030* and includes information on progress towards achieving defined indicator end-values for the targets, an analysis of investments, as well as expert opinion about existing policy and changes needed in the future.

## An Innovative and Eco-efficient Economy

### Firm foundations

*The economic model needs to change so that the intellectual and creative potential of the people can be transformed into innovative, resource effective and competitive growth. (Latvia 2030)*

The Latvian economy is on its way to the sustainable development model described in *Latvia 2030*. Latvia's GDP growth is moderate and stable, and the country ensures macroeconomic stability (low public debt, a budget close to being balanced, and a good balance of payments ratio). Recently the economy has been on an upswing. GDP grew by 4.5% in 2017, the largest increase in the past six years. Private and public consumption are steadily growing. Export volumes have reached their highest levels ever, and there is rapid investment growth.

The employment rate has reached an historic high, prompting wage increases that reduce peoples' incentives to emigrate due to inadequate income and that facilitate return migration. At the same time, wage growth challenges employers to push their companies toward productivity (knowledge and innovation) based competitiveness, and it stimulates employees to acquire new competencies.

The conditions are favourable for a modern productivity-based competitive economy that is:

Innovative - characterized by self-initiative and a business-friendly environment, support for new ideas and their commercialization, knowledge transfer, user-driven digital development and creative industries.

Eco-efficient - in which growth is decoupled from GHG emissions, natural capital is utilized efficiently, and the capital approach is balanced with biodiversity goals. The economy is viewed as circular, with sustainable consumption and production, including, but not limited to the efficient use of primary resources, re-processing, waste management, and energy management.

## Natural and cultural capital

Latvia's advantages in culture and natural resources will contribute to economic innovation and eco-efficiency and will be passed on to future generations. In Latvian policy, nature and culture are regarded as capital. Of the 12 areas in which Latvia directs its mid-term goals, progress in *Management of Natural and Cultural Capital* was assessed to be most successful by experts polled for the NDP2020 impact assessment (with criticism mainly targeted at the quality of waste management). Latvia's inhabitants and guests, however, perceive nature and culture not as capital, but as the enabling environment that makes Latvia attractive for life, work and leisure. Culture in Latvia is understood not only in terms of historical heritage and fine arts that promote creativity, but also as relations among the people - such as mutual cooperation, trust, public participation and integrity.

## Innovative economy

The innovative economy is based on linking creativity, education and research to business. To this end, the Latvian Investment and Development Agency has recently added an innovation and technology development modality that promotes start-ups, business development, innovation and technology transfer, as well as cooperation between research and business. It is building Latvia's start-up ecosystem with a wide range of support services. Higher education in Latvia is becoming more innovative. Public financing of higher education has been restructured to increase support for STEM study programmes and scientific institutions that carry out research in smart specialization areas. Fewer, but stronger, research institutions receive public funding, and new technology transfer programmes facilitate the commercialization of scientific research. The state-owned development finance institution ALTUM supports business development, and the government provides tax incentives for modernization of companies to attract capital investment.

Latvia has established and continues to expand its start-up support programme because start-ups are an important link in the innovation system, contributing to the paradigm change to the modern economy. Start-ups promote investment, contribute to the evolution of new business models, nurture talent and strengthen the venture capital industry. In 2018, Latvia opened a start-up representation office in Silicon Valley. Currently Latvia is forging a long-term co-operation

model between the emerging start-up eco-system and the public sector, universities and large corporations.

For an innovative economy to succeed, society as a whole must be creative. Latest research shows that culture fosters the type of creativity and abstract thinking that brings excellence to STEM. Latvian children have access to high quality, publicly funded art and music schools in addition to their traditional schooling. Ongoing public education reforms are aimed at preparing pupils for the future, targeting an increase in the ratio of students with high competencies and a decrease in the ratio of students with low competencies.

Latvia benefits from one of the fastest Internet connections in Europe. The government, scientific community, IT sector and businesses are partnering to accelerate the digital transformation toward a data driven society and government. For example, the Innovation Centre – a new technology innovation platform in Northern Europe was established in Riga in 2017. Latvia is planning free access to public data, public awareness and engagement through open data, and the development of innovative products.

These recent improvements have not yet had an impact on two important goals. Investments in the productive economy and investments in research and innovation are not yet reaching set targets.

## Eco-efficient economy

Biodiversity is, itself, capital in a sustainable economy, and Latvia prides itself in its protection of nature. We farm 92% (2016) of the land that is designated for agricultural purposes. As the price of land is rising substantially, the number of farms is rapidly decreasing. The share of farmland used for organic farming has grown over the last five years and is the sixth largest in the EU. Latvian forests cover 52 % of the country, and the volume of accumulated wood in forests is growing three times faster per annum than forest area. About 57% of Latvia's forests are certified according to the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) and/or Forest Stewardship Council Forest Certification schemes.

Ratification of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, its Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement create economic development opportunities. Latvia's commitment to limiting the increase of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 17 % by 2020 in comparison to 2005 is especially challenging for Latvia's competitiveness because, in

*Latvia's population density is relatively small, making it one of the greenest and least-urbanized areas in the EU (Latvia 2030).*

contrast to the majority of EU member states, where GHG emissions are decreasing, Latvia's transition to a market economy in the 1990s resulted in a sudden and steep decrease in GHG emissions at that time, while emissions have increased since 2005.

At present, the requirement to decrease emissions creates an opportunity to improve the eco-efficiency of the transport, agricultural and small energy equipment sectors. Climate change adaptation has been integrated into sectoral policies. We are currently working on a national climate adaptation strategy and a low carbon development strategy, as well as on the development of alternative fuels and more efficient energy policy.

The share of energy from renewable sources in Latvia is increasing (37.2% in 2016). Latvia intends to achieve its national target of 40% of renewable energy in gross energy consumption and a 10% threshold of renewable energy (biofuels and electricity) in the transport sector by 2020. The electricity and transport sectors, however, are not on target. Support for renewable energy has increased electricity prices, which has reduced the competitiveness of companies and affected consumers. This is being addressed by the government. The Industrial Support Programme includes a series of measures to promote energy efficiency and reduce energy costs. For example, from 2018, the financing model for the Mandatory Procurement Component, a support mechanism set by the state for electricity producers generating electricity at cogeneration plants or from renewable energy sources, has been modified to ensure competitive electricity prices for Latvian manufacturers in the European region.

In 2015, the European Commission adopted a new ambitious Circular Economy Package, and Latvia supports the goal of resource efficiency and progress towards the circular economy. Currently, Green Public Procurement in Latvia is contributing to a gradual transition to sustainable consumption and production. However, options for a systemic transition to a circular economy (in which the value of products and materials is maintained for as long as possible, while waste generation and use of primary resources are reduced, resulting in industrial symbiosis and cost cutting) are being assessed.

In the future, it will be important to promote more efficient use of resources (including recycling and reuse), the transition from waste management to resource management, as well as energy efficiency and sustainable production and consumption. This will lead to a reduction in the export of natural resources as raw materials, more efficient use

of raw materials in manufacturing, more efficient agricultural land management, etc. Latvia still has great growth potential regarding use of recycled materials. Sustainability gains also can be made in improving waste recycling and management of bio-waste in Latvia, where the per capita household waste production is 410 kg (2016), lower than that of most EU countries.

Latvia's lessons learned from the introduction of alternative energy targets shows that the circular economy must be viewed in its entirety, not through single initiatives. Furthermore, it is important to avoid placing disproportionate short-term financial burdens on consumers and business. In planning the system, recent investments must be taken into account and their effectiveness is to be ensured.

## Main Challenges in the Economy:

- Increasing productivity of the economy, including through the efficient and productive use of resources
- Introducing a system to reduce and pre-empt skills mismatches in the labour market
- Improving the availability of labour by providing high-quality adult education, promoting return migration and access to expertise from abroad, ensuring access to housing, etc.
- Increasing the share of pupils with higher level competencies
- Increasing the share of society that is healthy and fit for work
- Attracting investments to the productive economy
- Increasing private and public investment in research and innovation
- Implementing the Latvia data driven nation concept
- Adapting to climate change, reducing GHG emissions
- Promoting wider use of renewable energy
- Increasing recycling and reuse



## Reducing income and opportunity inequality

Reducing inequality is one of three macro-goals of Latvia's current national development plan. When designing policies to reduce the share of people at risk of poverty, particular attention is paid to high risk groups. In recent years, Latvia has targeted and made significant improvements in reducing poverty of families with three or more children, as well as employed persons. However, target groups are changing. At present, the poverty risk is particularly acute for the elderly (especially those living alone) and for single-parent families.

Although the macro indicator S20/S80 measures inequality of income distribution, it is important to target multiple dimensions of inequality - income, assets and inequality of opportunity. The global economic crisis hit the Latvian people very hard. Many were unable to re-pay loans and meagre savings were spent. Promoting the ability and capacity of individuals to accumulate assets, including through improved financial literacy, would significantly contribute to reducing inequality. Income inequality is closely linked to inequality of opportunity: opportunity to work for sufficient remuneration and accumulate assets, to live a healthy lifestyle and receive health care services, opportunity to acquire competencies and an education in demand by the labour market, opportunity to access those services and benefits that would best help a person get out of a disadvantaged situation as quickly as possible. The aging of society and decrease in population also contribute to inequality in an emerging "sandwich generation", as an increasing number of individuals forego monetary income to care for children or elderly relatives, or face great challenges in balancing work and family life.

Latvia has outstanding government programmes to increase employability. However, due to the free movement of labour in the EU and the opportunity to earn more abroad, a large proportion of the working age population has emigrated. This trend perpetuates inequality between countries.

Educational systems are known for increasing opportunity levels in society. Latvia's education policy is designed to reduce the share of young people with low competencies and basic skills and increase high-quality adult education opportunities, which, in turn, result in better paid jobs with higher levels of productivity.

Inequality of income and opportunity has a pronounced territorial

dimension. Now, economic development is beginning to concentrate around the capital, regional development centres and their adjacent areas. This is due, in part, to consolidation of farm holdings and ensuing migration of the rural population to the capital and/or out of the country. Because distances between communities in Latvia are not large, strong development centres can evolve by reorganizing school and road networks, health care and other infrastructure and resources. Then, though increased mobility, rural populations would have access to education opportunities, quality jobs, services, etc. This “intelligent shrinking” to increase equality of opportunity and economic development can be implemented through rational spatial planning and infrastructure development. One key factor for future success is creation of a model for good quality and affordable housing in the regions of Latvia, with the goal of ensuring that housing expenditure for the majority of the population does not exceed 30% of the household income.

People in Latvia are concerned about the availability of health care, an essential precondition for people to be fit for work and socially active. Health care funding was significantly increased in 2018. From 2019, mandatory health insurance through individual social insurance contributions will be instituted. The results of the health insurance reform must be carefully monitored to ensure adequate and timely care for those unable to make these contributions. Because prevention is the best cure, lifestyle habits must be improved and mental health care should be strengthened. Also, recent data reveals an upsurge in new HIV cases that is to be addressed immediately.

Inequality is reduced also by social benefits, social insurance, social and other services. Local governments, within their financial means, provide persons with low incomes financial support above the guaranteed minimum income, housing allowances and other support on the basis of individual needs assessments. Latvia is in the process of developing a system to determine a minimum income level that is methodologically sound, evidence-based and adapts to changing socio-economic conditions. The system will serve as reference point for improving social benefits, social insurance and social assistance programmes. The most important factor for determining the minimum income level is the availability of financial resources.

The digital age provides an opportunity for different institutions to coordinate support to individuals in need of complex solutions for their development needs through individual plans. Latvia has learned lessons

from introducing individual plans. For example, coordinated support for long-term unemployed (including health care, social skills, training), can be extended to other areas in which isolated services alone will not have the needed impact.

In 2018, an ambitious tax reform was introduced with the twofold objective of reducing inequality and promoting reinvestment of profits by businesses to enhancing competitiveness. Only time will tell whether the tax reforms will yield sufficient government income to increase investments in social protection.

## Main Challenges in Reducing Inequality:

- Ensuring older people decent lives in an ageing society
- Reducing emigration and encouraging return migration
- Balancing work and family life
- Strengthening regional centres, appraising “intelligent shrinking” in low density areas, including with regard to road infrastructure, housing and public transport on demand
- Encouraging accumulation of assets by individuals (housing, savings, etc.)
- Involving more people in adult education and retraining for more productive work
- Decreasing the share of pupils with low competencies
- Increasing access to health care, in particular, to maternal and child health care, access to specialists and diagnostic services for low-income persons and persons at risk of occupational injuries or illnesses
- Developing individualised plans for persons in need of services aimed at elimination of inequality
- Creating a minimum income system, adequate funding for social support.

## 4.

# Preparation of the Review

The Review describes the extent to which the sustainable development goals within Latvian long-term and medium-term policy documents are consistent with the SDGs and how Latvia is implementing the SDGs in 2018. It defines the challenges for the planning period from 2021 and provides insight into the sustainable development initiatives of local governments, non-governmental organizations, individuals and other stakeholders.

### Stakeholders involved in the preparation of the Review

- **THE CROSS-SECTORAL COORDINATION CENTRE (CSCC)** - the institution under the direct authority of the Prime Minister responsible for the Latvian development planning system. Since 2015, the CSCC is the focal point for the SDGs. It coordinated the preparation of this Review. The CSCC participates in the EU Council Working Party Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and in the European Sustainable Development Network (ESDN), which is a group of government officials responsible for sustainable development policy
- **MINISTRIES**, including policy planners
- **THE CENTRAL STATISTICAL BUREAU (CSB)** - the main institution for collecting and publishing national statistics. CSB participates in the UN Statistical Commission, which develops and approves the global indicator framework for measuring SDGs
- **INFORMAL WORKING GROUP FOR THIS REVIEW** - NGOs, social partners, ministry policy planners and others
- **CABINET OF MINISTERS** - the government of the Republic of Latvia.



## Key documents for sustainable development in Latvia

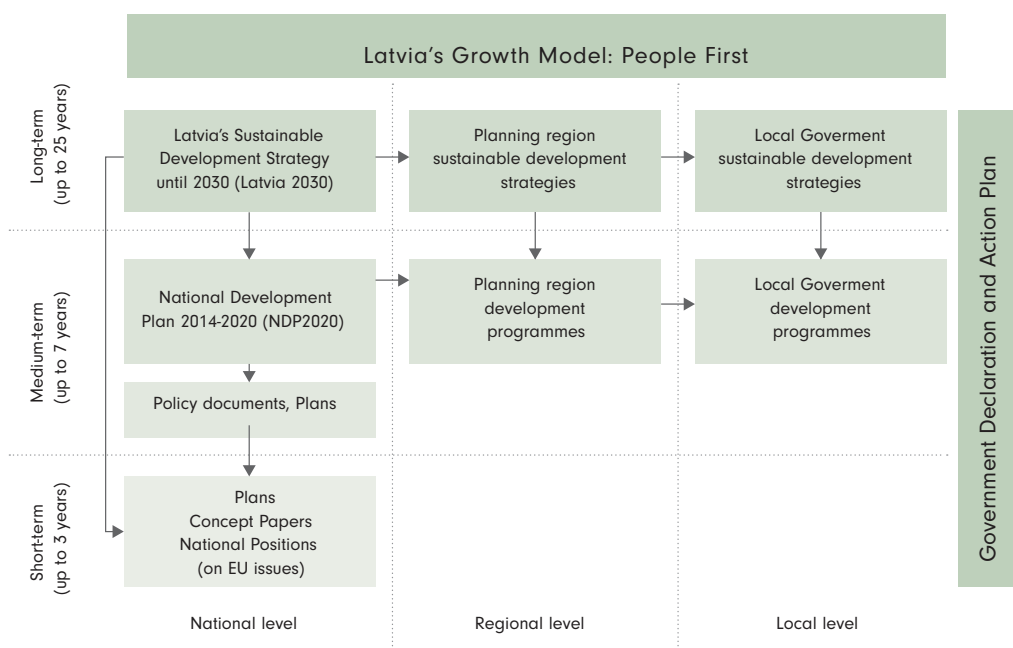
- The Saeima (Parliament) created and approved **LATVIA'S GROWTH MODEL: PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST**, an overarching policy document that defines a human oriented growth model for the improvement of wellbeing, security and sustainability of everyone in Latvia. Thus, the Agenda 2030 principle “leave no one behind” is a fundamental principle of Latvian development planning.
- **LATVIA 2030, LATVIA'S SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY UNTIL 2030**, approved by the Saeima in 2010, is Latvia's primary long-term development planning document and can be considered a social contract. An assessment was carried out in 2017 on progress in achieving indicator targets.
- **THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN** is the highest medium-term planning document. It is a policy planning tool that includes main policy outcome indicators for a seven year period, indicative additional financing needed to achieve goals, etc. In 2017, a mid-term impact assessment was carried out for the National Development Plan 2014-2020.
- **OTHER POLICY DOCUMENTS** - sectoral policies and plans address SDG targets, including some that are not included in higher level planning documents.
- **THE GOVERNMENT DECLARATION AND ACTION PLAN** set the government's priority goals. A change of government can mean a change in emphasis on aspects of sustainable development.

## Methodology for the Review

### 1. SDG MAPPING AGAINST LATVIA'S DEVELOPMENT GOALS

In order to understand how the SDGs are mainstreamed into Latvian policy, the Cross Sectoral Coordination Centre, in cooperation with experts from line ministries, mapped the respective policy documents, policy outcomes and their performance indicators at the level of the 169 SDG targets. The mapping exercise reveals the place of SDG goals and targets in the Latvian policy hierarchy and provides insight into policy coherence and coverage. The relevance of the SDG targets to policy was also evaluated.

## LATVIA'S PLANNING DOCUMENT HIERARCHY



Source: Policy Drafting Manual.  
The Cross Sectoral Coordination Centre, 2016.

## Step by Step: SDG mapping of Latvia's policy goals

**THE FOLLOWING IS A LIST OF STEPS TAKEN IN THE MAPPING PROCESS:**

1. Link each of 169 targets to performance indicators defined in Latvia 2030, the National Development Plan 2020, and other Latvian policy documents and plans
2. Evaluate whether the respective SDG target is currently relevant for Latvia
3. Categorize the relevant targets according to whether they are reflected in domestic policy, development cooperation or other external dimensions (global trade, financial flows, etc.) or a combination of them
4. Identify the line ministry or other government institution responsible for the target, identify co-responsible ministries/institutions
5. For comparison purposes, map the international indicators for each of the 169 targets, including official UN, Eurostat, Sustainable Development Solution Network (SDSN) and OECD pilot project indicators

6. Ministries/institutions provide information on whether the SDG targets will be relevant to Latvia in the future
7. Prepare conclusions, organize a conference with discussions on the SDG framework in Latvian policy
8. Include the conclusions in this Review.

## **2. ASSESSING THE NDP2020 AND PROGRESS TOWARDS LATVIA 2030**

In 2017, the CSCC conducted an assessment of progress and challenges in achieving Latvia's development goals reflected in the NDP2020 as a reference for future development planning. As a part of the assessment, a survey of opinion leaders was conducted to determine their views on the relevance of the NDP2020 goals and their progress. This was followed by analysis of statistical and secondary data on the implementation of NDP2020 and Latvia 2030, including the progress towards reaching performance indicator values. Civil servants, Members of Parliament, ministers, government social and cooperation partners, businessmen, representatives of non-governmental organizations, representatives of planning regions, and heads of local governments, journalists, researchers and academics participated in this survey.

An investment analysis was done to see how much money was spent from the national budget, EU funds, as well as local government budgets to achieve progress. Conclusions were drawn on the progress and the perception of progress (often there is a difference between perception and data-reflected trends) at the level of the 12 areas of direction covered by the National Development Plan. Recommendations were made for future action. Before the impact assessment was approved by the Cabinet and Parliament, the conclusions and recommendations were discussed at a national conference. The impact assessment provides the basis for the analysis of each of the SDGs in Section 6. Evaluation of SDG Implementation and the rest of the Review.

## **When Evidence and Opinion Differ**

Data on results must be viewed together with expert opinion about progress. Both objective and subjective components are important because data is data, but opinions affect peoples' behaviour and influence the future agenda.

When data and viewpoints (either expert or public opinion) match, governments may get rather clear signals on how to react. In its assessment of progress towards

achieving sustainable development, Latvia has several targets in which data shows positive trends, but experts are critical. Are the experts and society critical because they know something about the situation not captured by the data? Or are they influenced by cultural norms, stereotypes or individual personality traits? Maybe data fails to measure the right aspect of the issue? Or maybe the indicator targets were too easy or ambitious? Could the problem have moved to another target group? Is a better indicator needed?

It is even more difficult to agree on action when opinions or facts are ambiguous. As notes prof. Peter Messerli of the University of Bern Centre for Development Environment, it is the very nature of the problems that we try to address, that they are inherently contested by different actors and that factual uncertainty is unavoidable. Hence, we need new forms of collaboration between decision-makers and scientists, where we learn from each other and work together towards solutions.

THE IMPACT OF OPINIONS AND FACTS  
ON POLICY INITIATIVES  
EXAMPLES

Societal agreement	low			Chaos <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Polar ice melt</li><li>- Alternative facts</li><li>- Fundamentalism</li></ul>
		Complicated <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Exciting nuclear energy</li><li>- Carbon tax</li><li>- Redistribution</li><li>- ...</li></ul>	Difficult <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Energy transition and decarbonisation</li><li>- Sustainable rural-urban development</li><li>- Equitable trad and investment networks</li><li>- Fighting corruption</li></ul>	
	high	Simple <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Recycling</li><li>- Nature protection</li><li>- Technical innovations</li></ul>	Complex <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Promotin eco-friendly farming</li><li>- Maintaining social cohesion</li><li>- Eunsuring equal opportunities</li><li>- ...</li></ul>	
		high	Factual certainty	low

Source: Adapted from Messerli P, Bieri S. 2018. Annual Report 2017 of the Centre for Development Environment (CDE), University of Bern, Switzerland. Inspired by Stacey. 1996.

### 3. DESCRIBING LATVIA'S IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SDGs

The CSCC in co-operation with line ministries prepared information about each SDG based on the mapping and assessment, describing the significance of the SDG for Latvia, as well as progress towards achieving the goals, mentioning some of the most characteristic indicators and their trends, highlighting best practice, success stories and identifying challenges that might be relevant also to others.

### 4. DEVELOPING THE STATISTICAL ANNEX

The Statistical Annex includes strategic indicators from Latvia 2030 and the NDP2020 and other indicators used in the SDG descriptions in Section 6. This includes data from the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia. Line ministries provided much data, especially regarding environmental protection and environmental quality. Indicators are grouped in sections under a single SDG and referenced towards other relevant SDGs. Trends are assessed using the year 2010 as the baseline and the latest available statistics - usually from 2016, 2017 where possible. Trends are visualised as follows:

- 1** – significant progress; the trend fully complies with the Sustainable Development Goal or a trend in line with the progress toward achieving NDP2020 and Latvia 2030 indicator targets
- 0** – insignificant positive or negative changes; the trend does not move towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal, or it is not related to progress towards NDP2020 and Latvia 2030 indicator targets
- 1** – significant negative changes; the trend moves against the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal, or it moves against the NDP2020 and Latvia 2030 indicator targets

See also, the Statistical Annex.

### 5. INFORMATION FROM OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

An informal advisory working group for the SDG Review was established by the Cross Sectoral Coordination Centre. Its participants provided information, including best practice examples. Stakeholders reviewed the final draft of this Review before it was sent to the Cabinet of Ministers

for approval and held a meeting where they reached a consensus on the text. The working group includes representatives of line ministries and other institutions, the Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments, the Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia (LBAS), the Employers' Confederation of Latvia (LDDK), UNESCO Latvian National Committee, representatives of non-governmental organizations, World Health Organization Latvia Country Office, and NGOs delegated by the Council for Implementation of the Memorandum of Co-operation between Non-Governmental Organisations and the Cabinet. The NGOs had expertise in rural development, development cooperation, youth policy, environmental issues, corporate social responsibility, the scientific community, etc.

The CSCC coordinated the open consultation process that was announced at the State Secretaries' meeting and published the draft Review for debate on the Cabinet website.

The Parliament's Commission on Sustainable Development periodically invited the CSCC to report on progress and provided opinions and recommendations on sustainable development issues. Also, the Council for Implementation of the Memorandum of Co-operation between Non-Governmental Organisations and the Cabinet was regularly informed on progress in drafting the review.

The Cabinet adopted the Review on May 15, 2018.



## 5.

# Linking National Development Planning with SDGs, and the Enabling Environment

Latvia integrates the SDGs into the national planning system.

Latvia adheres to the following development planning principles:

- **SUSTAINABILITY** – plans should meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs
- **PROMOTING COHERENCE AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** – through the planning process
- **EFFECTIVENESS** – targets must be defined and progress monitored
- **ACTING WITHIN FINANCIAL MEANS** – policy goals are balanced with available financial resources and measures are efficient
- **TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT** – development is balanced throughout the country, the uniqueness of each area is preserved and promoted
- **SUBSIDIARITY PRINCIPLE** – policy is planned and implemented by the closest level to the respective problem to be solved. The national government only addresses issues that cannot be best addressed at the local government, community or individual level. The national and local governments support and encourage citizens' initiatives
- **VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL INTEGRATION** – national level policy initiatives must be in line with hierarchically higher goals and coherent with goals in other plans.

## Public participation

The public participates in the SDG Review process as it does in any inclusive policy process. Individuals, non-governmental organisations and the public administration engage as they deem most appropriate.

Stakeholders may:

- take part at any policy-making stage - problem identification, development of planning documents, policy implementation, monitoring and evaluation;
- become involved in public consultations, in formal and informal working groups, advisory councils and other forums, send written opinions;
- comment document drafts published on ministry websites under the section “Public Participation”. (All official institutions have public participation sections on their websites).

The procedure for achieving consensus on development planning is Latvia’s best practice that ensures transparency and policy coherence. Any stakeholder may submit proposals and receive responses.

## Steps toward achieving policy coherence in the policy planning process

1. A draft policy is prepared on the basis of an impact assessment and initial public participation.
2. State Secretaries (the top ministerial civil servants) announce a consultation period on the Cabinet of Ministers website and add the document.
3. All stakeholders – individuals, NGOs, other government entities can apply to comment the draft.
4. The responsible ministry then compiles a table of proposals and objections, prepares reactions to the comments and information on any changes to the wording of the text. This is sent to all stakeholders participating in the consultation.
5. Stakeholders have the right to maintain their proposals or objections.
6. If this is done, the ministry convenes a conciliation meeting and seeks to reach an agreement.
7. If reaching agreement is not possible, a special meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers, called the Cabinet of Ministers’

Committee, hears both sides and makes a political decision on the particular proposal, then sends it to the full Cabinet of Ministers Meeting.

8. The Cabinet of Ministers makes the final decision.

Stakeholders have the right to be heard at this meeting, too, which is televised live on the Cabinet website.

There are many other ways citizens may engage in the decision making process. For example, they may submit proposals via the citizens' engagement website ManaBalss.lv. If a certain number of signatures is collected, the Parliament must consider the issue.

## Linking the national budget to policy outcomes

Linking budget and planning processes is crucial to achieving sustainable development goals. The seven year National Development Plan defines investments needed to ensure achievement of the targets in twelve areas. The funding needs are broken down according to sources, including the national budget, EU funds, and other investment from abroad, co-financing by local governments and the private sector.

After consensus is reached on National Development Plan (NDP) goals, performance indicators and areas of direction, ministries submit proposals for funding of policy that will evolve from the NDP. They base their estimates on rough ideas about activities to be defined by policy documents yet to be drafted. Should the estimates for financing exceed the fiscal limits forecast by the Ministry of Finance, negotiations take place to balance the budget and the targets, limiting the scope of proposed policy. After the NDP is approved, ex ante impact assessments are elaborated that include more evidence based information on effective interventions. The responsible institution/s also integrate these goals and indicator targets in operational strategies. The first three years after approval of NDP2020, the Cross Sectoral Coordination Centre supported the Ministry of Finance and the government by ranking ministry annual budget requests according to their impact on policy outcomes.

To provide more insight from the national budget perspective into the link between national budget expenditures and development policy (NDP, sectoral policy) goals, outcome indicators and output indicators, in 2017 the Ministry of Finance introduced Policy and

Resource Management Maps that are included in the publicly available Annual National Budget Statements. These also provide information on the linkage between national budget expenditures and government priorities stated in the Government Action Plan.

In order to achieve better policy outcomes with less investment, in 2016 the Ministry of Finance introduced a new budget expenditure review procedure. The government financing decisions made in previous years are periodically re-evaluated. This process refocuses budget expenditures on relevant performance indicators. In turn, the Cross Sectoral Coordination Centre's bi-annual impact assessments of the NDP assess the contribution of investments in achieving progress on policy outcomes, and provide recommendations to the government and Parliament.

## Results based planning

The Latvian development planning system defines how the goals and performance indicators are used in policy planning. This helps the public participate more effectively in the planning process and facilitates the budget-related decision making.

Performance (or outcome) indicators help evaluate progress in the implementation of the SDGs. Latvia's development planners compared the SDG targets and global indicators with existing policy goals and target indicators in order to identify gaps. The indicator sets created by different institutions proved to be very useful – development planners compared Latvia's indicators with the UN global indicator framework for measuring SDGs, Eurostat, Sustainable Development Solution Network and OECD indicators.

Different stakeholders, including the private sector, also focus on indicators they consider relevant. For example, Swedbank, a bank active in the Nordic and Baltic States, has created and monitors its own composite indices to assess progress towards the SDGs in the region. Various approaches to using indicators will help Latvia better measure the achievement of goals in the next planning period. Of course, there are challenges to choosing indicators. They should be general enough to be relevant in the long term, while providing sufficient focus in the medium term (for instance, by identifying target groups for poverty risk reduction). Another challenge is setting target values so that they are neither too high, nor too low.

## Assessing national sustainable development policy

All long-term and medium-term planning documents in Latvia are subject to policy impact assessments. Assessments provide reasoned answers as to whether policy has brought the expected changes, and outline evidence-based recommendations for policy improvement.

Latvian policy planners at the ministry level have committed to reviewing gaps between SDG targets and Latvian policy indicators when conducting their mid-term assessments of sectoral policies. This assessment process will provide evidence about changes needed.

## The new tax reform

On 1 January 2018, a comprehensive tax policy reform came into effect in Latvia that is aimed at promoting economic growth and well-being, including by reducing income inequality. At the same time, it is aimed at ensuring sufficient and predictable tax revenues to finance state and local government commitments. It shifts the tax burden from labour to consumption, environment and property taxes.

This tax package will improve Latvia's international competitiveness at the regional level; encourage start-ups and investment in business development. It will attract investors, motivate citizens to pay taxes, promote economic activity and prompt people to return to the labour market. Moreover, the national tax administration has been simplified and made more cost-effective for its users.

## European Union membership

One of the most significant aspects of the enabling environment for the implementation of the SDGs is Latvia's membership in EU. Participation at the EU in joint decision-making regarding the future of Europe, common EU External Action, the European Single Market, European cohesion as well as the stability of the Eurozone - all facilitate the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Latvia supports the European Union's common ambition to play a major role in the Agenda 2030 process. Latvia also supports the European Pillar of Social Rights and its twenty principles proclaimed in Gothenburg in 2017.

## Initiatives and partnerships for SDG implementation

It is not possible to name all stakeholders in Latvia that are involved in securing the sustainability of Latvia and the planet. Below is an incomplete list of stakeholders.

### PARLIAMENT'S SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

The Saeima (Parliament's) Commission on Sustainable Development is an important driver of sustainable development. The Commission provides a public platform for reviewing proposals on promoting sustainable development. It promotes new policy initiatives by working with all stakeholders, highlighting their newest research and sharing international best practice. The Commission puts major sustainability challenges on the agenda. For example, in 2017, it highlighted the role of lifelong learning in the transformation of the economy, development of the Latvian innovation ecosystem and climate change policy.

### LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Since democratically elected local governments are the closest public administration level to the people, they are best able to involve relevant stakeholders and coordinate and direct local development in accordance with local priorities. The global SDGs have a local dimension, and action and multi-stakeholder dialogue at local level are key to achieving tangible results.

Today local governments play a significant role in implementing the SDGs in real life. Territorial development planning documents take into account the UN policies, EU sustainable development, environmental and other policies, strategic national and regional development documents, sectoral policies and programmes.

At present, all local governments in Latvia have adopted sustainable development strategies. These are the most important territorial development documents at the local government level. They describe problems and instruments chosen by the local governments, and localise solutions for economic, social and environmental issues addressed in the SDGs.

These local government sustainable development strategies have a long-term perspective that is based on Latvia 2030 and the Sustainable Development Strategy of the respective planning region. The strategic section defines the local government's long-term development vision and main development priorities, while the section on strategic spatial development defines and schematically represents the desired spatial structure of the

*There are 119  
local governments  
in Latvia – 9  
cities and 110  
municipalities,  
including the  
capital Riga.*

territory, development priorities and desired long-term changes.

Since all of society must be involved in achieving the SDGs, education and awareness raising is really important. The Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments has implemented several projects on the opportunities and challenges of achieving sustainable development goals in Latvia and in the world.

#### **LOCAL GOVERNMENTS RAISE AWARENESS ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Local governments have been providing skills to simultaneously think globally and act locally by linking global challenges to daily life through a project “Local governments - facilitators of developmental education and awareness-raising” about capacity building, increasing the role of local governments in development education and public awareness-raising about SDGs, and exchanging best practice. The Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments was able to provide two grant competitions for development education in Latvian local governments, and five winning projects were awarded financial support – in Jelgava, Auce, Jekabpils, Rucava and Kekava.

Under the leadership of the EU Platform for Local Government Development Cooperation “PLATFORMA”, Europe’s local government associations are working together from 2016-2018 to empower local and regional authorities to promote development in EU partner countries. Activities strengthen multilateral dialogue both on development cooperation and implementation of the SDGs in Latvia. For example, children and youth working with Jaunpils Animation Studio show their understanding of the SDGs in 10 self-made animation films.



Source: Jaunpils Secondary School pupil Emīls Freimanis' film (minute 8'40) in a series of children's animation films on the SDGs. [youtu.be/u5ZV7BZa2uo](https://youtu.be/u5ZV7BZa2uo)

## Civil society

Restoration of Latvia's independence in 1991 is inextricably linked to the sustainability of the environment and culture, citizens' self-initiative and taking responsibility for change. Through the Prayer for the Renewal of the Baltic Sea and other peaceful protests against environmental degradation, the Environmental Protection Club launched a movement for the rebirth of civil society in the late 1980s which to this day is still characterized by peaceful self-initiative. In the 1990s, Latvia's civil society progressed rapidly, and NGOs started defending the interests of their constituencies in virtually all policy areas.

The opportunities provided to civil society in 2000 to mobilize for the implementation of the eight UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) gave additional impetus to NGOs fighting HIV/AIDS, defending equal rights for women and men, environmental organisations, etc. In 2004, the government approved a policy for strengthening civil society and institutionalised a policy approach to public participation. The Parliament adopted laws that encouraged the development of the NGO sector, including a law to encourage donations to public benefit organizations. The same year brought about the establishment of Civic Alliance - Latvia, the largest NGO umbrella organization in Latvia, which today brings together many organizations that practically work with the SDGs. In 2005, when the Latvian government had just begun sharing Latvia's transition experience through development cooperation, non-governmental organizations founded the Latvian Platform for Development Cooperation (LAPAS) and created partnerships in this area as well. Civil society actively participated in creating Latvia 2030. Activists contributed to the National Development Plan, participating in working groups and the steering groups, as well as helping to organize public discussions outside the capital. As 2015 approached, Latvian non-governmental organizations participated with their counterparts in their international networks to advocate for a Post-2015 Development Paradigm. Thus, Agenda 2030 and its 17 goals and 169 targets emerged with the involvement of civil society, including Latvian NGOs.

There are NGOS in Latvia working on every SDG, both at the grass roots level and also representing the interests of individuals, communities at the local government, national, regional and global level.

## Private sector

Private sector companies cooperate on the basis of mutual interests to drive sustainability in Latvia and in the world. The Latvian Employers' Confederation (LDDK) and the Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia (LBAS) represent the private sector in the National Tripartite Co-operation Council. Together with the Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, representatives of line ministries and other invited parties, they provide advice in the framework of the National Development Council established by the Prime Minister.

The LDDK is the UN Global Contract focal point and, in cooperation with LBAS, it initiated the development of the Sustainability Index, which is currently promoted by the Institute of Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability (InCSR). Annually, on average 70 companies in Latvia rate their corporate responsibility practices according to the Sustainability Index.

CSR Latvia, the Latvian Corporate Social Responsibility Platform that represents Latvia's private sector in CSR Europe since 2013, conducts research, for example, on the impact of business on the goals and challenges elaborated in Latvia's sustainable development documents. CSR Latvia invites companies to assess their current and future environmental, economic and social impacts, and to use procedures (good governance) and criteria (indicators, codes of ethics) for identifying risks, as well as to contribute to the development of industry standards for a sustainable economy.

Latvian stakeholders cooperate in European networks and also globally. Through these networks, Latvia's social partners, local governments, NGOs (such as those working on environmental issues, welfare, development cooperation and corruption prevention) and entrepreneurs that stand for corporate social responsibility are represented at the European Commission's Multi-Stakeholder Platform on SDGs.

## Academic environment

Universities organize courses, seminars and conduct research on the SDGs. For example, Riga Technical University (RTU) has identified its strategically important SDGs (4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12 and 17), and aligned them with university activities and research platforms. The university concentrates its infrastructure and academic staff at the Student Campus on Kipsala Island in Riga, which is being developed as a centre for

innovation and technology to contribute to the development of green technologies and their commercialization. The RTU Student Campus is designed as a *green* meeting place, where students, academic staff and innovations converge and where green thinking and sustainable development concepts are integrated into the education process. For instance, RTU is gradually replacing its transport with electric vehicles, and is installing charging stations near the university buildings.

## The World Health Organization (WHO) in Latvia

WHO in Latvia works with Health 2020, the WHO health policy framework for the European region that promotes Health in All Policies and health as a common responsibility of the whole of government and society. Since Latvia became a member of WHO in the early 1990s, the WHO has been providing technical support in priority public health areas. The main objective for cooperation is to create better health care opportunities for all in Latvia and reduce inequities by introducing health policies and practices that are based on evidence and international best practice.

Latvia's main priorities in cooperation with the WHO for many years have been:

- To reduce the burden of non-communicable diseases (including reduction of risk factors: smoking, alcohol abuse, obesity, sedentary lifestyle)
- To support universal access to the health system by: strengthening the role of primary health care; promoting a health care financing model aimed at better financial protection in the event of illness; support for the introduction of e-health system
- Maternal and child health, antimicrobial resistance, control and surveillance of communicable diseases, and patient safety.

## UNESCO Latvian National Commission

UNESCO LNC activities focus on implementing the UNESCO Education 2030 Framework for Action and SDG 4. UNESCO LNC coordinates the advisory council Education for All that facilitates co-operation and coherence of activities between ministries and other institutions, local

municipalities, the private sector, non-governmental and international organisations. It develops proposals for key educational policies in order to ensure inclusive, equitable and high-quality education and to promote lifelong learning.

In partnership with the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, since 2017 UNESCO LNC has been cooperating in the implementation and promotion of the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development through various networks, including the UNESCO Chairs at the University of Latvia and the Daugavpils University, UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network, etc.

The World's Largest Lesson is an international campaign supported by UNESCO underway in Latvia for three years, bringing together around 50 educational institutions and 3000 children, young people and teachers every time. Lesson plans on the SDGs are developed, and interactive classes, hikes, concerts, fairs and other events are organized to foster accountability towards cultural and natural resources, promote civic participation and the involvement of all in shaping an inclusive society and a sustainable economy. More than 300 lesson plans and three electronic publications have been produced. See also <http://www.skolas.unesco.lv/lv/pasaules-lielaka-stunda/>

The annual international week "Education for All" is dedicated to promoting high quality, inclusive and accessible lifelong learning. The theme for 2018 in Latvia was sustainable and innovative vocational education.

Illustration: UNESCO LNC, Winning cover picture for Latvia's UNESCO #Unite4Heritage 2018 Calendar  
"Twirling through the Oak Branches"  
Authors: Ozolnieki Secondary School students:  
K. Krūzberga, J. Černuho, N. N. Rozenbergs



## 6. Evaluation of Latvia's Implementation of the SDGs and their Targets

This section provides a brief overview of each of the 17 SDGs - describing its place in the planning system, highlighting trends toward achieving results and naming a few indicators (see also Statistical Annex). With deep conviction that “success is in the details”, we illustrate key actions for achieving the main targets in each SDG. In order for the analysis to be useful in the future, we comment on the risks to sustainable development in Latvia, mentioning those SDG targets which merit more attention, and describing best practice.

To give the reader a sense of how the SDGs are mainstreamed in Latvian policy, we begin with information about Latvia's current priorities – the relevant goals set in Latvia's Sustainable Development Strategy to 2030 (Latvia 2030) and their link to the goals set in the National Development Plan 2020 (NDP2020), which is Latvia's highest medium-term planning document that ties medium term goals to the national budget. This is followed by a description and evaluation of each SDG in the Latvian context.

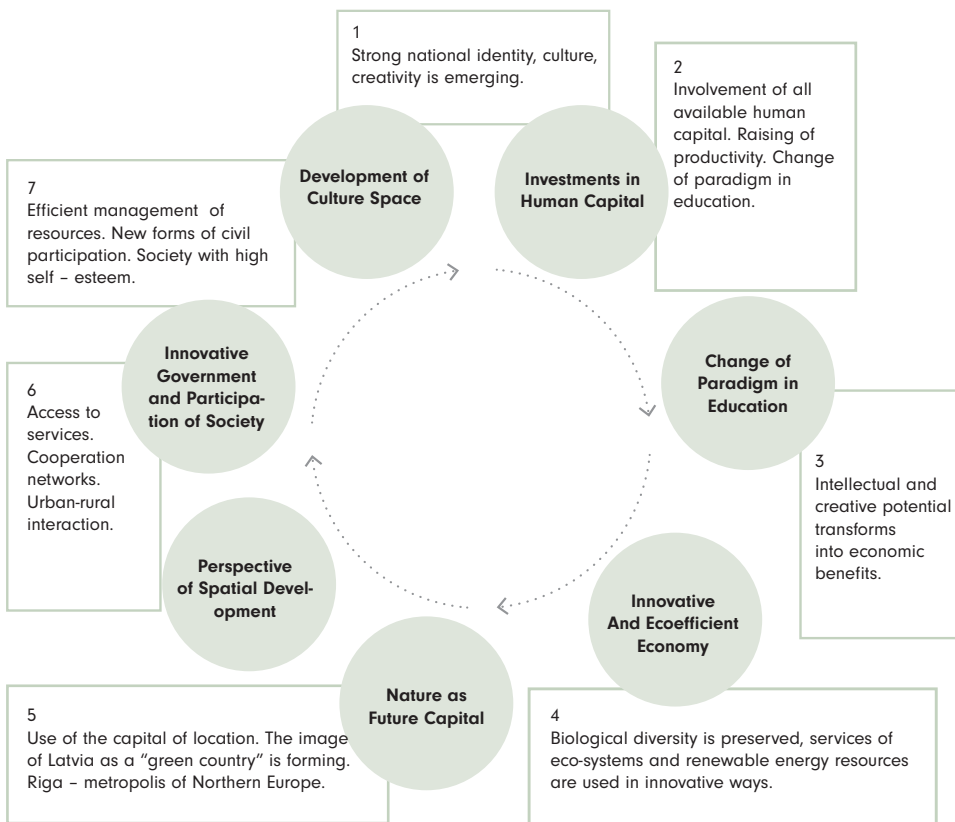
Although it is important that goals are elaborated in long-term and medium-term policies, other factors are critical for achieving results. The quality of action plans and the allocation of budget and other resources reflects the dedication of politicians and society. The analysis below is based on the 2017 assessment of Latvia's sustainable development goals, including an analysis of data, investments, expert and public opinion.



## Latvia's goals

Latvia 2030 sets 55 specific policy outcome indicator targets to be achieved by 2030 in seven priority areas (of which 44 are also SDG targets).

### LATVIA 2030 PRIORITY AREAS



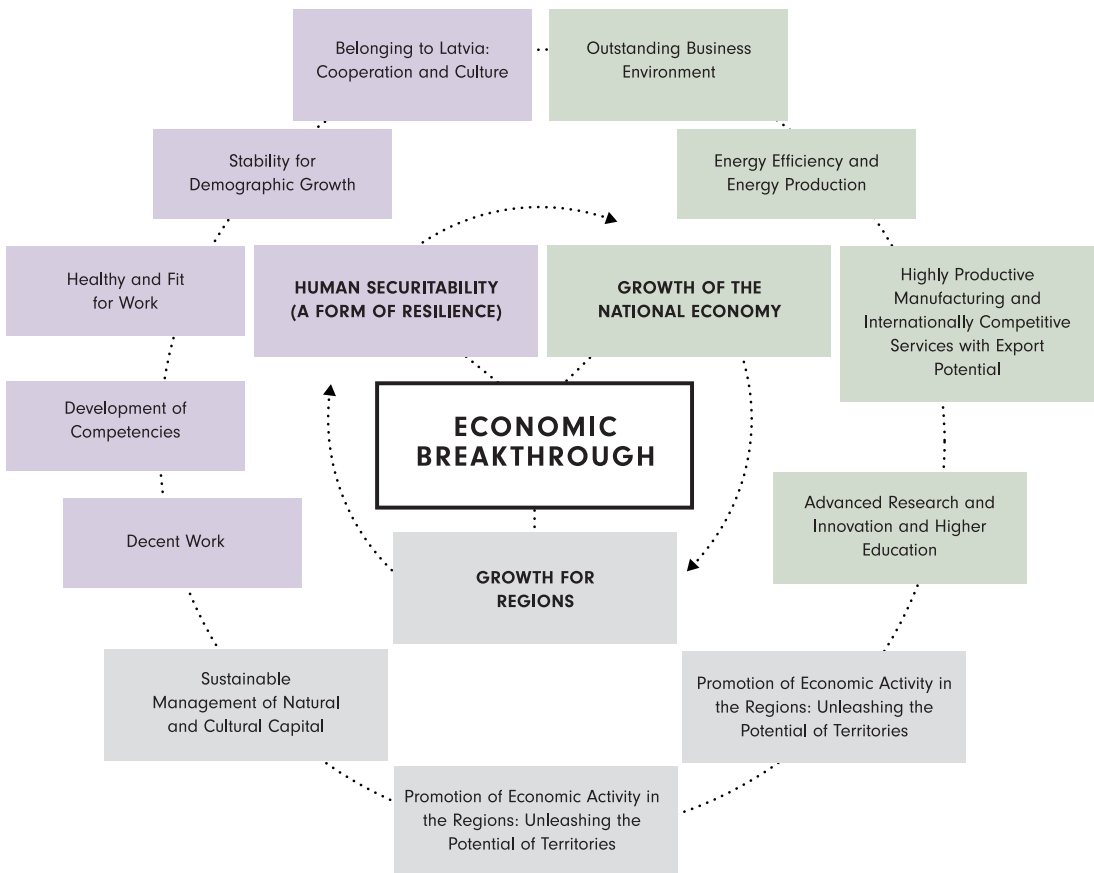
The NDP2020 sets mid-term goals to achieve Latvia 2030. It emphasises the need to achieve an economic breakthrough as a post-crisis prerequisite for any further development.

The National Development Plan has three overarching macro-level indicators. It defines goals in three priority areas and 12 strategic objectives. It has 96 policy outcome (performance) indicators that are hierarchically tiered. Some of the goals and indicators are also defined in Latvia 2030, but others define mid-term progress towards achieving the longer term goals.

The three macro-level indicators are:

- GDP growth (GDP per capita);
- Natural population growth (the difference between the birth rate and the death rate);
- Reduction of income inequality (S80/S20 income quintile share ratio).

## NDP2020 PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



Each of the 12 strategic objectives in NDP2020 includes measures (or programming areas) implemented through policy that is allocated funding to achieve targets. From 2013-2016 funding was allocated to activities aimed directly at achieving the targets, with priority being given to those activities that contributed the most to achieving the macro-goals. Ministries annually request budget allocations for achieving indicator targets, and planning documents are monitored to ensure that they are designed to achieve the targets.

In broad terms, the goals defined in Latvia 2030, NDP2020 and sectoral planning documents correlate with the SDGs as follows:

- Economic growth, full employment and decent work (SDG 8) and reducing inequality (SDG 10) are two of Latvia's macro-goals, and preconditions for achieving other goals. Poverty reduction (SDG 1) is closely linked to SDG 10.
- One third of the NDP2020 is dedicated to achieving development throughout the entire country, not only in the capital city. Latvia 2030 forecasts a decline in the population and migration to the capital city or abroad and outlines the need for "intelligent shrinking", i.e. adapting the infrastructure and public services to demographic shifts.
- Good Health and Well-Being (SDG 3), Quality Education (SDG 4), Affordable and Clean Energy (SDG 7) are among the eight Latvia 2030 priorities, and twelve strategic objectives in the NDP2020. In addition, each SDG is covered by a comprehensive sectoral policy framework, i.e. Education Development Guidelines 2014-2020, Public Health Policy Guidelines 2014-2020, and Energy Development Guidelines 2016-2020.
- SDG 9 in the Latvian context is about appropriate infrastructure (not too large, not too small) and an innovative economy. Infrastructure is not usually considered in its entirety in Latvia, but mainstreamed in sectors - IT, transport, school networks, etc. Innovation is one of the main topics currently being addressed in the economy and education, and is found in several strategic objectives in NDP2020 under the Economic Growth priority.
- Drinking water and sanitation (SDG 6), climate change (SDG 13), water (SDG 14) and terrestrial ecosystems (SDG 15) are well-regulated, with a great deal of international cooperation.
- SDG 2, 5, 16 and 17 are multifaceted and horizontal. SDG 2, in the Latvian context, is about adequate and high-quality nutrition as well as sustainable agriculture. The Ministries of Agriculture, Health, Education and Science, and Welfare are co-responsible for quality nutrition, and the Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for agricultural policy that ensures both productivity and sustainability. Gender equality (SDG 5) is a horizontal principle throughout all policies. SDG 16 addresses the justice system, public administration, civic participation, corruption prevention, and other areas requiring integrity. Latvia's responsibility for development outside Latvia and the EU (SDG 17) is achieved primarily through development cooperation policy.
- Sustainable consumption and production, including promotion of the

circular economy (SDG 12) is a goal with high innovation potential that requires horizontal integration in Latvian policies. Several policies affect aspects of sustainable production and consumption, and from 2021 ministries plan to view sustainable consumption and production more holistically.

## SDG mapping

In the current planning period, Latvia has defined policy outcomes and performance indicators for all 17 SDGs. Latvia 2030 references all SDGs, but includes no specific objectives or indicators for Goals SDG 5 and SDG 17. Indicators for SDG 5 are included in NDP2020 and other planning documents. Policy outcomes and indicators for SDG 17 are detailed in the Development Cooperation Policy 2016-2020, both for bi-lateral development cooperation and in EU external policy.

Since each SDG covers many topics, Latvia's mapping exercise examines the SDGs at the 169 target level.

- 136 targets address Latvia's domestic policy or external dimensions
- 44 of 136 relevant targets are defined in Latvia 2030, 66 are included in NDP2020; 108 targets are included in sectoral policies (including development cooperation policy)
- 33 targets are not relevant at present in Latvian domestic or foreign policy (for example, Target 15.4 - ensure conservation of mountain ecosystems - as there are no significant mountains or mountain expertise in Latvia that would be useful to other countries).

It should be noted that certain priorities that are important for the sustainable development of Latvia are not measured by the SDGs, the most important of which are:

- Facilitating natural population growth (one of three NDP2020 macro goals)
- Creating favourable conditions for people to remain in Latvia, and promoting return migration
- Promoting a sense of belonging, civic awareness and pride in one's country and nation
- Promotion of public use of the Latvian language.

These are current issues for Latvia, as one of the modern nation states that was established a century ago in Northern and Eastern Europe after World War One to ensure the nation's right to exist and its continuity. These rights are enshrined in the Preamble of the Constitution.



## SDG

## 1

# End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Reducing poverty is one of the most important goals of Latvia and the whole of Europe. Latvia 2030 calls for the reduction of the at risk of poverty rate to 16 % by 2030 (Eurostat 2016 – 21.8%), while the National Reform Programme of Latvia for the Implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy targets decreasing the at risk of poverty and/or in low intensity work households to 21 % by 2020 (in 2016 – 23.4 %, 2010 – 22.1%).

In the medium term, Latvia has prioritised reducing the poverty rate for employed persons and families with children, while continuing to improve conditions for older persons and persons with disabilities. The share of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion (Eurostat data) fell by 10 % between 2010 (38.2%) and 2016 (28.2%), while the population has decreased by about 9% during the same period.

Economic growth and decent work play a crucial role in reducing poverty (see sections SDG 8 and SDG 10).

During the economic crisis of 2008-2011, a social safety net was put in place to meet basic welfare, education, employment, transport and health needs. Several measures were retained after the crisis, such as medical co-payments exemptions for low-income persons.

Since the economic recovery began (after the crisis that led to high unemployment and emigration), the employment rate has increased (in 2017 for 20-64 olds: 72.7% for women, 77.0% for men). This is partly due to government programmes to support employability, especially of the long-term unemployed youth, those 50 years and older, prison inmates and those who have completed their sentences. These programmes are being constantly improved.

Persons with disabilities are provided with government-funded assistant services to access schools, universities and work. In 2016, 24.9% of persons with disabilities (52% women and 48% men) were registered as employed. To encourage employment of persons at risk of social exclusion, the government has launched a pilot project to support social enterprises. From 2018, businesses can qualify for social enterprise status and receive special support.

Support to families with children has been significantly increased between 2014 and 2018 through family benefits during the child-care period. This includes differentiated family benefits, depending on the number of children, additional allowances and tax exemptions. Local governments provide free meals in schools and kindergartens, and there are also discounts

for public transport. Persons with disabilities, orphans etc. receive free public transport and families with three and more children are entitled to a 25% discount for public transportation costs. This support has contributed to the reduction in the risk of poverty for families in which two adults raise three or more children (19.8 % in 2016), however, the risk of poverty remains high (34.3 %) in single-parent families.

Pensions granted during the economic crisis (when wage levels fell) are being recalculated and the indexing of all pensions and indemnities continues. In spite of this, the poverty risk for persons over the age of 65 continues to increase (39.9% in 2016), and there are distinct differences between the poverty risk for men (29.1%) and women (45.1%). Women's life expectancy exceeds men's by more than 10 years, and when women outlive their husbands, their poverty risk escalates.

For several years, the proportion of persons classified as being in need according to Latvian regulations has ranged between 2.3 and 2.4 %. Local government social services provide these persons social assistance, such as housing allowances, guaranteed minimum income (GMI) benefits, etc. Since 2018, the GMI in Latvia is 53 EUR per person per month, and the local governments cover the difference between GMI and household (personal) income. The Government adopted the Concept Paper on Determining a Minimum Income Level that outlines the need to set a methodologically sound, evidence-based minimum income level as reference point for improving the system of social benefits, social insurance and social assistance. The concept is being gradually implemented, primarily through income support to population groups with the highest poverty risk.

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## LOCAL GOVERNMENTS WORKING TO IMPROVE LIVES

Local government social services and social assistance benefits are particularly important for people at risk of poverty.

- Many local governments have voluntarily set a higher guaranteed minimum income level beyond that mandated by the national government to provide for their citizens' basic needs.

- To reduce the poverty risk for families with children, especially single-parent families, many local governments provide free lunches for children at school, kindergarten or set significant school meal discounts, supplementing the basic free lunch funding for children at school subsidised by the national government.

- Local governments provide additional support for housing, health care, etc. to elderly people with low incomes living alone, one of the most socially vulnerable groups.

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Source: Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments

Limited availability of public financial resources is one of the biggest challenges in addressing poverty. Although social protection is one of Latvia's largest national budget items, Latvia is among those EU and OECD member states that channel a relatively small proportion of the GDP to social protection.

## SDG 2

## End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

The most relevant aspects of SDG 2 for Latvia, taking into account Latvia 2030 priorities, are ensuring sustainable agriculture, increasing the productivity of agricultural lands and promoting healthy personal eating habits.

The risk of hunger is minimal, and food safety and nutrition requirements have improved with Latvia's accession to the EU. Households with critically low income levels receive social assistance from local governments, nutritional needs are addressed with support from the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived, free meals are provided at school for children of all ages from large families and low-income families. In 2016, 18.5 % of households could not afford to eat meat, poultry or fish every other day (an indicator of economic strain), while 37.3% of households below the poverty threshold could not afford this. The number of such households has decreased during last seven years due to economic development. The proportion of obese people aged 18 and over rose to over a fifth of this age group in 2014. The coverage of free meals for children and young people at schools continues to increase, and, as of 2016, regulations were changed to allow only

the sale of listed healthy products in cafeterias and vending machines at schools and their adjacent territories. The nation-wide "School Milk, Vegetable and Fruit" programme has an annual budget of 1.3 million euro.

Sustainable agriculture entails preserving agricultural land for agricultural production while maintaining soil fertility. Efficient and sustainable management of land resources is an essential precondition for the future development of agriculture and the bioeconomy. There have been economic incentives for the increase in agricultural production on agricultural land, which grew from 88,6% in 2010 to 92 % in 2016. Agricultural land transactions in terms of number and area have decreased, but the price of land has increased one and half times – in Kurzeme and Zemgale regions it has even doubled. The rising price of agricultural land attests to the competition for this valuable resource, and imposes additional production costs for farmers.

In recent years, agricultural production has increased due to modernization of agricultural farming –the use of the latest state-of-the-art technologies and knowledge intensive farming

solutions. As a result, the number of people employed in agricultural production has decreased from 83,000 in 2010 to 70,000 in 2016.

Public investments have not sufficiently contributed to the productivity and viability of small farms. A balance between productivity and employment has not been reached, in spite of the availability of natural resources and the potential for adding value to agricultural production, including through food processing. Policy that focuses largely on economic efficiency of farms, increasing farm size, and modernization leads to a decrease in labour and poses the need/challenge to find alternative employment for residents in rural areas to ensure sufficient income for the people and sufficient tax revenues to cover costs, including state and municipal services and infrastructure.

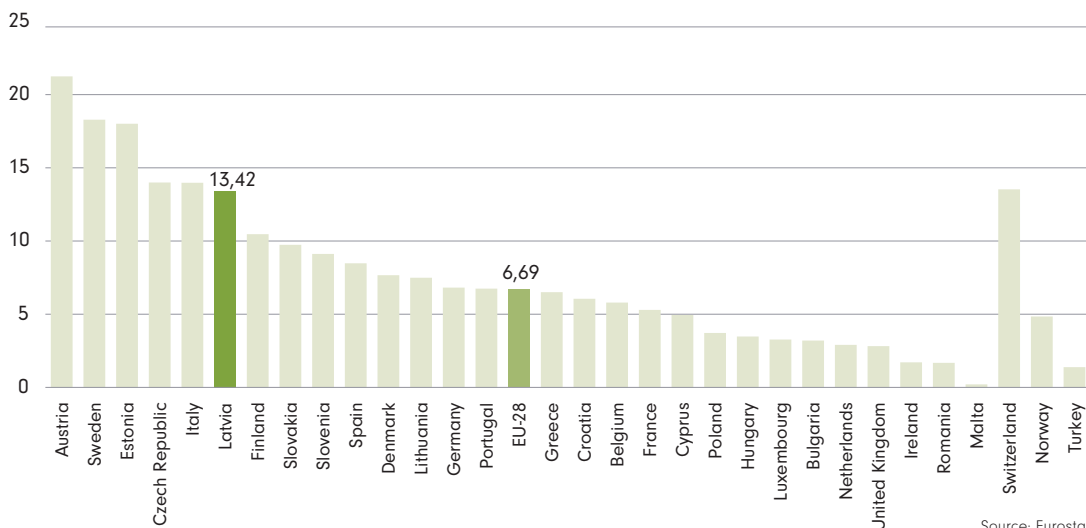
Farmers' incomes grew by more than 23 % from 2013 to 2016 in spite of a decrease in the market price of agricultural products.

However, farm productivity is still a major challenge, as it remains one of the lowest in EU. The situation is similar in food processing, largely due to the technological level of manufacturing, insufficient availability of fixed assets (machinery, equipment, buildings and structures, etc.), the large number of farms that produce only for their own needs and the low level of co-operation between small farms.

One Latvia 2030 goal is to increase the share of land used for organic farming. This is up from 10.1 % in 2010 to 13.4% in 2016, and is the sixth highest in the EU.

To preserve and improve the quality of land and soil, support is provided for the reconstruction of drainage systems in agricultural and forest areas. Agri-environmental subsidies are given to farmers who use environmentally friendly farming methods that reduce erosion and preserve plant nutrients in the soil.

### ORGANIC CROP AREA (%) OF TOTAL UTILISED AGRICULTURAL AREA IN 2016



Source: Eurostat

## SDG 3

## Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Affordable and effective health care is one of the most important challenges that Latvia has faced over the last decade. According to Eurostat, out of pocket expenditure comprises 42.07 % of total expenditure for health services, one of the highest levels in the EU. The health care budget was significantly increased in last two years with the explicit aim of improving the availability of health care services by reducing waiting periods for publicly financed secondary outpatient services, diagnostics and reimbursable medicines. One immediate result - on average, waiting periods for medical services have been reduced by 25 % in 2017.

The main national health goal is to increase the average number of healthy life years, as well as to reduce potential years of life lost by 30 % from 2014 to 2030. To achieve this, the government is concentrating on several areas, including reducing premature mortality from cardiovascular disease, which is three times higher for men than for women. Because there is no significant progress in reducing premature mortality due to malignant tumors, the government has developed a “green corridor” for early diagnostics and timely treatment of cancer patients. A comprehensive policy to improve nutrition and physical activity is cur-

rently being implemented. In the future, more action is to be taken to reduce the number of suicides and curtail mortality from cardiovascular diseases, especially among men.

The high premature mortality rate among men is largely due to lifestyle habits, namely the prevalence of smoking and harmful alcohol consumption. Regular smokers account for 25.6 % of the working age population (50.5 % of men and 21.6 % of women), while 61.5 % of men and 28.4 % of women aged 15-64 partake in harmful alcohol consumption. In order to reduce the prevalence of consumption of addictive substances, the excise tax on tobacco products and alcoholic beverages has been repeatedly raised in recent years, and restrictions have been imposed on the advertising, distribution and availability of tobacco, other smoking products and alcoholic beverages. To continue decreasing substance abuse, future policy should not only focus on lowering consumption and restricting availability, it should also substantially improve addiction treatment and rehabilitation services, providing access to a broader range of therapies and improving their effectiveness.

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## THE ADDICTION TREATMENT CENTRE

Some prison inmates have unhealthy habits, including abuse of alcohol, narcotics and/or psychotropic substances, and have committed crimes under the influence of these substances. Prisoners with addictions are not always able to fully participate in the resocialisation process, which often determines how successfully the person will integrate into society after serving the sentence. The Addiction Treatment Centre, built with the help of the Norwegian Government Financial Instrument, was established in Olaine Prison in October 2016. Owing to two addiction treatment programmes and new infrastructure, prisoners now are serving their sentences in therapeutic communities, where the personnel use special mentor-contact principles. The Centre is a reminder that imprisonment is not revenge, but a way of helping offenders understand how to live on their own without committing crimes.

Source: Ministry of Justice

The situation in Latvia is of heightened concern regarding the spread of HIV and AIDS. In 2015, Latvia had the second highest growth rate of newly diagnosed HIV cases in the EU, 3.5 times higher than the EU average. Latvia also has the highest growth rate of newly diagnosed AIDS cases in the European Union. In response, the availability of medicines for HIV and AIDS treatment has been improved over the last year, and more hepatitis C patients are receiving new generation medications and appropriate treatment at earlier stages of that contagious disease. To ensure a systematic approach, the government approved a plan in late 2017, further restricting the spread of HIV, sexually transmissible diseases, hepatitis B and C.

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## HEALTH IN ALL POLICIES

For many years WHO has provided technical support to the Ministry of Health based on a Cooperation Agreement on priorities in the Latvian health sector.

For more information, see Section 5 *Initiatives and partnerships for SDG implementation*

Source: Ministry of Health

Air quality monitoring is the responsibility of the national authorities, but local governments and businesses also monitor the quality of air and pollution levels. Local governments must respond when non-compliance with air quality standards has been identified. Although overall air quality in Latvia is good, there is much to do to mitigate pollution in the capital city Riga. The most significant pollution source in the city centre is vehicles, not industry. Riga's air is polluted by small dust particles known as PM<sub>10</sub>, which exceed maximum permissible annual concentrations. However, since 2007, the number of days when permissible levels of PM<sub>10</sub> particles exceed the limit has dropped by about half.

Maternal and child health has been given special attention in the past seven years through additional testing methods for pregnant women, improved service availability, and the setting of ultrasound test standards. Publicly funded infertility treatment programmes and confidential analysis of maternal mortality have been introduced. Unfortunately, maternal deaths are still being registered annually. The situation was particularly alarming in 2015, when the maternal mortality rate was 55.2 per 100,000 live births. In absolute terms, those were 12 cases, 8 of which pregnancy-related. As regards the children's health, perinatal mortality is decreasing, but remains relatively high in

comparison to other EU countries. Issues of reproductive and sexual health have not been addressed systematically in existing health policy. The plan until 2020 emphasises public awareness raising on sexual and reproductive health as well as the availability of government funded birth control for women at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

Investing public finances in health promotion and disease prevention is less costly than battling the consequences. Treating the illnesses, and long-term investments ensure long-term gains. National and local health workers are promoting healthy lifestyles and disease prevention in four priority health areas by concentrating on nutrition, physical activities, substance abuse, process addiction, sexual and reproductive health, and mental health. Special attention is paid to people at risk of poverty, as well as territorial and social exclusion. One future policy option to increase the timely availability of health care for pregnant women and children could be to compensate public transport costs to medical institutions for those at risk of social exclusion.

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## HEALTHY LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND SCHOOLS

The National Healthy Local Government Network unites 112 of 119 Latvian local governments that implement health promotion and prevention activities in Latvia's four priority health care areas – cardio-vascular, oncology, maternal and child care, and mental health (2017 data). 105 educational institutions have joined the Health Promotion School Network and integrate health promotion activities into the school's daily schedule. Although most local governments have institutionalised health activities, nation-wide data is not available on municipal budget allocations toward health promotion.

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Source: Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments, Ministry of Health

## SDG 4

## Ensure inclusive and equitable education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Latvia's Sustainable Development Strategy to 2030 (Latvia 2030) describes the paradigm shift needed in education, one in which parents, teachers, students and educational institutions are fully aware of their mutual responsibility in ensuring quality education. Schools are transformed into social networking centres, learning is competency based, IT is used extensively and a lifelong learning culture is the norm. The National Development Plan (NDP2020) sets the medium-term targets - to reduce the number of young people with low competences, while increasing the share of students with high competences, decrease the share of young people neither in employment nor in education or training, increase the quality and of higher education and its appeal internationally, develop vocational and adult education systems and increase adult participation in learning. The Education Development Guidelines 2014-2020 detail these and other targets, comprehensively covering the SDG 4 targets.

Discussions continue on organising the secondary school network in light of demographic changes, migration trends, the socio-economic situation of local governments, quality of educational institutions, and other factors. Regarding

income inequality, the pay gap between teachers at the same job in different size schools has been reduced.

Competency-based education content that has been developed recently will set the foundation for pre-school education guidelines, as well as basic and secondary education standards. The new education content will be implemented gradually, starting from 1 September 2018. In the future, teacher training and professional development programmes will improve competency based education.

Vocational education competence centres are being strengthened. This will lead to a broader range of vocational education opportunities for different target groups, an increase in coherence between networks of vocational education providers, and better cooperation between vocational education institutions and employers, including through work based training. The centres also will help increase the capacity of vocational schools to provide programmes for business development.

There are many initiatives to promote inclusive education and decrease the risk of social exclusion. In the 2016/2017 school year, 40.9% of special needs students were integrated

in general education. To help youth at risk of social exclusion, support staff is available, they are provided non-formal education opportunities, and teacher competencies are being improved.

The problems of early school leavers also are being addressed. The share of early school leavers (aged 18-24) in 2017 was 8,6% - 12% male, 5% female (Eurostat data). To improve student learning achievements, an individualised learning approach is being introduced in general education. Teachers are being provided teaching material and training, IT use is being increased, and best practice from other countries is being introduced.

A new financing model for higher education was developed with the support of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and introduced in 2015. It comprises three funding pillars - core, performance and development funding - to encourage high-quality, research-based content and performance management. Improvements are being made in quality assurance, course content (consolidating programmes), management, training of personnel and increasing foreign academic staff. All of the above will contribute to the quality of higher education and draw international interest.

As the labour force shrinks, regular training and re-training of the workforce and a focus on STEM will ensure growth of the economy, productivity, efficient use of available resources and reduce structural unemployment. Reforms have been introduced to reduce skills mismatches (between the supply and demand in the labour market) and improve the relevance of education programmes. Sectoral Expert Councils representing employers, trade unions, relevant government and education institutions

cooperate to improve vocational education. The provision of STEM subjects is being stepped up in general education, and pupils are being encouraged to study in the STEM areas.

7.5% of adults aged 25-64 participate in adult education. Latvia plans to increase public awareness of the adult education system and improve the system's coherence by 2020. An Interdisciplinary Adult Education Management Board, set up in 2017 to eliminate skills mismatches in the labour market, will contribute to this goal. In response to the digital revolution, ICT companies and business associations have started training businesspersons, youth and others to raise awareness and jump-start skills in this realm.

Education for sustainable development (SDG Target 4.7) is a multi-disciplinary subject. Non-governmental organizations, universities and the UNESCO Latvian National Committee (UNESCO LNC) develop materials and methods on the topic for use by teachers and young people in various situations inside the classroom and outside of it.

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## **MINORITY EDUCATION PROGRAMMES IN LATVIA**

The Latvian government funds basic education programmes in seven minority languages: Russian, Polish, Jewish, Ukrainian, Estonian, Lithuanian and Belarusian. The Advisory Board on Minority Education established by the Ministry of Education promotes dialogue between education policy makers, practitioners and society. It provides advice on maintaining high-quality education at schools with minority education programmes, promotes humanistic values in a multicultural society, and upholds values of intercultural understanding. Board members include representatives of school

boards, schools, national associations, and other stakeholders from national and local government, and civil society.

Source: The Cross Sectoral Coordination Centre.

## CREATE!

Create! is a week-long annual event with an extensive programme of conferences, discussions, seminars, creative activities, etc., that highlights Latvia's cultural industries and creativity, in general. The main theme in 2017 was design and design-thinking methods that influence peoples' daily lives and improve their welfare.

Source: The Cross Sectoral Coordination Centre.

## THE LATVIAN SCHOOLBAG

As of September 2018, all primary and secondary school pupils in the country will have the chance to explore the interrelationships between history, culture, nature and innovations outside the traditional classroom setting through a programme called the Latvian Schoolbag. During the piloting of the programme, for example, pupils from the region of Latgale in the eastern part of Latvia travelled across the country to the western coastal town of Carnikava, where they visited businesses that process and sell a traditional delicacy – the lamprey eel. They learned about business plans, saw an exhibit on the role of eel production in the town's history and spoke to the people of the town about their past and future. Outside the classroom pupils also seek interconnections between different topics at concerts and exhibitions. In school, they host cultural events and artists. Funding is being provided under the auspices of Latvia's Centenary to ensure every child the opportunity to learn contextually.

Source: Ministry of Culture.

## E-SKILLS WEEK

E-Skills Week is in its 9th year in Latvia. In 2018, schools and libraries, NGOs, local governments and businesses across the nation contributed lectures, courses and exchanged information on topics like digital security, digital jobs of the future (for youth), digital literacy in lifelong learning, etc. People could test their personal digital skills in self-assessment tests and competitions. On IT Pro Day, experts met to discuss topics that need attention – retraining, women in IT, etc. Activities were attended by more than 240,000 Latvian residents.

Source: The Cross Sectoral Coordination Centre.



University of Latvia.  
Photo: © University of Latvia.

## SDG 5

## Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Equal rights and opportunities for women and men is a fundamental human right that is provided by the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia. The government of Latvia is regularly informed about the implementation of the UN Beijing Platform for Action on Gender Equality. In the framework of development cooperation, Latvia plans to allocate 8% of bilateral official development assistance to support gender equality in development cooperation partner countries by 2020. In Latvia, various domestic policies include measures aimed at ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men. Concurrently, a draft Plan for the Promotion of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men 2018-2020 is being drafted, which includes measures to promote the implementation of an integrated, targeted and effective gender equality policy.

The female employment rate (age 15-64 years) in Latvia exceeds the EU-28 average by 6%, while the male employment rate is only slightly below the EU-28 average. Women tend to be more educated than men, and this difference is most notable among university graduates – in 2016, women made up 65.5% of this group. At the same time, women and men tend to concentrate in certain areas of education,

which leads to strong segregation in the labour market. As a result, certain professions are being labelled as either “female” or “male”. Some sectors become less socio-economically valued than others and subsequently have lower wages.

Although Latvia has the highest share of women in positions of leadership in all of Europe (47 %), the pay gap between men and women is 17 %, which is higher than the European average (16.2%). Activities are underway to promote balancing work and family life both for women and men, however, a balance is hard to achieve since there still is a lack of adequate and appropriate pre-school and childcare services available throughout the country. This is especially difficult for parents with non-standard work hours. Since society is ageing, access to care services for older family members is also becoming increasingly relevant. Care needs for young and old alike underscore the urgency for implementing Target 5.4 – To recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work.

In Latvia, the average life expectancy for men is ten years shorter than that of women. Similarly, differences between women and men persist in terms of healthy life years, which is 51.8 for males and 54.1 for women. The proportion of women living alone over the age of 65 (40.1%)

is two times higher than the proportion of men living alone in the same age group (19.7%).

A 2012 survey conducted by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) on violence against women showed that every third woman in Latvia has experienced partner violence during her lifetime. Survey data published in the 2016 Eurobarometer show that, although Latvian respondents often say that they know a victim of domestic violence, relatively few believe that domestic violence is a widespread problem.

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### **ACTIVE MULTI-PARTY ENGAGEMENT TO REDUCE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

Local governments, non-governmental organisations, State Police and other institutions are co-operating to prevent violence. A police risk assessment questionnaire (for use in calls regarding family conflict, including domestic violence) has been developed and tested. The risk assessment enables police officers to better identify and recognise different forms of domestic violence, and to explain to the victim the various ways in which the violent party can be kept at a distance. The police officer and the victim of domestic violence jointly fill out the questionnaire to determine the risk of recurrence. The police then collaborate with other responsible institutions and the victim to deter another incident.

Work has begun on training programmes and methodologies that will improve coordination between institutions involved in a collective response against violence toward women, as well as improve the skills and knowledge of local government social workers, an important partner in assuring the next steps. Public awareness activities also are underway that promote

the role of bystanders, encouraging them to become involved and report any cases of violence that they observe.

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Source: Ministry of Welfare, Ministry of the Interior

MARTA Resource Centre for Women participated in seminars in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan that raised awareness about economic opportunities for women and girls. Speaking to parents, representatives of civil society organisations and academia, MARTA shared its experiences and presented information on the negative impacts of early marriages on girls. MARTA also developed methodological material on the topic for local communities, educational administrations, schools and parents in the Kirghiz and Tajik languages.

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Source: MARTA Resource Centre for Women

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### **GENDER EQUALITY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**

The local government of Skrunda has signed the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life, committing itself to the principles of gender equality and equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes. That involves carefully considering and incorporating views of stakeholders of both genders into decisions made, and ensuring that good governance processes take account of women's and men's capabilities and needs.

Women are actively involved in shaping the political agenda in local governments throughout Latvia. In the nation-wide municipal elections of 3 June 2017, 39% of all registered candidates were women. The election results were such that women make up 24% of all newly elected local government heads/mayors.

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Source: Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments

## SDG 6

## Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Latvia is rich in water resources of varying quality. Latvia's volume of freshwater resources per capita is the fourth largest in the EU and exceeds the current and estimated consumption needs by several factors. Access to clean water that is in compliance with healthiness and purity requirements is mostly available to all. At present, more than 90% of homes in Latvia are connected to centralized sewage and water supply systems.

In both rural and urban areas of Latvia, the supply of drinking water has traditionally come in large part from groundwater sources. 60% of supplied drinking water is sourced from groundwater, 21% from surface waters, and 19% is artificially supplemented groundwater. Riga is the only Latvian city which uses both underground spring water and Daugava river water for its drinking water supply. To ensure the rational use and protection of groundwater, as well as to ensure that its use respects the state's interests, the Law on Subterranean Depths grants groundwater the status of "resource of national significance". Regulations set mandatory safety and quality requirements for drinking water, as well as monitoring and control procedures. In order to promote the efficient use of water resources, a natural resource tax and

has been introduced as well as a requirement for recording of water consumption.

Latvia's main challenges related to water resources are: drinking water that is not of acceptable quality in some of the country's smaller water supply systems (i.e. for use by up to 2000 persons), and the eutrophication of surface waters. In 2016, 85% of Latvia's population was receiving drinking water that complies with all regulatory requirements. Approximately 15% of water supply systems showed an excess of iron and manganese content, mainly because some small water supply systems do not have the funds to fully remove the iron, and indoor water system for some is unsatisfactory. Consequently, although a centralised water supply system may be delivering water of adequate quality, after having moved through a building's water system, the water that the consumer receives may have deteriorated in quality.

Water protection is one of the main priorities of Latvian environmental protection policy. Latvia has set the goal of providing Latvian residents with high-quality water services (water supply and sewerage) by expanding sewage networks and reconstructing those water supply networks that do not comply with set quality requirements. By 2013,

73.1% of Latvia's population had access to high quality sewage services, and 74.9% of the population had access to a high-quality water supply. Implementation of planned investment projects should increase the number of people being serviced by centralised sewage collection networks by over 43 thousand by the year 2023.

Depending on their financial resources, local governments provide varying degrees of support for the installation of connections to centralised water supply and sewerage systems that service residential properties. In order to prevent polluting of the environment (including waters) and possibly damaging human health, Latvia has enacted a new Cabinet Regulation that sets requirements for the management of decentralized sewerage systems in small but densely populated areas with non-functioning decentralized sewage systems and/or who practice illegal wastewater discharging. This regulation will not only ensure equal access to both centralised and decentralised sewerage services, but is also an important measure for achieving both sustainable management of waters and the objectives of SDG 6 in whole.

In 2015, management plans for Latvia's four largest rivers and their basins – Daugava, Gauja, Lielupe and Venta – were approved for the period 2016 – 2021. The plans cover the entire area of the country and integrate the catchment areas of smaller rivers as well. Such plans are developed every six years and local governments are involved in their implementation through activities such as assessing the quality of public swimming areas.

International cooperation in water resource protection and management is very crucial for Latvia, since 56% of total river runoff entering Latvia is sourced from the neighbouring countries of Lithuania, Estonia, Belarus and Russia. Consequently, water pollution from these countries enters Latvia. Trans-border water pollution from neighbouring countries is one of the largest concerns for Latvian inland waters in terms of all pollutant groups, especially biogenic substances and persistent environment pollutants. Latvia is party to a joint agreement with Lithuania and Estonia on cooperation in the field of environmental protection and management of shared river basins. Latvia also has agreements on environmental co-operation with Russia and Belarus.

## SDG 7

## Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

The main focus of Latvia's energy policy has been placed on strengthening the national economy, promoting industrial development, and enhancing energy security.

The energy intensity of Latvia's economy is gradually falling. In 2010, gross energy consumption in GDP (kg of oil equivalent per EUR 1000 GDP) was 260.2 kg, dropping to 202.8 kg by 2016. The share of energy from renewable energy sources in terms of total final energy consumption is increasing. In 2015, this share was 37.6%. Although it dropped slightly to 37.2% in 2017, this is still a moderately high percentage compared to other countries in the European region.

Latvia promotes the use of domestic energy resources in energy generation to balance the structure of energy generation and energy import. Support is given to encourage the use of renewable energy sources for energy generation in both the public and private sectors, and also specifically in the transport sector. The future share of renewable energy could reach 10% of total energy consumed in the transport sector, given an increase in biofuel consumption (by transport), electricity generated by renewable energy resources, and improved infrastructure

for alternative energy. This is a serious challenge for Latvia to meet by 2020.

State support provided to renewable energy and for the provision of base capacities, has, however, increased electricity prices for consumers, and reduced the market competitiveness of local businesses. The government is taking measures to minimise the burden to Latvia's residents and firms that has been created by this national support mechanism.

Latvia aims to diversify the routes and sources of gas and electric power, thereby ensuring the security of the supply and strengthening the liquidity of the gas and electric power market. It does so by promoting the continued development of EU infrastructure projects of common interest (The Kurzeme Ring, the Third Latvia-Estonia Interconnection, the Lithuania-Poland gas pipeline, modernisation of Inčukalns underground gas storage facility, upgrading the Lithuania-Latvia Interconnection, etc.). Synchronisation of the electricity networks of the Baltic States with the continental European System by 2025 is under way.

### JELGAVA CITY'S "GREEN HEAT"

The energy company Fortum Jelgava, established in 2008, restructured the city's heat network by replacing the gas boiler station with a new biomass cogeneration station that uses wood chips, an ecologically clean fuel. The station directly employs approx. 30 workers, and it contributes to the generation of approx. 300 related jobs in the fuel supply chain and in other services. Reconstruction of the heating lines was carried out to reduce heat loss, and a connection line was installed under the Lielupe River to link both banks. As a result, the city's district heating system has almost completely switched from fossil fuels to the locally-sourced renewable resource of wood.

Source: Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments

As of 3 April 2017, the Latvian natural gas market is open to competition. This provides market participants access to both new natural gas sources and a more diverse range of products

and services via Latvia's gas infrastructure, positively affecting the competitiveness of Latvian energy consumers. The establishment of a regional gas market is being promoted, which will reduce future energy costs for consumers. The Energy Efficiency Law and relevant regulations on energy efficiency came into force in 2016, stipulating that large energy consumers, big cities, counties, and state institutions must implement energy efficiency plans. An Energy Efficiency Obligation Scheme has been introduced for energy retail merchants, and voluntary agreements with heat supply companies have been made to ensure progress towards reaching national energy efficiency targets by 2020. The granting of support for increasing energy efficiency and using renewable energy sources began in 2016-2017.

Hydroelectric station on the Daugava river.  
Photo: Edijs Volcoks / Shutterstock.com



## SDG 8

# Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Latvian GDP growth averaged 2% annually between 2013 and 2016. In 2017, improvements in the external environment, growth in EU fund disbursements, lending and wage levels accelerated the growth rate to 4.5%. Manufacturing is developing rapidly, export and private consumption are steadily growing, and investments have accelerated again. As a result of strong domestic and external market demand, high production capacity and low interest rates, private investment is expected to support economic growth.

Macroeconomic imbalances have been to a large extent eliminated, and economic vulnerability risks have been significantly reduced. Macroeconomic stability is maintained by a low national debt, an almost balanced budget and a stable balance of payments. Inflation is driven mainly by supply side factors.

The share of the economically active population and employment levels has reached historic highs. The unemployment rate has fallen to 8.9% (in 2017 - 7.9% for women, 9.9% for men). Changes in employment and unemployment rates are in part due to labour market improvements but

are also a result of a decreasing population driven by low birth rates and emigration.

Low labour costs are still a dominant factor in Latvia's competitiveness. If the current situation remains unchanged, economic growth will average 2-3% per annum in the medium term. Future wage convergence with other EU member states will adversely impact sectors that have benefitted from low labour costs. Unless the economy converges toward innovation and high value-added industries, it risks falling into a middle-income trap. Therefore, increasing competitiveness based on knowledge and innovation is a government priority.

Although a decrease in the available labour force leads to wage pressures and affects competitiveness in external markets, wage increases create decent work that can reduce emigration. In 2017, the Law on Immigration was amended to attract highly qualified specialists in certain professions. In 2019, a system for pre-empting skills mismatches in the labour market will be introduced to ensure more timely and coherent cooperation between national institutions and non-governmental or-

ganizations in predicting changes in the labour market and implementing necessary reforms.

The global financial crisis that began 10 years ago clearly showed that there is no future for an economic model in Latvia that relies on a significant inflow of foreign capital and rapidly growing domestic demand. Lessons have been learned from the previous development cycle, and Latvia's primary focus is on productivity-based competitiveness.

The government aims to increase productivity, exports and improve the quality of life of employees in manufacturing and services. To do so, it supports production modernization processes in export-oriented companies, training for employees on innovation, clusters for businesses, research, education and knowledge transfer organizations, as well as competence centres for research and industry cooperation.

The new tax system incentivises foreign and local capital investment. Tax rebates are offered to companies operating in special economic zones and free ports, and the corporate income tax rate is 20%, paid only when dividends are paid to owners. A reduced corporate income tax rate is retained for investments approved by the Cabinet and submitted by December 31, 2017.

ALTUM – the dedicated national development finance institution, has been set up to provide financial support for: business development, start-ups, new product development for manufacturers and exporters. It manages credit guarantees, co-financing of loans (incl. mezzanine instrument), start-up and micro loans, accelerated funds and venture capital.

The Law on Aid for Start-up Companies (2017) was adopted by the Parliament and state support programmes have been set up to foster

strong business growth. Currently, there are 320 financial technology, IT, robotics, analytics, transport, and other start-ups in Latvia which have attracted investments of approximately 210 million euro.

SDG 8 calls for decent work for all. One of the fundamental building blocks of decent work is the opportunity to receive sufficient income. The government has gradually raised the minimum wage each year since 2013 (285 EUR) to 2018 (430 EUR). The tax reform implemented from 2018 is designed to reduce labour taxes, increase income for low-income workers, and increase legal employment. Progressive personal income tax rates – 20%, 23%, 31.4%, depend on the income level of the particular person. The standard tax deduction (including for retired persons) will continue and will be increased annually.

As described in the sections SDG 1 and SDG 8, since the economic recovery began (after the crisis that led to high unemployment and emigration), the employment rate has increased (in 2017 for 20-64 olds: 72.7% for women, 77.0% for men). This is partly due to active labour-market policies supporting employability, especially of the long-term unemployed, those 50 years and older, prisoner inmates and those who have completed their sentences. These programmes are being constantly improved. In 2016, 24.9% of persons with disabilities were registered as employed.

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## **SOCIAL PARTNERS FOR DECENT WORK**

In 2017, Latvia's social partners – the Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia and the Employers' Confederation of Latvia – began to draft collective agreements in the following

five sectors – the timber industry, the chemical industry and its allied industries, construction, transport and logistics, and telecommunications and communications. Collective agreements are recognized by the International Labour Organizations as a tool to promote decent work within relevant sectors and at the national level as a whole.

Source: Corporate Social Responsibility Latvia

## READY TO RETURN

To facilitate the return to Latvia of people who emigrated during the economic crisis, a national Return Migration Plan 2013-2016 instituted mechanisms for information on the labour market, language learning opportunities, acclimatisation of schoolchildren to the classroom, etc. Now that the economy is improving and return migration is on the increase, a pilot project has been launched – a dedicated coordinator in each region of Latvia provides necessary practical

assistance to people ready to return.

YourMove.lv, a job and information website for those who want to return to Latvia has been created by people who themselves have returned from working abroad. Your Move promotes job opportunities and provides information on state and local government services and everyday life in Latvia. 40 leading Latvian employers have joined the website to find potential employees with global experience – all of whom are ready to provide adequate remuneration for the experienced returnees.

Source: Centre for Demographic Affairs, YourMove

Draugiem Group Riga Headquarters  
Photo: Lauris Viksne, F64



## SDG 9

## Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Latvia's long term regional policy is designed to strengthen international competitiveness by promoting the capital city Riga as Northern European metropolis and strengthening the international presence of other Latvian cities. The transformation to a more productive economy concentrates resources around the capital city and regional development centres. This will ultimately enhance development throughout the country. "Intelligent shrinking" measures are especially important to ensure an efficient and rational settlement structure with sustainable infrastructure in areas of low and decreasing population density. This requires meticulous calculations of revenues, expenditures and social gains for different scenarios.

The entrepreneur is at the epicentre of Latvia's transition to the knowledge economy. This person takes the decision to invest in research, development and innovation, modernize manufacturing processes or transfer resources to another industry/region/country. Latvia's policy aims to reduce the transition costs to the new economy by providing high-quality public services, support for start-ups. Latvia is

also supporting R&D investments in environmentally friendly, resource efficient technological development and manufacturing and the modernization of manufacturing processes and availability of infrastructure.

An essential prerequisite for innovation-driven economic growth is strong investment and stable GDP growth. At present, domestic investment is concentrated in infrastructure and housing construction. These sectors were affected by the crisis and the slow post-crisis recovery, which has reduced the total level of investment in the country. Investment in equipment and intellectual property is currently low. In response to data suggesting that the research & innovation capacity of Latvian companies must be improved to ensure long-term growth, support to innovation is playing an increasing role in policy planning and investment promotion.

A determinant of economic growth is the legal protection of intellectual property rights on innovations. In recent years, the Latvian Patent Office has simplified the patent application procedure and reduced application

processing times. Latvia also established an Intellectual Property Information Centre in 2017. A national pilot project provided patent applicants in Latvia free of charge patent search services by international experts. One quarter of the searches showed positive results.

The mandate of the Latvian Investment and Development Agency was expanded in April 2016. The agency actively promotes the competitiveness of local enterprises, supports exporters and helps Latvian businesses attract investment. More recently the agency has supported knowledge and technology transfers. It now also implements national innovation and technology development policy. The agency, in co-operation with the Ministry of Economics, is currently creating Latvia's start-up ecosystem.

Rail Baltica is a rail infrastructure project which will improve passenger and freight rail connections between Central and Northern Europe by linking Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland to the rest of the EU. It showcases EU transport policy by contributing to the decarbonisation of transport, providing passengers with sustainable high-speed mobility and offering new rail freight opportunities throughout the Baltic region. When completed, Rail Baltica will provide multimodal logistics and a platform for digital innovation.

To alleviate the recent decrease in international freight volumes, Latvia is attracting freight from new markets in Central Asia, China, Belarus and other countries. This, in concert with rational, long-term investments in the railway, road and border crossing infrastructure, will improve the competitiveness of Latvia's transit industry.

Riga Airport's role as an aviation connection hub continues to grow. In 2017, passenger numbers reached 6.1 million due to excellent

relations between the facility, existing and new airline companies. The airport is a regional central hub for the three Baltic States. It is essential for Latvia's international accessibility and contributes to various sectors of the economy.

Unfortunately, many of Latvia's regional roads of different pavement types are in poor condition. In 2017, 24.3 % of black pavement roads needed repair. Maintenance of local roads has been insufficient due to a lack of funding. At the same time, under normal driving conditions, 98% of the population can travel from their homes to one of 29 regional centres within 40 minutes or less.

Demand for public transport, including railway passenger services, has been declining, while the use of less environmentally friendly transport has been increasing. Solutions must be found to balance public transport costs with public benefit in less densely populated areas requiring higher subsidies. Next steps include re-evaluating the national road network, public transport services and availability of other services, and recalibrating them to the population structure, taking into account people's mobility. Changes require setting a minimum efficiency threshold for services and infrastructure.

The Latvian government has actively partnered with business and scientific communities to increase productivity. Latvia has introduced unified and centralized IT infrastructure and e-governance for simple, secure and fast public services. This digital environment creates the preconditions for Latvia to become a Northern European economic magnet. The next steps include capitalising on our digital comparative advantage by harnessing the potential of the business and scientific communities to create demand for Latvia's products and services.

## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND USER-SPECIFIC MACHINE LEARNING

Artificial intelligence (AI) and user-specific machine learning has been evolving in Latvia since the 1970's. There is a strong scientific research base in these fields at Latvia's two largest universities - Riga Technical University and the University of Latvia. Artificial intelligence and user-specific machine learning are most advanced in the following areas:

- a) Machine translation - Tilde is a recognized European player and a Microsoft Bing translation partner
- b) Biometrics - Squalio Cloud Consulting has developed an artificial intelligence-based traffic flow management system. Primary applications: traffic safety, national security and mobility solutions
- c) Medicine - AI and user-specific machine learning for medical smart devices (Institute of Electronics and Computer Science), genetic engineering (University of Latvia)
- d) Machine vision in transport, manufacturing and other sectors – (Squalio Cloud Consulting for transport and manufacturing, Kleintech Software for transport)
- e) Chatbots - integrated language technologies, such as speech recognition for customer service, both in the private and public sectors (Tilde chatbot solutions)
- f) Fraud detection solutions - (ABC Software)
- g) Robotic solutions for national security - (Riga Technical University).

Source: Cross Sectoral Coordination Centre, Ministry of Economics

## 5G IS HERE!

In 2017, one of the first 5G technology mobile base stations in Europe was set up in Latvia. This technology, which will help to automate complex tasks, is a driving force behind the fourth industrial revolution. Latvia ranks second among the OECD countries in mobile data usage and fifth in Internet speed.

Source: Ministry of Environment

## FROM BIRCH BARK TO BETULIN

The Latvian plywood industry is looking for innovative ways to use the industrial remnant - birch bark - which is currently simply being burnt. A company, MNKC, in cooperation with the Latvian plywood manufacturer Latvijas Finieris are using a Latvian competence centre to pilot equipment for industrial extraction of the birch bark extract betulin for use in the cosmetics industry. The next step is to scale up production and expand the use of extra pure betulin in pharmaceuticals, in the chemical synthesis of various new compounds.

Source: Ministry of Economics



Photo: © Tilde.

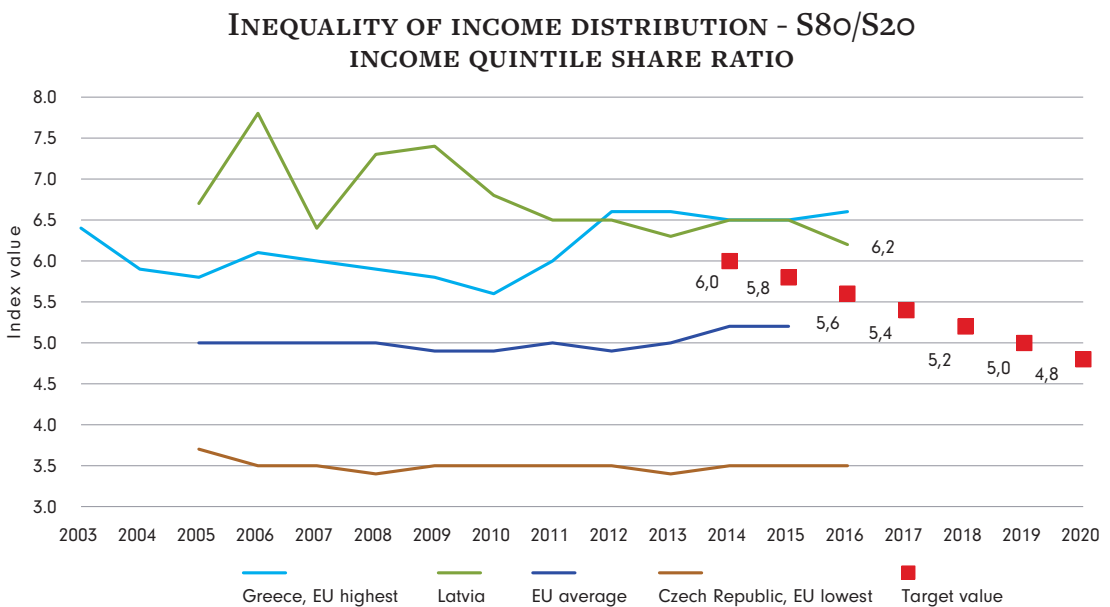
# SDG 10

## Reduce inequality within and among countries

Goals for reducing inequality are broadly defined in Latvian and EU long-term policy. Latvia 2030 states that, as the GDP increases, the goal is to reduce social and income inequality, ensure social inclusion, reduce poverty risks, and promote the evolution of a socially and economically stable middle class. The Europe 2020 Strategy and EU Cohesion Policy concentrate on reducing social, economic and territorial disparities between and within European countries.

Latvia's Competitiveness Assessment in 2011 concluded that "High inequality negatively

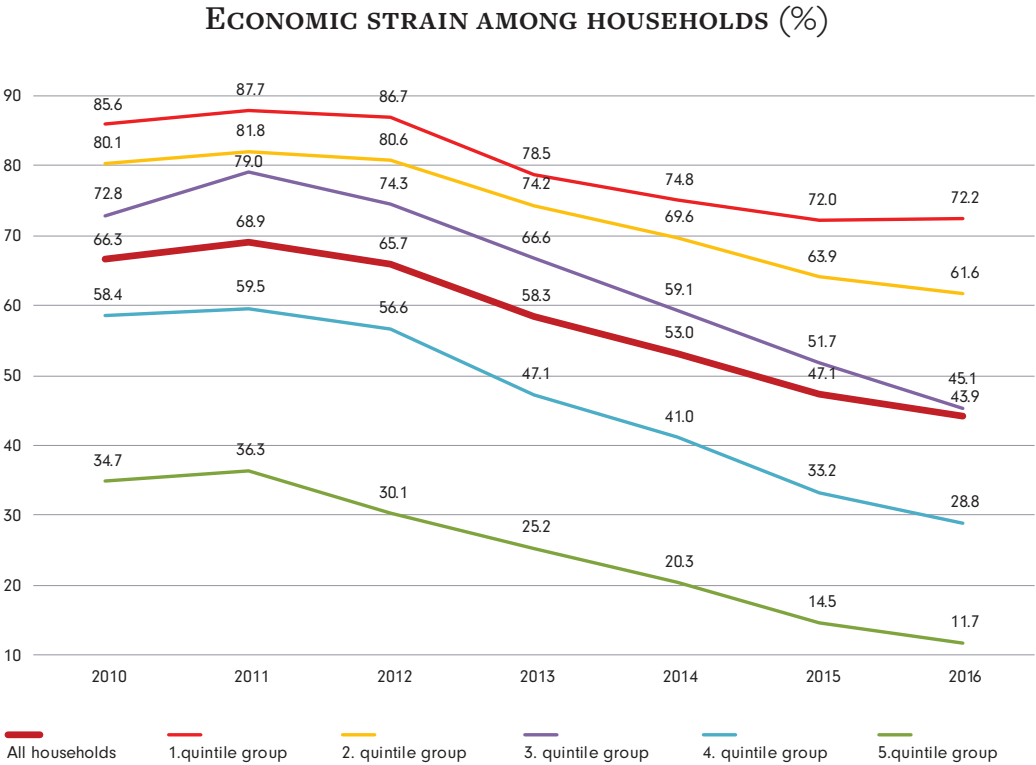
affects productivity and thus competitiveness. Given the current wealth level, the country's inability to reduce inequality and ensure a higher standard of living for a larger segment of society is a sign of low competitiveness." In response to these conclusions, the government set reducing income inequality as one of the top three medium-term macro goals. The target is ambitious - to reduce inequality between 80% of lower-income population (S80) and 20% of the population with the highest incomes (S20), rapidly bringing the S80/S20 income quintile share ratio to the EU



average. The mid-term assessment shows that, although income inequality has fallen in recent years, the NDP2020 target will not be achieved. The Gini Index, the inequality measure used in Latvia 2030, has also not changed significantly – it still remains one of the highest in the EU.

Household economic strain in society gradually began to decrease in 2010, toward the end

of the economic crisis. Although the situation is improving, the drop in economic tension is relatively smaller for the 40% of people with the lowest incomes, i.e. in 1st and 2nd quintile groups. In 2016 less than half of the respondents in the 3rd, or middle, income quintile households reported not experiencing economic strain.



Source: Central Statistical Bureau

Economic strain is determined by asking respondents in all five household income quintiles (1st quintile being 20% of households with lowest income and 5th quintile being 20% of households with the highest incomes) to assess their household's ability to cover utility costs, rent and credit payments, keep the dwelling warm, cover unexpected expenses from their own resource, have a meal with meat, chicken or fish or equivalent vegetarian meal every second day and take one week annual holiday away from home. Households which give a negative answer to at least two questions are considered to be subjected to economic strain.

As already mentioned in the analysis of SDG 1 and SDG 8, employment is a key factor for improving people's lives. The employment rate increased during the economic recovery, boosted by labour market inclusion programmes that have enhanced opportunities for youth, people over the age of 50, the long-term unemployed and persons having served prison sentences. Persons with disabilities are provided government funded assistant services to access educational institutions and/or work places. A pilot project has been launched to support the newly legislated social entrepreneurship system, and from 2018 businesses qualifying for the status of social entrepreneur may receive support for inclusion initiatives.

Although one of the goals of the comprehensive tax reform in effect from 2018 is to decrease income inequality through progressive income tax on labour, the result of the totality of reforms on inequality is still to be seen. The changes in the tax system, coupled with an increase in the minimum wage are expected to decrease the shadow economy by causing a drop in the number recipients receiving low official wages and fictitious minimum wages. Given that more than 20 % of the workforce reports receiving minimum wage or less (CSB data), reported income inequality is expected to decrease. On the individual level, this will reduce the risk of being excluded from receiving social benefits, an important aspect of decent work.

On the macro level, a relatively small percentage of the GDP is channelled to social protection. Changes in the corporate income tax will promote business activity, hence competitiveness. However, the changes may lower tax revenues against the GDP, which, if they were

higher, could be effectively redistributed to persons with insufficient income from paid employment, such as people with disabilities, the elderly, etc.

Inequality undermines people's ability not only to generate income, but also to save, acquire property and other assets, and avoid excessive credit liabilities. A lack of personal resources was one of the main reasons for high emigration during the crisis period and is significant to this today. Although the banking sector educates different target groups on financial literacy, according to the Latvian Association of Borrowers, non-bank creditors are issuing "quick loans" (as payday loans are called in Latvia) that are being taken without any second thought. Studies show that payday loans are mostly used by individuals from the lowest income groups, most likely because they need money and do not qualify for bank loans.

In the long run, income inequality will be affected by access to public services that provide opportunities for people to develop, such as of high-quality, inclusive education and good health care services. Latvia is introducing a compulsory health insurance from 2019 that must be monitored carefully to ensure that it does not pose risks for certain groups. Although all citizens will continue to be entitled to basic health care services, in the future a full basket of services funded by the government will be available to socially insured persons and those who make voluntary health insurance contributions. The full service basket also will be available to certain vulnerable groups: children up to age of 18, orphans and children without parental care up to the age of 24, pupils and students, persons with disability groups I and II, the unemployed, etc.

To increase social inclusion, state and local government institutions are facilitating the transition of adults with mental disabilities and children without parental care from institutional care to community-based services. In 2017-2018, a wide spread social movement is underway to prevent the placement of children without parental care into state social care centres by having families take them in and provide personal attention and love.

For information on inequality between countries, see the section on SDG 17.

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### PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE

Education is one of the main tools for reducing inequality. Vitols Fund grants scholarships to secondary school graduates from rural areas whose family circumstances affect their chances to study at higher education institutions. The fund was founded by Vilis Vitols, a former refugee and businessperson who returned to

Latvia. Donors include many people who have experienced refugee hardships as well as persons having started businesses since Latvia re-established independence. Both of these groups know the difference that the right kind of support can make in improving lives. Astrida Jansone, one of the contributors, wrote a book on the not-so-easy lives of the donors to inspire those living in better times to give.

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Source: Cross Sectoral Coordination Centre

Astrida Jansone signing books.  
Photo: Personal archive.



## SDG 11

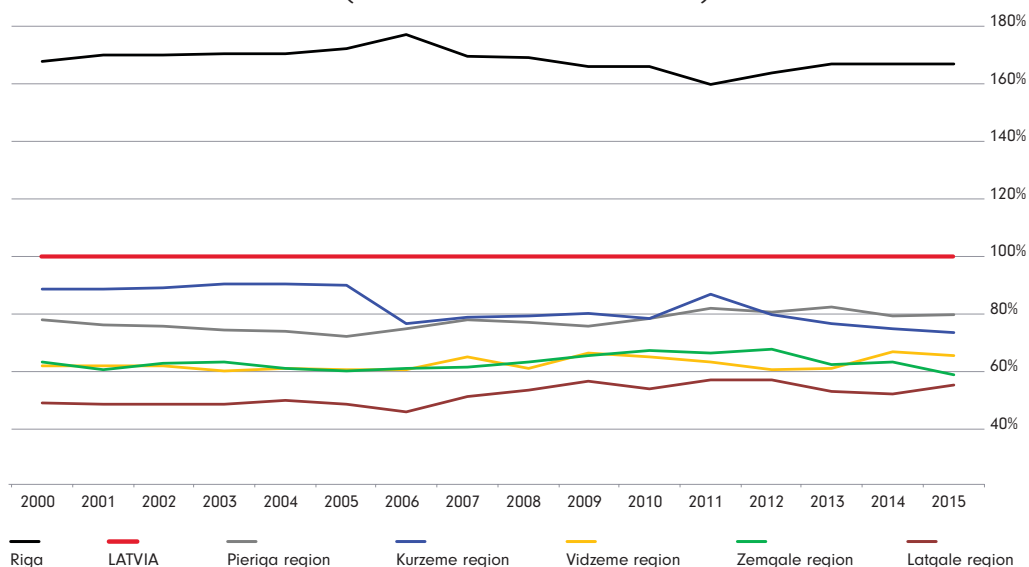
# Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

It is important for people in Latvia to be attracted not only to the cities, but also to small towns and rural areas. For this reason, planning and management of spatial development are defined in Latvia's highest long-term and medium-term national development planning documents, Latvia 2030 and NDP2020. In this context, global economic processes are not only national and transnational, they create new complex relationships between global and local space, affecting the regions within

the country and local levels.

Latvia faces two major challenges regarding SDG 11: depopulation and economic inequality. Economic inequality between Latvia's regions is reflected in the differences in GDP per capita. GDP per capita is three times higher in Riga, than the Latgale region in eastern Latvia. In 2014, Latvia showed the second worst result among EU member states in dispersion of regional GDP per capita (44.0%, Eurostat data).

**REGIONAL GDP PER CAPITA IN REGIONS**  
(LATVIA AVERAGE = 100%)



Due to uneven economic development, a low birth rate and emigration, Latvia currently is experiencing a demographic downturn. People move from less populated regions to the cities, including Riga or abroad in search of better jobs. At the beginning of 2017, Latvian had a population of 1.95 million, a decrease of 27% from 1989. The UN 2017 population projections forecast that Latvia will be one of 10 countries (or areas) with a population decline of at least 15% by 2050. Emigration of the working age population contributes to the aging of society remaining in Latvia. At the beginning of 2017, only 62% of the Latvian population was of working age (15-64 years). Depopulation poses a twofold challenge for local governments of rural areas: long-term erosion of their tax base and constantly rising costs of health and social care services for older persons.

Latvia envisions solving these challenges by improving the economic potential of regions and modernizing service provision. Latvia focuses on a polycentric development model of 9 urban municipalities as national development centres, and 21 largest towns as national regional development centres that can offer an alternative to emigration by concentrating important economic resources and services for communities.

In this development model, cooperation between small and medium-sized cities and towns, and cities and rural areas is essential for creating functional interconnections, developing high-quality transport and communications infrastructure and new types of public service delivery adopted to the changing population density. Well-planned “intelligent shrinking” (rather than haphazard population outflow) can bring positive changes to the quality of life, while optimizing the service networks.

At the same time, the government must cre-

ate a sustainable support system to provide access to quality and affordable housing in regions so that housing expenditure does not exceed 30% of household income. Due to low purchasing power, there is little private investment in quality rental housing. The lack of affordable rental apartments impacts new job creation outside the capital city of Riga and its adjacent municipalities. Disappointment with available housing and high housing costs are also important reasons for emigration.

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## ON DEMAND TRANSPORT

It is possible to prevent situations when public transport is not available in areas with low population density by providing on-demand transport. There are plans to make transport available on request on parts or even whole public transport routes, providing that the passenger has purchased a ticket or has pre-registered. A pilot project has been launched in Aluksne and Mazsala to test demand-driven bus runs and/or passenger cars to increase access for more distant rural households.

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Source: Ministry of Transport

Two thirds of the Latvian economy is concentrated in and around the capital city Riga, which, on its own, will not be able to provide for the socio-economic needs of the rest country. For this reason, Latvia is using EU Funds to promote the economic development of regions with the goal of creating 5,000 new jobs by 2023 and attracting 300 million euro worth of non-financial investment.

Because smaller cities lack the manpower, skills and infrastructure to attract large-scale high-tech industry, big cities will continue to specialize in high value-added services. At least four-

fifths of services like IT, finance and commercial services are in Riga and its vicinity. Production of various components for equipment, machinery and vehicles, and furniture for export has been steadily increasing throughout the country. Relative to their Asian counterparts, manufacturers in regional cities are well placed to capitalize on their manufacturing and design expertise, flexibility and Latvia's proximity to Western European markets.

To ensure service provision in areas where financial resources are limited and the population is decreasing, the government has developed a "service basket" model, which is used to determine different levels of service provision in culture, health, social services and education, depending on the type of territory and population size. In 2017, this was used as tool to restructure the school network and for designing social services for those persons leaving state long-term care facilities. A new challenge is the practical application of this model in public investment planning and value for money assessments of investment projects.

### SMART TECHNOLOGIES IN JELGAVA AND VALMIERA

Latvia's cities are getting smarter year by year. Here are two examples.

The city of Jelgava established a Municipal Operational Information Centre Public in 2016 to ensure safety, security, infrastructure monitoring and improvement of people's well-being. The centre provides: 1) immediate response in case of emergencies; 2) takes Jelgava citizens' complaints and suggestions 24/7; 3) monitors infrastructure 24/7 (street lighting, pumping houses, meteorological stations, streetlight and intelligent traffic control systems); 4) supports and coordinates the work of local government specialists and partners.

The city of Valmiera introduced smart lighting by installing LEDs in over 50% of city's public lighting fixtures. The system ensures more efficient use of electricity by actively adjusting light intensity as traffic and pedestrian activity changes.

Source: Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments

Latvia preserves its cultural heritage (Target 11.4) by restoring and reconstructing sites and opening new cultural infrastructure. People increasingly go to concerts, museums and theatres, and participate in amateur folk art groups. Between 2015 and 2017, the number of museums visits went up by 13%, reaching 3.7 million. As incomes increase, households spend more on culture and recreation.

### HISTORIC CENTRE OF RIGA - UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE

The Historic Centre of Riga is listed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. To maintain this status, the Riga Sustainable Development Strategy 2030 calls for the protection of the distinctive silhouette, and building regulations prevent new development projects from affecting the skyline.

Source: Ministry of Culture

Deeper societal understanding of culture and cultural heritage is promoted through the recognition and support of different regional cultures and dialects. This support fits into the broader objective of promoting regional and linguistic differences as a dimension of the national identity. Important religious buildings, i.e. churches, monasteries, chapels, etc, throughout the country will be conferred cultural monument status and be protected by a new Law on Financing Sacral Heritage (2018).



## SDG 12

## Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Moving towards a circular economy is one of the European Union's priorities. The European Commission adopted a Circular Economy Package in 2015 aimed at boosting Europe's transition towards a circular economy that will contribute to global competitiveness, sustainable economic growth and job creation. Latvia supports this trend and plans to take action at both the national and local level.

Existing unsustainable consumption patterns and production models contribute to a depletion of natural resources, environmental degradation, increased pollution, threatening ecosystems throughout the world. SDG 12 and its targets envision a transition from a linear economic growth model to a circular economy model.

Latvia 2030 and NDP2020 do not define a conceptual framework for the circular economy. However, sectoral planning documents partially set targets related to the circular economy, for instance, Environmental Policy Guidelines 2014-2020 target environmental quality, biodiversity and sustainable use of natural resources.

One way to promote the gradual transition to sustainable consumption and produc-

tion on the national level is by implementing Green Public Procurement (GPP). Latvia's regulatory framework stipulates that green public procurement is a process whereby public authorities seek to procure goods, services and works with a reduced environmental impact throughout their life cycle when compared to goods, services and works with the same primary function that would otherwise be procured. Green Public Procurement is mandated by the NDP2020, the Green Procurement Promotion Plan and the Public Procurement Law.

Each year EU member states, including Latvia, spend an average of one fifth of GDP on public procurement. Green Public Procurements in 2017 comprised 12 % of total public procurements in Latvia. The most significant GPPs are in road maintenance, building construction, transport, as well as food and catering services.

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### PROMOTING GREEN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

In recent years, Latvia has started training procurement specialists, supporting green procurement businesses and raising awareness of the practice. In order to dispel the

myth that environmentally friendlier products are more expensive, a product life cycle cost calculator has been made available to the public, allowing people to compare life cycle costs of different products, such as bulbs, computers, printers and enabling them to select the most economically advantageous offers (available at the website of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, and as a mobile app). Procurement specialists are aware of these guidelines and their applications, as well as examples of best practices. Recognition of eco-labels among consumers has been increasing, leading to more demand for environmentally friendly products.

Source: Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development

According to Eurostat, less per capita waste is generated in Latvia than in most other EU countries. Despite this, reducing waste generation has been high on the political agenda. An important component of sustainable consumption is waste recycling and re-use. In 2017, Latvia recycled less than 30% of household waste. A large share of biodegradable waste is disposed of in landfills. Sorted waste disposal systems are not available everywhere, households do not always pay for the quantity of waste generated and disposal data quality needs improving. In accordance with European Union standards, 65% of household waste in Latvia is to be prepared for reuse and recycling by 2035, and only 10% of household waste is to be disposed of in landfills.

Investments have been made to create pre-sorted waste collection systems to accelerate waste recycling, and reuse. At present,

87.9% of Latvia's population living in 99 local governments have access to pre-sorted waste collection systems. The goal is to make these systems available in all local governments. A second challenge is the handling of biodegradable waste (food waste, garden and park waste, paper/cardboard, wood and textiles), which accounts for approximately 40% of total household waste. Most of it is composted or buried in landfills. All waste landfills have separate composting areas, and local governments are actively setting up independent composting areas in their territories.

To reduce the volume of waste, a natural resource tax is levied on waste disposal and the sale or use of certain goods. The tax is imposed on hazardous goods such as tires, oils, oil filters, batteries, accumulators, electrical and electronic equipment, ozone-depleting substances, packaging, disposable tableware, and certain vehicles. Tax rates are differentiated, depending on the specific environmental impact of the types of goods and disposal management costs. The rates are designed to encourage people to reduce waste generation and to restrict the amount of waste in landfills. These "producers pay" efforts shift the responsibility to the producers to compensate for their environmental impact.

Latvia is currently assessing how to introduce the circular economy as a system in which the value of goods and materials is maintained for as long as possible, while waste generation and use of primary resources are reduced through industrial symbiosis and that result in lower costs. This approach should be a guiding principle in the planning of all policy documents from 2021.

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## FROM BY-PRODUCTS TO NEW PRODUCTS

In cooperation with food scientists from Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies and Riga Stradins University, some Latvian companies are creating innovative foods with high value added from industry by-products and food waste.

The dairy food processing company Smiltenes piens produces Latvia's first drink made from whey, called *Piena Spēks*. This natural energy drink contains three times the amount of protein found in regular milk. Less than one glass per day can provide an adult with the daily amount of lysine needed to absorb calcium.

The beer brewery *Valmiermuižas alus* produces cookies from brewer's spent grain, a by-product of the beer industry that is full of healthy fibre. Currently the brewing industry, in cooperation with researchers, is also developing other products from spent grain, malt residue, and sediment (or dregs).

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Source: Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development

Ensuring policy coherence for sustainable production and consumption remains a future challenge. Regulations on the production, use, and disposal of goods, secondary raw materials, chemicals and energy resources need to be harmonized. On the road to the circular economy, policy must avoid imposing disproportionate short-term burdens and costs on business and consumers. Investments made in recent years have to be taken into account, and their efficiency must be ensured. The circular economy must be viewed as a system in its entirety, rather than a patchwork of measures, each developed independently.

As in all countries, Latvia's sustainable consumption and production challenges lie in achieving consensus among different stakeholders with competing goals. Reconciling environmental protection goals with other priorities and mutual concessions will be needed to promote economic growth and employment without depleting natural resources and the environment and while preventing and mitigating the effects of climate change. Only close cooperation can make this possible. Latvia plans to solve these challenges by working towards the circular economy and bioeconomy.

## SDG 13

# Take urgent actions to combat climate change and its impacts

Climate change issues, including the reduction of Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and the removal of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), are a focus of the EU and also very important to Latvia. Latvia has ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Paris Agreement, the Kyoto Protocol and the Doha amendment to the Kyoto Protocol. Latvia's Sustainable Development Strategy Latvia 2030 states, "Latvia - our home - green and smart, creative and accessible from anywhere in the world - our responsibility in the name of future generations."

In 2015, approximately 11.32 Mt CO<sub>2</sub> eqv were generated (approx. 6t CO<sub>2</sub> eqv per person) in Latvia. Latvia's goal is to restrict or stabilise the total GHG emissions generated on a national level, and by 2020 to have emissions at a level that does not exceed 12.16 Mt CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent.

EU Climate policy is binding for Latvia as an EU member state. By the year 2050, the EU has committed to reduce total member state GHG emissions by at least 80-95% as compared to 1990 levels, based on the reductions required for the developed country group by the Intergovernmental Climate Change Council. EU legislation stipulates that by 2020, Latvia must limit its increase of GHG emissions to 17%, and by 2030, its GHG emissions must be 6% less than

the levels emitted in 2005. Both leading up to 2020 and after, Latvia must ensure that its forest management leads to the annual removal of CO<sub>2</sub> amounts as specified (i.e. the forest management CO<sub>2</sub> balance goal), and that deforestation is balanced with afforestation. In addition, in the period leading up to 2030, the total GHG emissions generated in the land sector (LULUCF - land use, land use change and forestry) must be offset by CO<sub>2</sub> removal.

In order to meet these climate policy goals, Latvia's economic strategy must be restructured. Unlike most other EU countries, where GHG emissions have decreased in recent years, Latvia's lowest point of GHG emissions was in the 1990s, and since 2005 there has been an overall increase.

Latvia is projected to meet the GHG emissions reduction goals set for 2020. In 2016, Latvia's installations participating in the EU Emission Trading System (ETS) produced ~20% of Latvia's total GHG emissions. Compared to 2005 levels, by 2016 Latvia's installations participating in the EU ETS had cut their GHG emissions by 23%. Total GHG emissions for non-ETS installations, however, have increased by 4.87% in the period 2005-2016. The largest emission producers in Latvia are stationary combustion installa-

tions (the power sector) and the transport and agricultural sectors; subsequently, these sectors require the most changes. However, it is important to not perceive emission restriction measures as a burden on the economy, but rather as an opportunity for development. To reduce emissions, resource consumption must be optimised through maximising the use of local resources and implementing other similar efforts, all of which are actions that would aid in improving competitiveness and development as well. In addition, it is important to note that existing policies and measures in Latvia ensure neither the achievement of the target for forest management, nor the requirement for balancing afforestation and deforestation. However, the actual assessment of the achievement of the target for second commitment period 2013-2020 will only take place in the end of the commitment period (in 2022), and the situation may change.

Latvia's long-term vision for climate change prevention measures will be largely influenced by Latvia's low-carbon development strategy for 2050, which is currently being prepared. Short and medium-term measures will be determined by national energy and climate plans, the first of which will be finalised in 2018-2019 for the period 2021-2030.

### **LATVIA IMPLEMENTS THE CLIMATE CHANGE FINANCIAL INSTRUMENT**

In order to prevent global climate change, foster adaptation to the effects of climate change and contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, the Climate Change Financial Instrument (CCFI) was established in Latvia, and it was active from 2009 till 2015. Within the framework of the CCFI, more than 2600 projects have been implemented with total amount of

CCFI co-financing of almost 200 million EUR. At present GHG reduction from projects financed by the CCFI is being monitored. In turn, support for the new projects takes place through The Auctioning Instrument of Emission Allowances (AIEA). Within the framework of the AIEA, in 2016 two open project open calls were organized and 16 projects were launched to improve building energy performance. Both the CCFI and the AIEA are programmes fully funded by the state from the sale of GHG emission units.

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Source: Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development

Latvia's current contribution to financing the goal of 100 billion USD to support climate measures in developing countries is in line with Latvia's limited budget possibilities. In the future, options for providing financial assistance to developing countries for solving climate change issues, either bilaterally or via contributions into different funds, will be considered. From 2011 to 2017, Latvia invested EUR 480 336 of climate financing into developing countries, including those undergoing transition to a market economy. Latvia's investment goals: a contribution of EUR 350 000 to the Green Climate Fund, which was met in December 2014; a contribution of EUR 85 000 to the Eastern European Energy Efficiency and Environmental Partnership Fund (channelled to energy efficiency projects in Ukraine); EUR 45 336 were used for separate bilateral cooperation projects in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Uzbekistan.

Since climate change is taking place in real time, in addition to restricting GHG emissions, Latvia is paying an increasing amount of attention to climate resilience. Issues relating to climate change adaptation are being integrated

into civil protection, health, agriculture, forestry, land use, and other policies. In 2016, work was begun on creating a strategy, effective through 2030, for Latvia's adaptation to climate change. It will be the first document having long-term guidelines for implementing effective policies and measures to reduce the negative impacts and risks of climate change upon vulnerable groups and individuals (i.e. to promote their resilience). The strategy is expected to be approved by the end of 2018.

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### CLIMATE MONITORING

An extensive and detailed analysis of Latvia's historical climatic data has been carried out. It included data recorded at all accessible meteorological observation stations over the last 50 years (1961-2010). In addition, in co-operation with the Finnish Meteorological Institute, high-detail future climate change forecasts based on moderate and high greenhouse gas emission scenarios have been calculated for Latvia up to the year 2100. An interactive climate-change tool has been developed to raise public awareness of climate change events expected in the territory of Latvia. The information is freely downloadable and can be used for future climate-change research (<http://www2.meteo.lv/klimatariks/>).

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Source: Ministry of Environmental  
Protection and Regional Development

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### ELECTRIC TRANSPORT

Latvia has started building electric vehicle charging stations throughout the country to decrease dependence on fossil fuels. As of 2016, the automobile and motorcycle taxes are tied to CO<sub>2</sub> emission. Vehicles with low emissions (<50g/km) are tax exempt. In Latvia, fuel excise tax and natural resources taxes exist for many

years. Other mechanisms to support environment-friendly transport have been introduced, such as free parking for electric cars and permission to use public transport lanes. In 2017, the government approved The Alternative Fuel Development Plan 2017-2020 to promote the use of compressed or liquefied natural gas, hydrogen, biofuels, and electricity in transport.

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Source: Ministry of Transport

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### GREEN BONDS

In June 2015, the electric utility company Latvenergo became the first state-owned company in Eastern Europe to issue green bonds. These were worth 75 million euro, and the programme closed with the issuing of 25 million euro in bonds in April 2016. The emissions programme received the highest assessment from the independent research institute CICERO, i.e. the dark green grade, which indicates that a project reflects a long-term vision of a low-carbon and climate-resilient future, as well as good corporate governance and transparency.

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Source: Latvenergo

## SDG 14

## Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

The Baltic Sea is a partly enclosed European inland sea. It is one of the largest brackish water basins in the world, and has been severely affected by many natural and anthropogenic factors. The coastline is about 8000 km long, and borders several countries: Germany, Sweden, Finland, Poland, Lithuania, Russia, Estonia, Denmark and Latvia. The sea's catchment basin is about four times larger than the sea itself and covers the territories of 14 countries. Latvia's marine waters (both territorial sea and EEZ) constitute 7.7% of the total Baltic Sea area. The length of the Baltic Sea coastline in Latvia is 496 km, 308 km of which border the Gulf of Riga. National, international and European Union regulations stipulate that the Baltic Sea's coastline is a protected zone.

The latest Baltic Sea regional environmental assessment (2017) concluded that more than 95% of the Baltic Sea is being exposed to the effects of nitrogen and phosphorus pollution (eutrophication), thereby remaining the area's primary problem. Hazardous substance contamination is also a cause for concern.

Climate change poses two further challenges. Firstly, expected warmer and moister winters will increase wintertime river runoff and, due to unfrozen topsoil, the nutrients upon

which vegetation depends will be increasingly leached from the soil. Secondly, higher seawater temperatures create better conditions for the flowering of algae and prolonged algae growth periods, thus contributing to eutrophication. However, in Latvia's case, the total load on the Gulf of Riga and the Baltic Sea is affected by the cross-border transfer of pollutants from other countries located in the catchment area of rivers that flow through Latvia. Hazardous substance pollution trends show overall improvement.

On an international level, Latvia is a member state of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) (since 10 December 1982), as well as a party to both the UN Convention on Biological Diversity of 1992 and the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973 (MARPOL) and its Protocol from 1978 (as amended). Latvia is also a party to the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area, 1992 (Helsinki Convention). The Helsinki Convention provides the fundamental basis for international legal cooperation between the Baltic Sea coastal states for the prevention of marine pollution. At a national level, in 2016 the Programme for Achieving Good Marine Environmental Status 2016-2020 was adopted to define the measures

for achieving and preserving a good marine environmental status of the maritime waters under Latvia's jurisdiction. These measures will have a positive impact on the economic growth of coastal areas. Consequently, the recreational value of the coastal areas will also increase, which is a benefit to the population's health and well-being.

Currently the most significant measures for improving the status of the marine environment, and for reducing the pollution load from land sources, are those included in the 2016-2021 management plans for Latvia's largest rivers: the Daugava, Gauja, Lielupe and Venta rivers. Their implementation would have a significant positive impact, especially regarding the lessening of eutrophication.

Latvia has developed a National Preparedness Plan for dealing with marine pollution incidents involving oil and other hazardous and noxious substances. Procedures set out in the plan comply with the Helsinki Convention and its recommendations on rules and procedures regarding international cooperation.

In the parts of the sea designated as Latvia's territorial waters, there are seven protected marine areas set up for the purpose of conserving specially protected biotopes and species' habitats as well as the feeding and wintering sites for important migratory birds. In total, the protected areas amount to 436 468 ha or 15% of the marine waters under Latvia's jurisdiction. These protected areas are part of the EU's Natura 2000 network.

In 2018, work continues on the Marine Spatial Plan pursuant to an ecosystem-based approach that respects the unified principles of the Baltic Sea Region as well as the characteristic features of the relevant marine ecosystem

and land areas that are functionally related to marine areas. The marine spatial plan will reduce the potentially negative impacts of future economic activities on the marine environment.

In Latvia 2030, the Baltic Sea's coastal areas are defined as "a space of national interest" in which economic development must be balanced with environmental protection requirements. In 2016, the government adopted the National Long-term Thematic Plan for Public Infrastructure Development of the Coastal Area through 2030, which focuses on one of the most important areas of economic development in the coastal area – tourism and recreation. With markedly attractive landscapes and great importance in terms of both cultural and natural heritage, the coastline is one of Latvia's most interesting destinations for foreign tourists.

Regarding sustainable use of fishery resources, coastal fishing is an important form of employment for the inhabitants of the Baltic Sea coastal areas and territories adjacent to the Gulf of Riga. Latvia is bound by the EU's annual fishing quotas in the Baltic Sea, which is why the fishing industry will have to undergo transformation in the future.

About 70% of the litter items in the Baltic Sea are plastic materials derived from human use, and this amount is increasing. This plastic poses the greatest threat to the environment and marine life. 80% of this waste comes from land-based sources, while 20% is sea-based. Latvia's coastal water situation is similar. Beach monitoring of sea-polluting waste is carried out annually using the methodology developed by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). It should be noted that Latvia has the largest number of monitored beaches (42) throughout the Baltic Sea Region.

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## THE BEST MEDICINE IS COOPERATION

The regional Baltic Sea Pharma Platform has been established to jointly address the polluting of the marine and aquatic environments with hazardous pharmaceutical substances. Latvia is participating in these activities to reduce the amounts of active pharmaceutical components being released into the environment.

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Source: Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development

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## MY SEA

Launched in 2012 by the NGO - Foundation for Environmental Education, the annual My Sea campaign involves a regular clean-up activity in conjunction with educational programmes for the public on keeping pollutants out of the Baltic Sea. In 2017, the project received the international National Energy Globe Award for its innovative approach to finding solutions and involving the public in reducing marine litter.

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Source: Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development



Lamprey fishing setup in the river Salaca.  
Photo: Mārtiņš Vānags.

# SDG 15

## Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Latvia's population density is relatively low, making Latvia one of the 'greenest' and least-urbanized EU member-states. Latvia's greatest natural resources are its soil, subterranean assets, water, and flora and fauna.

One of the goals of the National Development Plan is to "Maintain the country's natural resource capital as the basis for sustainable economic growth, and promote its sustainable use while minimising both natural and human-activity-caused risks to the quality of the environment".

In 1995 Latvia joined the Convention on Biological Diversity and accepted its objectives – the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of utilisation of genetic resources. Traditionally, Latvia's efforts in protecting the natural environment have mainly focused on the

protection of species and ecosystems, whereas the protection of genetic diversity is a relatively recent concept.

Latvia's forests cover 52% of the country's area. However, this definition of forests includes cleared forest land, young forest plantations, and afforested agricultural lands, as well as scrub, bogs, and forest infrastructure. The total forested area continues to increase both naturally and through the afforestation of areas that have poor soil quality or are non-arable. The total wood volume of these forests grows three times faster than the land area covered by forests. This metric indicates that Latvia's forest growth is not dependent on an increase in scrub but on targeted forestry activity. Over the last decade, about 12 million m<sup>3</sup> of timber has been harvested annually from Latvia's forests, which is less than annual natural growth. Currently, the forest sector is one of the cornerstones of the national

economy. In 2016, forestry, wood processing, and furniture manufacturing contributed 5.2% to the country's total GDP. Forestry sector exports totalled two billion euro, or 20% of total national export earnings. In Latvia, protected areas and areas with various economic activity restrictions make up 28% of the total forested area. All forestry management activities are prohibited in 3% of Latvia's forested areas.

28% of EU species and 11% of EU habitats in Latvia have a favourable conservation status. The conditions of the remaining EU species and habitats have been assessed as unfavourable to varying degrees. In order to improve the protection of species and habitats and to ensure that the necessary measures taken follow the same common principles, a common programme has been developed for the protection and management of Natura 2000 areas. Guidelines for managing all EU habitat groups and protection plans for 17 species are also being implemented. Latvia foresees that restrictions on economic activity in protected areas are compensated in full (100%).

Altogether there are 683 areas designated as Specially Protected Nature Territories. Protection plans have been developed for 42% of them, including the establishment of micro-reserves for the protection of species and habitats.

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## LAKE ECOSYSTEMS

The nature reserve Lake Liepaja is a NATURA 2000 protected area. It is one of Latvia's largest and most important mesotrophic lakes with vegetation species typical of brackish waters. To preserve the biodiversity of this lake, the municipal government of Liepaja works with experts in conducting lake management activities such as reducing lake plant overgrowth, mowing the reeds, and clearing the shoreline from overgrowing brush. By mitigating eutrophication, not only is the ecological status of the lake improved, but also the local population and visitors are provided with high-quality leisure and recreational opportunities.

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Source: Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments



SDG 16

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions

People and businesses thrive in places where the public administration and the judiciary system is efficient and just, and where members of society cooperate well with each other and are positively engaged with the state. Latvia's position has improved (even exceeding NDP2020 forecasts) in

terms of both the Global Competitiveness Index and the World Bank's GRICS (Governance Research Indicator Country Snapshot) that cover many indicators related to SDG 16. Still, Latvia aims to move its GRICS score closer to the EU average.

MAIN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORMS  
PLANNED THROUGH 2020



Source: State Chancellery

Reforms to modernise public administration began in 2017. Goals include introducing the ‘zero bureaucracy’ principle, eliminating excessive regulations and processes, improving services, decreasing the size of the public administration (in response to population decline), introducing performance assessments (which include customer satisfaction and employee engagement ratings) – through the use of new methods.

## OPEN GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES

Latvia's Third National Open Government Action Plan addresses Target 16.6 and Target 16.7. The plan specifies that in 2018 the State Chancellery in cooperation with the Council for Implementation of the Memorandum of Co-operation between Non-governmental Organisations and the Cabinet<sup>1</sup> will assess the current situation regarding regulations and practice of public participation in government decision making.

### LATVIA'S OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP NATIONAL ACTION PLAN 2017-2019

<p>Efficient public participation in decision-making</p> 	<p>Portal for drafting legal acts</p> 	<p>Transparency of decision-making process</p> 	<p>Open and efficient public procurement</p> 
<p>Moving towards “zero bureaucracy”</p> 	<p>Open Data Portal</p> 	<p>Efficient whistle-blowing mechanism</p> 	<p>Public sector values and ethics</p> 
<p>Transparency and accountability in governance of state-owned enterprises</p> 	<p>Transparency about enterprises and beneficiary ownership</p> 	<p>Accessible studies and data for evidence-based decision making and society needs</p> 	<p>Information on state budget spending and results</p> 

<sup>1</sup> Description of the Council for Implementation of the Memorandum of Co-operation between Non-governmental Organisations and the Cabinet activities as an OECD best practice (English): <http://www.oecd.org/gov/regulatory-policy/LTV-NGO-Council.pdf>

Source: Latvia's Third National Open Government Action Plan (in Latvian) <http://www.mk.gov.lv/sites/default/files/editor/atvertas-parvaldibas-plans2017.pdf>

They will also collect and disseminate information on innovative engagement methods and best practice for use in awareness raising activities in state institutions and local governments. Every year, the State Chancellery conducts a Public Administration Client Satisfaction Survey. Most people favourably view their experience with government institutions, according to data from the end of 2017. Respondents point out that staff is knowledgeable and professional, engaged, polite, and helpful. 42 % also say that over the last three years the public administration has simplified procedures for services to its citizens.

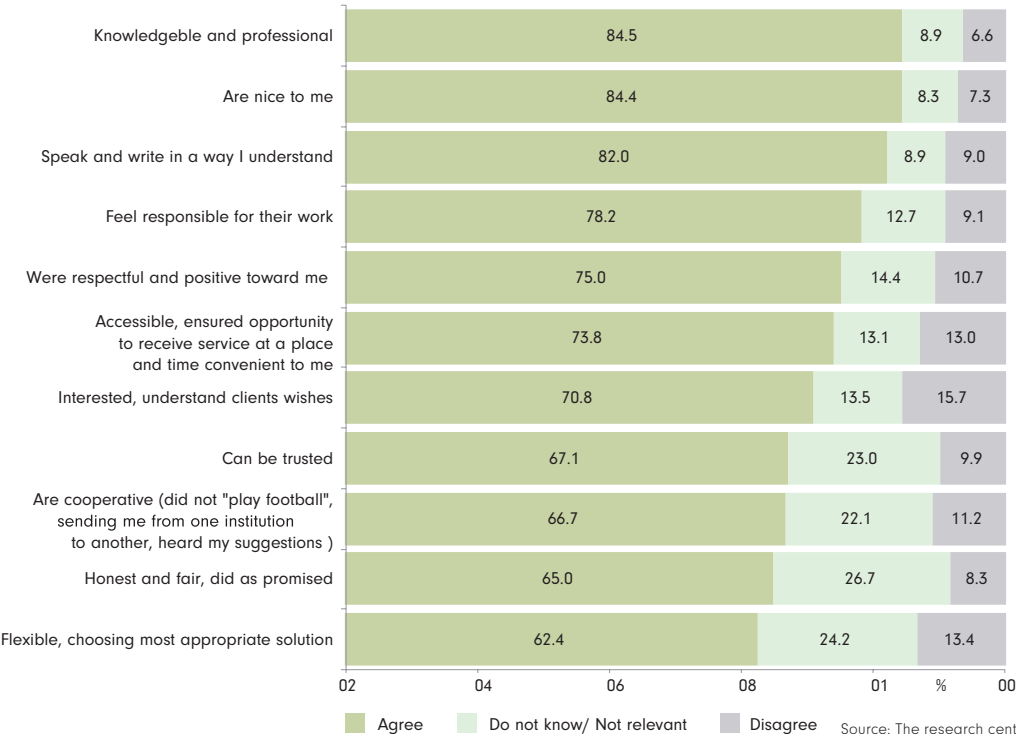
DIGITAL LATVIA

The e-Government portal *latvija.lv* ensures quick and convenient electronic access to over 500 services provided by Latvian government institutions and municipalities for residents and businesses, as well as practical information about life in Latvia. By 2017, the portal had been used by 40% of the country's population, as well as many entrepreneurs ready to do business in Latvia.

The Open Data Initiative *data.gov.lv* is constantly expanding to provide data from various economic sectors to anyone interested, thereby promoting both scientific research and the development of new products.

Source: Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION SATISFACTION SURVEY



The Latvian legal system is well developed. People are aware of their right to appeal court decisions in Latvia and at the European Court of Human Rights, as well as of their right to file complaints. The State has established an Office of the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman represents the interests of the public by investigating and addressing complaints of maladministration or violations of rights (both individual and collective). Recently, Latvia's Ombudsman's Office has been focusing on violations of children's rights.

The state guarantees persons with low incomes legal representation in the courts and in extrajudicial disputes. It also guarantees legal representation to individuals involved in cross-border disputes who reside in other EU member states.

Fair and efficient justice is expected by both residents and businesses. Case processing time has decreased. 82% of civil cases are completed at a court of first instance within 6 months, and 78% of cases heard at a court of appeals are completed within 6 months. By the end of 2018, an ambitious territorial reform of the Latvian court system will be completed with the following outcomes: more efficient processing of cases, a decrease in the backlog of pending civil and criminal cases, a more even distribution of caseloads for judges, savings, increased uniformity in judicial practice, judicial specialisation, and better random distribution of cases. In addition, mediation opportunities in civil disputes, including family disputes, are increasingly being introduced.

## **INTEGRITY OF THE STATE AND SOCIETY**

In order to strengthen accountability, openness and efficiency, there must be an honest relationship between the state and society. The shadow economy and tolerance of corruption continue

to hinder the development of the country. They affect people's trust in one another and in the state. Since the prevalence of corruption is closely linked to the mind-set, culture and traditions of society, the Corruption Prevention and Combating Bureau (KNAB), which is under the direct supervision of the Cabinet of Ministers, regularly polls public opinion on readiness to bribe public officials, and on perceptions of the main factors contributing to corruption in state and local government institutions. According to data published in The Shadow Economy Index for the Baltic States 2009-2016 (authors Tālis J. Putniņš and A. Sauka), the shadow economy in Latvia in 2016 was 20.3% of GDP. For purposes of analysis, the shadow economy is defined as unreported business income, unreported employees, and under-reporting of salaries ("envelope wages").

KNAB works systematically to target corruption. It participates in the planning of various government policies and regulations and raises public awareness to promote public condemnation of corruption. Other key activities include audits of financial disclosures of public officials and political organisations (parties), during which violations are identified and dishonest officials are punished. As a result, Latvia ranked 40th among 180 countries (with the 58 points) in the 2017 Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index. This is Latvia's best standing so far.

The high level Council for Prevention of the Shadow Economy initiates measures to reduce the shadow economy in construction, transport, trade, etc. In 2017, electronic time cards for recording work hours were introduced on construction sites, additional conditions for cash transactions between persons were set, and the system that verifies the origins of inherited property (including money) was improved. The public

is continually being informed about the consequences that the shadow economy and tax evasion have on the state's ability to provide for basic needs on both an individual and societal level.

Government internal control systems have been introduced to prevent corruption and conflict of interest, strengthen integrity and transparency. The Law on Whistleblower Protection, adopted by the Cabinet in 2017, is currently under consideration in Parliament. The government is also about to approve a unified Public Sector Code of Ethics.

## **VIOLENCE AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

The most common forms of human trafficking in Latvia are fictitious marriages and forced labour. Fictitious marriages are set up to obtain residency status in the Latvia and elsewhere in Europe. Cases in which people have been deliberately misled about the true working conditions abroad and, consequently, have become victims of forced labour are also considered human trafficking. The dramatic differences between EU member states in terms of economic development and income, coupled with unstable socio-economic conditions in some countries outside the EU, contribute to human trafficking also in Latvia. A limited understanding of workers' rights and access to ICT are two significant risk factors.

The State Police has an e-mail address for reporting human trafficking (thb@vp.gov.lv), including on suspected criminal activities, recruiting, forced sexual exploitation (prostitution, pornography), employee exploitation, forced services (illegal adoption), coercion to commit a crime (fictitious marriage, theft, illegal use of ID documents to commit of financial crimes), and organ harvesting. The NGOs Shelter 'Safe House' and MARTA Resource Centre for Women provide

support to victims of human trafficking.

In Latvia, as elsewhere in the world, most victims of violence committed by strangers are men, whereas most victims of domestic violence are women and children. A system for assuring immediate response to domestic abuse is being introduced. The police have been granted the power to separate the offender from the victim and to temporarily prevent the offender from approaching the victim and the victim's place of residence. Victims of domestic violence and offenders alike have access to state-funded rehabilitation services (crisis centres and/or counselling). Through a free Victim-Support Hot Line (116006), experts provide psychological support and inform victims about available services. In cases of immediate danger, the call is diverted to the State Police. As described under SDG 5, a risk analysis instrument was developed in 2017 for police to facilitate identification of domestic violence cases and to standardise institutional co-operation with the aim of deterring any recurrence of domestic violence.

Persons who have been convicted of violence need support while they are serving their sentences and are on probation. Offenders are actively involved in the resocialisation process that also includes behaviour modification and social learning (both cognitive and behavioural). In recent years, the profile of convicted offenders has changed. Only offenders who have committed serious crimes are being sentenced to imprisonment. Those convicted of lesser crimes are subject to probation and community service. This requires new working methods and a different approach to prison employee vocational training.

## SDG 17

## Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

Latvia, as country with high development indicators, cooperates with other countries at the EU level and bilaterally to promote sustainable development globally.

The EU has been given the mandate by member states to strengthen the global trading system, provide market access to Least Developed Countries, promote global macroeconomic stability and build global partnerships through multilateral cooperation. Latvian Official Development Assistance (ODA) 2016 was 0.11% of Gross National Income. The goal is to reach 0.17% in 2020 and 0.33% in 2030 to fulfil Latvia's commitment as a United Nations and EU Member State. Multilateral ODA comprises 89 % of Latvia's total ODA, including Latvia's national contribution to the multilateral EU budget, the European Development Fund, UN agencies and other international institutions and initiatives. At the EU level, Latvia mainly supports the European Neighbourhood Policy countries, in particular Eastern Partnership countries, as well as Central Asian countries, in their efforts to strengthen governance, democracy, human rights, economic growth, gender equality and environmental sustainability.

Latvia's bilateral development cooperation focuses on providing support to EU Eastern Partnership and Central Asian countries based on partner country requests for Latvia's expertise and aid effectiveness principles. Latvia, through bilateral development co-operation, supports development of public administration, strengthening business development and export capacity, management and reform of state security structures, promotion of democratic participation and development of civil society and education. 76% of the activities financed from the Foreign Ministry budget supported institutional development and capacity building of the public administration, including improvements to justice and home affairs systems, promotion of democratic participation, and the fight against corruption. 14% assisted with business development and increasing of export capacity, and 10% provided support for decentralisation and capacity building among local and regional authorities. Recognizing the importance of involving citizens in implementation of sustainable development, 80 % of the projects by 2020 will involve partner countries' civil society.



## DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION POLICY OF LATVIA FOR 2016–2020

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION OF LATVIA AIMS AT CONTRIBUTING TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 2030 IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, ESPECIALLY IN LATVIA'S PARTNER COUNTRIES, THEREBY PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ERADICATION, THE RULE OF LAW AND GOOD GOVERNANCE.

### UNITED NATIONS AGENDA 2030 FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

is a global commitment to a development framework anchored around 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved by 2030 – ending poverty, reducing inequalities and injustice, and protecting our planet. The goals follow the principle of leaving no one behind.

### POLICY RESULTS

1	Latvia promotes good governance, inclusive economic growth and security in the prioritised regions.
2	To meet its international commitments, Latvia seeks to raise development cooperation funding to 0.33% of its GNI by 2030.
3	An increasing public support in Latvia for the implementation of development cooperation policy.

### PRIORITY AREAS IN LATVIA'S DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION



Development and capacity building of public administration



Business development and strengthening export capacity



Conflict prevention and resolution, peace and security



Promotion of democratic participation and development of civil society



Education



Fostering public awareness of development cooperation

OVERALL, LATVIA'S DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION POLICY INTEGRATES THE PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRACY, GENDER EQUALITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

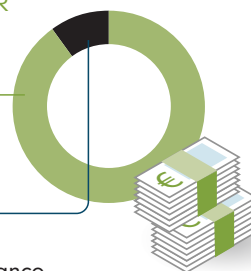
### LATVIA'S FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION CONSISTS OF (data for 2016):

**0.11%**  
of Gross National Income,  
or 27.3 million EUR

### MULTILATERAL ASSISTANCE

Contributions to EU budget, the European Development Fund, UN agencies and other international institutions and initiatives

**89%**  
24.23 mIn EUR



Bilateral assistance

**11%**  
3.07 mIn EUR

### PRIORITY COUNTRIES IN BILATERAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION:



EU Eastern Partnership region, especially Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine



Central Asian region, especially Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan

Countries where Latvian troops or civilian experts have been deployed by the state

### MAIN LINES OF ACTION:

1. Provide maximum support for sustainable development in the EU's Eastern Partnership and Central Asian countries
2. Step up implementation of Latvia's priorities in development cooperation as part of multilateral cooperation, especially in the EU, UN, the World Bank group and the OECD
3. Enhance professionalism, coordination and operational sustainability among Latvian policy makers and implementers
4. Increase transparency of Latvia's development cooperation and its compliance with international reporting standards
5. Raise public awareness about the importance of development cooperation, participation and support for policy implementation
6. Facilitate linkage and coordination between development cooperation, economic, and security policies

### PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN FORMULATION OF GUIDELINES



- ▶ **5** thematic "brainstorm" sessions for experts
- ▶ Population surveys on future priorities
- ▶ Consultations with the OECD experts
- ▶ **22** public authorities and civil society organisations involved in drafting
- ▶ Discussions at the Advisory Council on Development Cooperation Policy
- ▶ Open public consultations
- ▶ Proposals from over **60** institutions and organisations in three coordination rounds

### WHAT THE LATVIAN PUBLIC THINKS?



It's important to help the developing countries



Assistance should be increased



Assistance to developing countries is an effective means to prevent illegal migration



Peace and security should be ensured in developing countries as soon as possible

EUROBAROMETER DATA, 2016



Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
of the Republic of Latvia  
2018

Latvian local governments and non-governmental organisations are actively involved in development cooperation projects with Eastern Partnership and Central Asian countries - Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan and others. The Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments has provided long-term expert support for partner country budget planning, government negotiation, citizen involvement in decision-making, and business promotion.

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### **LATVIA SHARES ITS NATIONAL EXPERIENCE**

In 2017, the Latvian Clean Technology Cluster CLEANTECH LATVIA shared experience with regional authorities in Uzbekistan on how to reduce the impact of industrialization on the environment. Training courses were based on the needs defined by each particular region for sustainable environmental planning, management of water resources and household waste, ecological and population-friendly urban and regional environmental planning, recycling of industrial bio-waste.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with the United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) supported capacity building of the government of Uzbekistan in e-governance in 2016. Latvia shared its experience in providing various models of e-service delivery in Latvia. Information technology significantly improves democracy and inclusivity and engagement. For this reason Latvia would welcome continuing to develop cooperation in the fields of e-governance and e-services with interested partner countries.

In 2016, the Public Participation Foundation shared its experience in the establishment of an electronic democracy tool in Ukraine. It helped

to establish an independent Internet platform to promote the creation and publication of activities for civil society participation. A marketing strategy was developed for the involvement of civil society organizations and the public sector, and a network of non-governmental organizations was created, which enabled more effective mobilization of peers and experience exchange, sharing of ideas and knowledge, including on the use of the electronic platform.

Latvia is ready to share its experience through development cooperation based on the needs and interests expressed in partner countries.

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Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Equally important as development cooperation is improvement of macroeconomic stability in the world, inter alia through policy coordination and policy coherence. The Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Economics actively represent Latvia at the Economic Policy Committee of the Council of the European Union. The Cross Sectoral Coordination Centre under the Prime Minister promotes policy coherence at the national level while the Ministry of Foreign Affairs pursues policy coherence in development cooperation. The involvement of the business community, including business based in Latvia, in achieving the SDGs will have a major impact on the global economy and global development.

## 7.

# Conclusions and Next Steps

The Latvian government in cooperation with its stakeholders and on the Centenary of the Republic of Latvia presents Latvia's progress in achieving the SDGs. The preparation of this Review has set the foundations for prioritising activities for the planning period from 2021.

The Review provides concentrated insight into how Latvia implements each of the SDGs, mainstreaming them into the planning system. The planning process is inclusive, with elected representatives focusing on evidence-based decisions to ensure transparency, policy coherence and political responsibility.

The Review, agreed by stakeholders in a participatory process and approved by the Cabinet of Ministers, sets the baseline for all 17 SDGs. This means that stakeholders - ministries, the Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments, social partners and representatives of non-governmental organizations – now have a useful reference and measurement tool as they further integrate the economic, environmental and social dimensions of sustainable development both in Latvia and globally.

A good political foundation and social consciousness for sustainable development has evolved since Latvia restored national independence, providing momentum to the implementation of the global agenda and goals. Latvia's Sustainable Development Strategy to 2030, the hierarchically highest national long-term planning document, sets the priorities for sustainable development of the country.

The development challenges described in this Review stem from an impact assessment of Latvia's Sustainable Development Strategy until 2030, the National Development Plan 2020 and sectoral policies. The latter two are particularly important, as they link the goals set with financial resources and define very specific policy outcomes and the

mid-term performance indicators. Consequently, it is clear what we are achieving and where we must act differently.

Latvia will focus on areas in which progress must be accelerated in all three dimensions. Latvia's sustainable development challenges are concentrated in two vectors:

1. Ensuring an Innovative and Eco-Efficient Economy
2. Reducing Income and Opportunity Inequality.

As stated in *Latvia 2030*, progress will be achieved through ensuring sustainability of strategic resources - human resources, natural, cultural and digital capital and finances (both public and private). *Putting people first* is the overarching development approach set by the Parliament. Improvements in health, education and decent work are fundamental for solving the challenges along both vectors.

Our biggest advantages are Latvia's stable economic situation (low debt, almost balanced budget, good balance of payments ratio), as well as Latvia's cultural, natural and digital capital.

### **MAIN CHALLENGES IN THE ECONOMY:**

- Increasing productivity of the economy, including through the efficient and productive use of resources
- Introducing a system to reduce and pre-empt skills mismatches in the labour market
- Improving the availability of labour by providing high-quality adult education, promoting return migration and access to expertise from abroad, ensuring access to housing, etc.
- Increasing the share of pupils with higher level competencies
- Increasing the share of society that is healthy and fit for work
- Attracting investments to the productive economy
- Increasing private and public investment in research and innovation
- Implementing the Latvia data driven nation concept
- Adapting to climate change, reducing GHG emissions
- Promoting wider use of renewable energy
- Increasing recycling and reuse.

**MAIN CHALLENGES IN REDUCING INEQUALITY:**

- Ensuring older people decent lives in an ageing society
- Reducing emigration and encouraging return migration
- Balancing work and family life
- Strengthening regional centres, appraising “intelligent shrinking” in low density areas, including with regard to road infrastructure, housing and public transport on demand
- Encouraging accumulation of assets by individuals (housing, savings, etc.)
- Involving more people in adult education and retraining for more productive work
- Decreasing the share of pupils with low competencies
- Increasing access to health care, in particular, to maternal and child health care, access to specialists and diagnostic services for low-income persons and persons at risk of occupational injuries or illnesses
- Developing individualised plans for persons in need of services aimed at elimination of inequality
- Creating a minimum income system, adequate funding for social support.

Analysis shows that all SDG's are being integrated into the Latvian planning system. Improvements will be achieved by restructuring activities, focusing on specific target groups, reallocating investments, etc. The envisaged transformations will multiply gains. For example, widespread digitalization and increasing competencies of school children will offset costs, and are essential for achieving all of the SDG targets. Perhaps the awareness of the need to transition from an understanding of linear economic growth to an understanding of the circular economy and its possible contribution to sustainable public welfare is one of the greatest benefits from this process. If we can reduce inequality and help our businesses move towards innovation and eco-efficiency, we will be able to better integrate environmental, economic and social dimensions of sustainability in to the Latvian and global agendas.

The next steps will be taken by the government to ensure implementation the SDGs through policies linked to the budget from 2021. In order for planning to be effective, it must take into account both national budget limitations and the European Union planning process.

**MID-TERM IMPACT ASSESSMENTS.** By the middle of 2019, a series of mid-term impact assessments will be carried out on several important Latvian sectoral policies, including public health, inclusive education, inclusive employment and other areas. These will provide additional detail needed to plan future policy.

**MINISTERIAL PRIORITIES.** By September 2019, the ministries will provide information to the Cross Sectoral Coordination Centre under the Prime Minister on medium-term policy needed for the 2021-2027 planning period, including specific goals and a brief outline of the content.

**VARIOUS DISCUSSIONS.** In order to set the priorities, goals and solutions for the country's development, public discussions should take place in 2018 and 2019 on thematic areas, priority goals to be achieved, as mentioned in this Review and the Mid-Term Impact Assessment of NDP2020 and progress on Latvia 2030.

**POLITICAL CHOICES.** Parliamentary elections will take place in October 2018. After the elections the new government will prepare its Government Declaration and Action Plan, ensuring coherence with long-term planning documents or proposing changes in key policy directions. Political parties preparing their election programmes in 2018 are invited to use conclusions from this Review, the Mid-Term Impact Assessment of NDP2020 and progress on Latvia 2030, and sectoral mid-term impact assessments. The new government will be encouraged to continue the practice launched by the two previous governments to include priority policy outcome indicators in their Government Declaration. This helps the governments in making results based budget allocations.

**PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING GOALS.** In 2019, the Prime Minister will once again report to the Parliament on progress in achieving goals of NDP2020 and Latvia 2030. At this point in time there will be sufficient progress in the policy process to state specific 2021+ policy goals and indicator targets.

**OPINION OF THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL.** The National Development Council, chaired by the Prime Minister and comprising key line ministries, social partners and other government co-operation partners, will provide the Prime Minister with opinions on future policies, including on the designation of responsible and co-responsible institutions.

**THE FUTURE OF EUROPE.** Latvia will participate with other EU member states in setting EU level sustainable development goals. EU multi-annual budgeting will affect external as well as national level policy from 2021. In May 2019, Europe will elect a new European Parliament that will reflect the will of Europe's people.

To get the next steps right, it is important to have precise data, as well as information about public opinion, including the opinions of target groups affected by the relevant policy. The role of the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia and Eurostat in providing regular reports on progress and trends is crucial.

Of course, one of the main development goals is to create space for human potential. Improvement of conditions in the social, environmental and economic dimensions will unleash the capacity of individuals to initiate sustainability solutions. When national or local governments take the initiative, people, especially target groups, must be engaged.

# Statistical Annex

## to Latvia's Review on the Implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals

## Methodology

This Annex includes indicators and their values characterising Latvia's contribution to achieving UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Annex is based on the SDGs indicators drawn up by the UN working group, Eurostat (Statistical Office of the European Union), indicators from the Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2020 and the National Development Plan of Latvia for 2014–2020, as well as other relevant indicators from the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, and other public databases. The indicators are organised in tables under each of the seventeen UN Sustainable Development Goals. The base values (usually 2010) and the latest values (2016, 2017 when possible) are included. Target values are shown for 2030, if the indicators are included in the Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2020. Targets values are shown for 2020, if they are in the National Development Plan of Latvia for 2014–2020. Trends were assessed by policy experts and are analysed within the context of compliance with the goals and principles of sustainable development.

The trends are assessed as follows:

- 1 – significant progress; the trend fully complies with the sustainable development goal,
- o – insignificant positive or negative changes; the trend does not move towards the achievement of the sustainable development goal,
- 1- significant negative changes; the trend moves against the achievement of the sustainable development goal.

## Goal 1 – No Poverty

No	Indicator	Related SDGs	Base year/year of latest value	Unit	Base value	Latest value	Target for 2020	Target for 2030	Trend assessment
1	People at risk of income poverty after social transfers	10	2010/2016	%	20,9	21,8		<16	0
2	Economic strain	10	2010/2016	%	65,5	41,4	42		1
3	In-work at-risk-of-poverty rate in age group 18–64 (including)	8, 9, 10	2010/2016	%	9,5	9	5		0
4	At risk-of-poverty rate in single parent households	10	2010/2016	%	37,6	34,3	30		-1
5	At risk-of-poverty rate in households consisting of 2 adults with 3 and more dependent children	10	2010/2016	%	37,1	19,8	27		1
6	At risk-of-poverty rate of children aged under 17 (incl.)	10	2010/2016	%	24,7	18,4	19		1
7	At risk-of-poverty rate in households with dependent children	10	2010/2016	%	21,2	16,3			1
8	At risk-of-poverty rate in age group 18–64 (incl.)	10	2010/2016	%	20,2	17,5			1
9	At risk-of-poverty rate among males aged 18–64 (incl.)	5, 10	2010/2016	%	20,4	17,5			1
10	At risk-of-poverty rate among females aged 18–64 (incl.)	5,10	2010/2016	%	20,1	17,5			1
11	At risk-of-poverty rate in age group 65+	10	2010/2016	%	9,1	39,9			-1
12	People at risk of poverty or social exclusion	10	2010/2016	%	38,2	28,5			1
13	Severe material deprivation	10	2010/2016	%	27,6	12,8			1
14	People living in households with very low work intensity	8, 10	2010/2016	%	12,6	7,2			1
15	Share of people having housing costs above 40 % of disposable income	10,11	2010/2016	%	9,8	7,0			0
16	Self-reported unmet need for medical care (population aged 16 and older)	3, 10	2010/2016	%	15,1	8,2			1
17	Population unable to keep home adequately warm	10,11	2010/2016	%	19,1	10,6			1
18	Population living in a dwelling with a leaking roof, damp walls, floors or foundation or rot in window frames of floor	10,11	2010/2016	%	24,7	21,9			0
19	Population having neither a bath, nor a shower, nor indoor flushing toilet in their household	10,11	2010/2016	%	15,1	11,7			0
20	Overcrowding rate	10, 11	2010/2016	%	55,7	43,2			1
21	Material deprivation rate	10	2010/2016	%	46,6	26,4			1
22	Share of general government expenditure on social protection in total expenditure	10	2010/2016	%	31,2	32,2			0

## Goal 2 – Zero Hunger

No	Indicator	Related SDGs	Base year/year of latest value	Unit	Base value	Latest value	Target for 2020	Target for 2030	Trend assessment
1	Area under organic farming (as % of total agricultural area)	12, 14, 15	2010/2016	%	9,2	13,4		>15	1
2	Share of utilised agricultural area	12, 15	2010/2016	%	88,6	92	95		1
3	Overweight and obesity rate among children aged 7	3	2008/2015	%	21,5	21,7	21,5		0
4	Obesity rate among population aged 18 and over	3	2008/2014	%	16,9	21,3			-1
5	Agricultural factor income per annual work unit (2000=100)	1, 8, 10, 12	2010/2016	%	100	120,3			0
6	Government support to agricultural research and development	9, 12, 15	2010/2016	EUR	2,1	5,6			1
7	Nitrogen on agricultural land	12, 14, 15	2010/2014	kg/ha	29	28			0
8	Ammonia emissions from agriculture	12, 14, 15	2010/2015	kg/ha	8,1	8,6			0

## Goal 3 – Good Health and Well-being

No	Indicator	Related SDGs	Base year/year of latest value	Unit	Base value	Latest value	Target for 2020	Target for 2030	Trend assessment
1	Life expectancy at birth, female	5	2010/2016	year	77,9	79,4	80	>82	1
2	Life expectancy at birth, male	5	2010/2016	year	67,9	69,8	72	>75	1
3	Healthy life years at birth, females	5	2013/2015	year	54,2	54,1	60	63	0
4	Healthy life years at birth, males	5	2013/2015	year	51,7	51,8	57	60	0
5	Potential years of life lost		2010/2016	per 100 000 inhabitants	6476	5366	5300	4500	1
6	Share of population engaged in physical activities at least 1–2 times a week	4	2009/2013	%	27	31	40	60	0
7	Population of working age that attended family doctor/ general practitioner at least once in past 12 months	4	2010/2016	%	65,1	78,1	74	75	1
8	Population of working age excessively consuming alcohol during the past 12 months	4	2011/2015	%	43,7	44,5	38	35	0
9	Share of daily smokers aged 15 Daily smoking prevalence at age 15	4	2010/2014	%	26,9	14,3	22	18,5	1
10	Death rate due to external causes of death	4	2010/2016	per 100 000 inhabitants	93,0	73,5	60		1
11	Self-perceived general health status among population aged 16+ – good or very good Share of people aged 16+ assessing their health as good or very good		2010/2016	%	47,7	47,2			0
12	Population living in households considering that they suffer from noise, pollution	9	2010/2016	%	17,5	13,3			1

13	Death rate due to chronic diseases (population aged 65 and younger)		2010/2015	per 100 000 inhabitants	265,8	221,6		1
14	Suicide rate (population aged 64 and younger)		2010/2016	per 100 000 inhabitants	18,8	17,1	17	1
15	People killed in road accidents	9	2010/2015	per 100 000 inhabitants	10,4	9,5		0
16	Self-reported unmet need for medical care (population aged 16 and older)	1, 10	2010/2016	%	15,1	8,2		1
17	Infant mortality rate (mortality of live-born children during the first year of their life)		2010/2016	per 1000 live births	5,7	3,7	3,7	1
18	Neonatal mortality rate (children 0–27 days old)		2010/2016	per 1000 live births	3,6	2,5		1
19	Incidence of tuberculosis		2010/2016	per 100 000 inhabitants	39,3	28,6	<35	1
20	Maternal mortality ratio		2010/2016	per 100 000 live births	26,1	23,1		0
21	Number of new HIV cases		2010/2016		274	365		-1
22	Deaths due to AIDS		2010/2016		58	71	<80	0
23	Mortality rate attributed to cardiovascular diseases (population aged 64 and younger)		2010/2016	per 100 000 inhabitants	157,8	145,1	130	0
25	Mortality rate attributed to malignant neoplasms (population aged 64 and younger)		2010/2016	per 100 000 inhabitants	106,4	102,7	96	0
26	Share of expenditure on health in total household consumption expenditure	16	2010/2016	%	5,9	6,6		-1
27	National total emissions of nitrogen oxide (NOx)	11, 12, 15	2010/2016	t	34	36,53	25 20	-1
28	National total emissions of ammonia (NH3)	11, 12, 15	2010/2016	t	17	18,76	16 16	-1
29	National total emissions of volatile organic compounds (VOC)	11, 12, 15	2010/2016	t	65	41,37	53 49	1
30	National total emissions of particulate matter	11, 12, 15	2010/2016	t	27	41,14	23 20	-1
31	National total emissions of sulphur dioxide	11, 12, 15	2010/2015	t	3,1	3,66	6,2 7,1	0

## Goal 4 – Quality Education

No	Indicator	Related SDGs	Base year/year of latest value	Unit	Base value	Latest value	Target for 2020	Target for 2030	Trend assessment
1	Participation in early childhood education (% of the age group between 4-years-old and the starting age of compulsory education)		2010/2016	%	90,3	95,5	95	>95	1
2	Early leavers from education and training (% of population aged 18 to 24)	1, 10	2010/2017	%	12,9	8,6	10	9	1
3	Young people neither in employment nor in education and training (% of population aged 15 to 29)	8, 10	2010/2016	%	20,7	13,3			1
4	Adult participation in learning (% of population aged 25 to 64)	8	2010/2017	%	5,4	7,5	15	34	0
5	Share of foreign students (at the beginning of the academic year)	16, 17	2010/2016	%	1,91	10		>10	1
6	Tertiary educational attainment (% of population aged 30 to 34)		2010/2017	%	32,6	43,8	40	40	1
7	Reading competence (% of 15-year-old students, highest levels 5 and 6 in OECD PISA standard)		2009/2015	%	2,9	4,3	9		0
8	Reading competence (% of 15-year-old students, lowest level 1 in OECD PISA standard)		2009/2015	%	17,2	17,7	13		-1
9	Proportion of students (%) in general secondary education and vocational secondary education after the acquirement of basic education		2010/2016	%	61,7/ 38,3	61,4/ 38,6	50/50	50/50	0
10	Employment rates of higher education graduates (population aged 20–34)		2010/2016	%	79,2	85,4			1
11	State-funded foreign students (annual number)	16, 17	2012/2013 - /2016./2017		80	60	150		-1

## Goal 5 – Gender Equality

No	Indicator	Related SDGs	Base year/ year of latest value	Unit	Base value	Latest value	Target for 2020	Target for 2030	Trend assessment
1	At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers, females	10	2010/2016	%	18,3	19,1			0
2	At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers, males	10	2010/2016	%	19,8	24,6			-1
3	Gender average hourly earnings gap	1, 8, 10	2010/2016	%	15,5	17,0			0
4	Gender employment gap (population aged 20–64 (incl.))	1, 8, 10	2010/2016	%	-0,5	2,9			0
5	Share of females receiving minimum wage or less in total number of females having income from labour	1, 8, 10	2010/2016	%	25,9	22,7			0
6	Share of females receiving minimum wage or less in total population having income from labour	1, 8, 10	2010/2016	%	13,9	11,7			0
7	Share of males receiving minimum wage or less in total number of males having income from labour	1, 8, 10	2010/2016	%	27,3	20,6			0
8	Seats held by women in national parliament and government	16	2010/2016	%	19	15			-1
9	Positions held by women in senior management positions	16	2010/2016	%	23,5	27,9			1
10	Early leavers from education and training by sex (% of population aged 18 to 24), male/female	4	2010/2017	%	16,7/9	12,0/5,0			1
11	Tertiary educational attainment by sex (% of population aged 30 to 34), male/female	4	2010/2017	%	23,7/41,5	32,1/56,0			0
12	Employment rates of tertiary education graduates by sex (population aged 20–34 (incl.)) male/female	4	2010/2016	%	83,6/77,1	88,6/83,6			0
13	Victims of intentional homicide by sex male/female	11, 16	2012/2015	per 100 000 inhabitants	3,53/3,33	4,06/2,7			0
14	Victims of rape by sex male/female	11, 16	2012/2015	per 100 000 inhabitants	0,00/4,32	0,44/4,47			na
15	Victims of sexual violence by sex male/female	11, 16	2010/2015	per 100 000 inhabitants	2,14/7,21	3,40/8,56			na
16	Inactive population due to caring responsibilities by sex (population aged 20–64 (incl.)) male/female	1, 10, 16	2010/2016	%	6,5/24,8	11/31,2			-1

## Goal 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation

No	Indicator	Related SDGs	Base year/ year of latest value	Unit	Base value	Latest value	Target for 2020	Target for 2030	Trend assessment
1	Recycling rate of municipal waste	11, 13, 15	2010/2016	%	48	70,8	>50	>80	1
2	Population having neither a bath, nor a shower, nor indoor flushing toilet in their household	1, 10, 11	2010/2016	%	15,1	11,7			1
3	Biochemical oxygen demand in rivers	11, 14	2010/2012	mg O <sub>2</sub> /l	1,45	1,47			0
4	Phosphate in rivers	11, 14	2010/2012	mg PO <sub>4</sub> /l	0,026	0,023			0
5	Share of population in agglomeration with CE > 2000 having access to centralised water supply stipulated by regulatory enactments	11, 14	2010/2017	%	89,2	92,9			1
6	Share of population in agglomeration with CE > 2000 having access to centralised sewerage stipulated by regulatory enactments	11, 14	2010/2017	%	86,6	91,4			1

## Goal 7 – Affordable and Clean Energy

No	Indicator	Related SDGs	Base year/ year of latest value	Unit	Base value	Latest value	Target for 2020	Target for 2030	Trend assessment
1	Energy dependence (net imports of energy resources/ gross energy consumption and bunkering)	11, 12, 13	2010/2016	%	45,5	47,2	44,1	<50	0
2	Gross energy consumption in GDP (kg of oil equivalent per EUR 1000 GDP)	9, 11, 12, 13	2010/2016	kg/ EUR 1 000 GDP	260,2	202,8	280	<150	1
3	Share of renewable energy in gross national energy consumption	9, 11, 12, 13	2010/2016	%	32,3	37,2	40	>50	1
4	Changes in primary energy consumption, compared to 2005 (2005=100)	9, 11, 12, 13	2010/2016	%	101,4	95,4			0
5	Changes in gross final energy consumption, compared to 2005 (2005=100)	9, 11, 12, 13	2010/2016	%	102,5	95,1			0
6	Population unable to keep home adequately warm	1, 10	2010/2016	%	19,1	10,6			1
7	Household expenditure on energy resources (per household member annually)	1, 10	2010/2015	EUR	325,58	372,92			0
8	Household expenditure on electricity (per household member annually)	1, 10	2010/2015	EUR	95,56	154,27			-1
9	Household expenditure on heat (per household member annually)	1, 10	2010/2015	EUR	239,08	218,69			1

## Goal 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth

No	Indicator	Related SDGs	Base year/ year of latest value	Unit	Base value	Latest value	Target for 2020	Target for 2030	Trend assessment
1	GDP per capita in purchasing power parities	1, 9, 12	2010/2016	EUR	13400	18800		>2700	1
2	GDP per capita by purchasing power parities (% of the EU average)	1, 9, 12	2010/2016	%	53	65	70		1
3	Regional differences of GDP per capita – dispersion of regional GDP per capita	1, 9, 10, 11, 12	2010/2015		40,2	44,0	34,5	<30	-1
4	GDP per person employed (at base prices of 2010)	1, 9, 12	2010/2016	EUR	21 089	24 567			1
5	Exports of goods and services (as % of GDP)	9, 12	2010/2016	%	53,7	60	70	78	0
6	In-work at-risk-of-poverty rate of population aged 18–64 (incl.)	1, 9, 10	2010/2016	%	9,5	9	5		0
7	Dynamics of real wages and salaries (compared to the year before)	1, 9, 10	2011/2016	%	100,1	104,6	108		0
8	Nominal GDP per capita	1, 9, 10	2010/2016	EUR	8553	12722			1
9	Inactive population due to caring responsibilities (share in total inactive population)	1, 10	2010/2016	%	16,7	22,9			-1
10	Young people neither in employment nor in education and training (population aged 15–29, share in total population of corresponding age)	1, 10	2010/2016	%	20,7	13,3			1
11	Employment rate (population aged 15–74 (incl.))	1, 10	2010/2017	%	52,0	62,9			1
12	Share of long-term unemployed in total inactive population (population aged 15–74)	1, 10	2010/2017	%	8,8	3,27			1
13	Share of employed persons having labour contract of definite duration in total number of employed persons (population aged 20–64 (incl.))	1, 10	2010/2016	%	6,1	3,1			1
14	People killed in accidents at work (per 100 000 employed persons)	4, 12	2010/2016	%	2,74	3,32			-1

## Goal 9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

No	Indicator	Related SDGs	Base year/ year of latest value	Unit	Base value	Latest value	Target for 2020	Target for 2030	Trend assessment
1	Latvia in "Doing Business" index	12, 16	2010/2018	rating	27	19	13		1
2	Latvia in Global Competitiveness Index	12, 16	2011/2017	rating	64	54	45	<40	1
3	Share of roads with black surface in total regional state roads	11	2009/2016	%	75,4	84,3	82	100	1
4	Share of roads with black surface in total local state roads	11	2009/2016	%	19,8	21,1		>50	0
5	Annual freight turnover at Latvia's ports	11	2011/2016	million	68,8	63,1	116	>130	-1
6	Passenger turnover in public transport (regular bus traffic passenger kilometres annually)	11	2010/2016	million	2311	2187	1860	>2850	0
7	Annual number of air passengers at the Riga International Airport	11	2011/2016	million	5,1	5,4	8,5	>10	1
8	Passenger turnover in rail transport (million passenger kilometres annually)	11	2008/2016	million	951	584		>1150	-1
9	Annual number of passengers at the Port of Riga (thousand annually)	11	2010/2016	thousand	705	581	1150	>1500	-1
10	Reduced length of state main roads in bad and very bad condition	11	2012/2016	%	0	23	50	100	1
11	Reduced length of state regional roads with black surface in bad and very bad condition	11	2012/2106	%	0	2	50	85	-1
12	Share of households with access to the Internet	11	2011/2016	%	63,6	77,3	80	95	1
13	Individual use of eGovernment (as % of population aged 16–74 (incl.) who used Internet over the last 3 months for cooperation with state institutions)	11,16	2011/2016	%	41	69			1
14	Share of exports of high-tech sectors in total exports value	12	2010/2016	%	11,0	16,0	11		1
15	Share of manufacturing in total value added	12	2011/2016	%	14,1	12,5	20		0
16	Gross capital formation in manufacturing (non-financial investment annually)	12	2010/2016	million EUR	412	438	925		0
17	Employment in manufacturing (as % of total number of persons employed)	12	2010/2016	%	13,2	13,8			0
18	Researchers employed in private sector (as % of total, in full-time equivalent)	4, 12	2011/2016	%	16,2	17,5	23	27	0
19	Share of expenditure on R&D in GDP (annual)	4, 12	2010/2016	%	0,6	0,44	1,5	3	-1
20	Private sector investment in R&D	4, 12	2010/2016	%	37	24,5	48	51	-1
21	Patent applications to the European Patent Office from Latvia	4, 12	2011/2016	number	11	16	26	35	0

## Goal 10 – Reduced Inequalities

No	Indicator	Related SDGs	Base year/ year of latest value	Unit	Base value	Latest value	Target for 2020	Target for 2030	Trend assessment
1	Gini coefficient	1	2010/2016		35,9	34,5		<30	0
2	Quintile share ratio S80/S20	1	2010/2016		6,8	6,2	4,8		0
3	Income share ratio P90/P50	1	2010/2017		2,24	2,15	1,95		0
4	Regional differences of GDP per capita – dispersion of regional GDP per capita	1, 11	2010/2015		40,7	41,9	34,5	<30	-1
5	Net migration, focusing on increasing return migration and decreasing emigration	1, 11	2011/2016		-23127	-12229	+1000		1
6	Share of people living below the minimum income level	1	2010/2015	%	9,8	7,4			1
7	Relative median at-risk-of-poverty gap	1	2010/2016		28,9	24			1
8	1st income decile share in total household income	1	2010/2016	%	2,0	2,3			0
9	Income share of the bottom 40 % of the population	1	2010/2016	%	17,9	18,6			0
10	Adjusted gross disposable household income per capita (according to purchasing power parity)	1	2010/2016	EUR	10 190	13 442			1
11	Latvia's official development assistance	1, 17	2010/2015	million EUR	11,8	20,9			1
12	Imports from developing countries	1, 17	2010/2016	million EUR	830	1047			0

## Goal 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities

No	Indicator	Related SDGs	Base year/ year of latest value	Unit	Base value	Latest value	Target for 2020	Target for 2030	Trend assessment
1	Share of population of the Riga planning region in total population	10	2010/2017	%	49,4	51,6		<48	-1
2	Annual attendance of cultural events		2010/2016	per 100 inhabitants	197,5	293,71	200	>250	1
3	Members of amateur performing units		2010/2016	per 100 inhabitants	3,2	3,4	3	>3,5	1
4	Area of unarranged industrial zones and other areas important for business development	14	2013/2016	hectares	5826	5580	5520		1
5	Population living in households considering that they suffer from noise and pollution	14	2010/2016	%	17,5	13,3			1
6	Population reporting occurrence of crime, violence or vandalism in their area	10, 16	2010/2016	%	23,8	10			1
7	People killed in road accidents	9	2010/2016	per 100 000 inhabitants	10,4	9,5			0
8	Pollution of particulate matter in cities	12	2009/2014	µG/m3	15,8	18,3			-1
9	Recycling rate of municipal waste (of generated)	12, 14	2010/2016	%	9,4	25,2			1
10	Share of public transport passenger kilometres in total domestic passenger kilometres	9, 12	2010/2016	%	19,8	17,7			-1

## Goal 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production

No	Indicator	Related SDGs	Base year/ year of latest value	Unit	Base value	Latest value	Target for 2020	Target for 2030	Trend assessment
1	Resource productivity	9	2010/2016	EUR/kg	0,4817	0,4763		>1,550	0
2	Annual recycling rate of municipal waste (collected)	11, 14	2010/2016	%	14,55	25,2	45	>60	1
3	Municipal waste generated	11, 14	2010/2016	t	680 000	802 000	834 000	653 000	-1
4	Municipal waste generated per capita	11, 14	2011/2016	kg	350	410	444	400	0
5	Increase in manufacturing value added (at base prices of 2010)	9	2010/2016	%	100	114,4	140		0
6	Energy dependence (net imports of energy resources/ gross energy consumption and bunkering)	7	2010/2016	%	41,6	47,2	44,1		-1
7	Energy intensity (GDP value produced per kilogram of oil equivalent consumed)	7, 9, 11	2010/2016	EUR	3,8	4,9			1
8	Average CO <sub>2</sub> emissions per km from new passenger cars	13	2014/2016	CO <sub>2</sub> g/km	140,4	128,9			0
9	Freight transport intensity (domestic tonne-kilometres in GDP, 2005=100)	11	2010/2016		100,8	102,4			0
10	Final energy consumption per household member	7, 9, 11	2010/2016	kg of oil equivalent	662	584			1

## Goal 13 – Climate Action

No	Indicator	Related SDGs	Base year/ year of latest value	Unit	Base value	Latest value	Target for 2020	Target for 2030	Trend assessment
1	Annual greenhouse gas emissions (compared to emission in base year; Kyoto protocol)	7,8, 9, 11, 14	2010/2015	%	47,6	44,1	46,4		1
2	People at risk of flood and erosion processes	6, 11, 15	2012/2016	Number	600 000	580 000	400 000		-1
3	Total greenhouse gas emissions	7, 8, 9, 11, 14	2014/2015	Mt CO <sub>2</sub> equivalent	11,21	11,32	12,16		0
4	Greenhouse gas emissions from energy sector, compared to national gross energy consumption (2000=100)	7, 8, 11	2010/2015	%	96	85,9			1

## Goal 14 – Life Below Water

No	Indicator	Related SDGs	Base year/ year of latest value	Unit	Base value	Latest value	Target for 2020	Target for 2030	Trend assessment
1	Annual discharge of nitrogen/ phosphorus compounds in surface freshwater objects	2, 6, 11, 12	2007/2013	t	3717/ 424	1019/ 133		<2500/ 300	1
2	Maritime spatial plan based on ecosystem approach	9, 7, 13, 16	2007/2017		0	0	1	1	0
3	Protected marine territories with elaborated plans of nature protection or individual use and protection regulations as a share of all protected marine territories	8, 13,	2010/2017	%	40	78	80		1
4	Share of sea water observation stations observing eutrophication decline trend	2, 9, 12, 13	2013/2016	%	0	50%	100		1
5	Area of protected marine territories	8, 12, 15, 16	2010/2016	%	15	15	> 15	> 15	0
6	Catches in major fishing areas	2, 12, 13	2010/2016	t	164 488	114655			1
7	Latvian bathing sites with excellent water quality	3,4, 6, 11	2013/2017		7	18	>10		1

## Goal 15 – Life on Land

No	Indicator	Related SDGs	Base year/ year of latest value	Unit	Base value	Latest value	Target for 2020	Target for 2030	Trend assessment
1	Share of specially protected nature territories in total territory	11, 12, 13	2015/2017	%	18	18		18	0
2	Share of forest area	2, 8	2009/2017	%	49,4	52,0	50	55	0
3	Common farmland bird index	2, 11, 12	2010/2017		119,19	87,87	115	>120	-1
4	Common forest bird index	11, 12	2010/2017		92,96	116,95	95		1
5	Compensation for restrictions on economic activities in protected areas	8, 12	2013/2017	%	47	100	100		1
6	Share of specially protected nature territories with nature protection plans and started implementation thereof	11, 12	2013/2016	%	30	42	55		1
7	Share of species and biotopes of EU importance designated under the EU Habitats Directive	12	2013/2018	%	0	7,5	100		-1

## Goal 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

No	Indicator	Related SDGs	Base year/ year of latest value	Unit	Base value	Latest value	Target for 2020	Target for 2030	Trend assessment
1	Efficiency of Latvia's public administration (GRICS index)	8, 9	2010/2016	%	74	79	85	95	1
2	Latvia in Corruption Perceptions Index	8	2010/2017	rating	59	40			1
3	Hearing of civil cases up to 12 months in all courts of first instance	8	2011/2017	%	73,2	83,85	92	96	1
4	Perceived independence of the justice system	8	2016/2017	%	42	49	50		1
5	Participation in national parliament election		2010/2014	%	59,45	58,85		>70	-1
6	Participation in local government election	11	2013/2017	%	45,99	50,39		>70	0
7	Participation in non-governmental organizations	11	2009/2015	%	2,8	5,1	9		1
8	Mutual trust ratio	8, 11	2009/2015	%	46	51	62		0
9	Minor crime victims	11	2013/2015		254	302			-1
10	Childcare rights discontinued due to parental violence or suspected parental violence	11	2009/2015		141	185			-1
11	Homicide (per 100 000 inhabitants)	11	2010/2016	%	6,7	7,2			0
12	Civic engagement ratio	11	2009/2015	%	7,4	9	19		0
13	Population with confidence in EU institutions		2009/2015	%	3,23	3,3	4,75		0

## Goal 17 – Partnership for the Goals

No	Indicator	Related SDGs	Base year/ year of latest value	Unit	Base value	Latest value	Target for 2020	Target for 2030	Trend assessment
1	Share of general government revenue in GDP	8	2010/2016	%	36,8	37,2			0
2	Share of general government debt in GDP	8	2010/2016	%	46,8	40,5			1
3	Share of ODA in GNI	1, 10	2010/2016	%	0,06	0,11	0,17	0,33	1
4	Imports from developing countries	1, 10	2010/2016	%	9,9	8,5			0
5	Imports from developing countries	1, 10	2010/2016	million EURO	830	1047			0
6	Bilateral ODA managed by MFA used for public administration development and capacity strengthening, including anti-corruption measures	10, 16	2015/2016	%	62	67	65		1
7	Bilateral ODA managed by MFA, the main goal of which is support for judicial and home affairs systems, including strengthening of customs and border structures	10, 16	2015/2016	%	6	22	10		1
8	Bilateral ODA managed by MFA that includes civil society in partner countries	10, 16	2015/2016	%	76	75	80		0
9	Bilateral ODA managed by MFA supporting business development and export capacity	8, 10, 12	2015/2016	%	14	10	18		0
10	Bilateral ODA managed by MFA, the main goal of which is gender equality	5, 10	2015/2016	%	0	6	8		1

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