



Latvia



Background Several eastern Baltic tribes merged in medieval times to form the ethnic core of the Latvian people (ca. 8th-12th centuries A.D.). The region subsequently came under the control of Germans, Poles, Swedes, and finally Russians. A Latvian republic emerged following World War I, but the USSR annexed it in 1940 -- an action never recognized by the US and many other countries. Latvia reestablished its independence in 1991 after the breakup of the Soviet Union. Although the last Russian troops left in 1994, the status of the Russian minority (some 25% of the population) remains of concern to Moscow. Latvia joined both NATO and the EU in 2004; it joined the euro zone in 2014 and the OECD in 2016.

Capital name: Riga

Government type parliamentary republic

Area total : 64,589 sq km
land: 62,249 sq km
water: 2,340 sq km

Climate maritime; wet, moderate winters

Natural resources peat, limestone, dolomite, amber, hydropower, timber, arable land

Population total: 1,801,246 (2024 est.)

Population growth rate -1.14% (2024 est.)

Ethnic groups Latvian 62.7%, Russian 24.5%, Belarusian 3.1%, Ukrainian 2.2%, Polish 2%, Lithuanian 1.1%, other 1.8%, unspecified 2.6% (2021 est.)

Religions Lutheran 36.2%, Roman Catholic 19.5%, Orthodox 19.1%, other Christian 1.6%, other 0.1%, unspecified/none 23.5% (2017 est.)

Languages Latvian (official) 56.3%, Russian 33.8%, other 0.6% (includes Polish, Ukrainian, and Belarusian), unspecified 9.4% (2011 est.)

Executive branch chief of state: President Edgars RINKEVICS (since 8 July 2023)

head of government: Prime Minister Evika SILINA (since 15 September 2023)

Legislative branch legislature name: Parliament (Saeima)

Diplomatic representation in the US chief of mission: Ambassador Elita KUZMA (since 18 September 2024)

Diplomatic representation from the US chief of mission: Ambassador Christopher ROBINSON (since 21 February 2023)

Economic overview	high-income EU and eurozone member; weak recovery following economic contraction, with slight increase in private consumption and uncertain trade environment; challenges from skilled-labor shortages, capital market access, large informal sector, and green and digital transitions
Real GDP (purchasing power parity)	\$72.516 billion (2024 est.) \$72.838 billion (2023 est.) \$70.817 billion (2022 est.)
Real GDP per capita	\$38,900 (2024 est.) \$38,800 (2023 est.) \$37,700 (2022 est.)
Exports	\$28.117 billion (2024 est.) \$28.294 billion (2023 est.) \$29.364 billion (2022 est.)
Exports - partners	Lithuania 19%, Estonia 6%, Russia 6%, Germany 6%, Sweden 5% (2023)
Exports - commodities	wood, wheat, broadcasting equipment, packaged medicine, natural gas (2023)
Imports	\$29.234 billion (2024 est.) \$29.875 billion (2023 est.) \$31.206 billion (2022 est.)
Imports - partners	Lithuania 18%, Germany 11%, Poland 10%, Estonia 8%, Finland 5% (2023)
Imports - commodities	refined petroleum, cars, packaged medicine, broadcasting equipment, natural gas (2023)

Population Pyramid