

## **Latvia**

Latvia is a small country located on the Baltic Sea between Lithuania and Estonia. Latvia's capital is Riga and mostly consists of forests and wide spread beaches. It has a population of 2.013 million (2013). Latvia's government is parliamentary republic which means the prime minister is the head of the government leading a multi-party system. Although a small nation, Latvia is currently putting forth efforts to commence the ratification of the Paris Agreement. Latvia recognizes that the ratification of the Paris Agreement will entail Latvia to work meticulously towards the commitments that this treaty upholds including reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 40% by 2030. In addition, 80% of the world's total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is made up of a total of 20 countries. The rest of the world makes up a total of 20% of the world's total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Latvia is part of that 20%. Lastly, according to the World Development Indicators, in 2011, Latvia produced a total of 3.79 metric tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per capita.

Firstly, Latvia recognizes the health risks the country faces due to climate change. The country is extremely susceptible to various insect-transmitted diseases by both direct and indirect contact with these insects. Particularly, 3 types of diseases pose an imminent threat on the country and the health and wellbeing of its citizens: Mosquito-borne disease, Tick-borne disease, and the Sand-fly-borne disease. These diseases are a result of shifting environmental factors that make the country vulnerable to these illnesses. In addition, floods are the most common natural disasters in Europe. If climate change is not dealt with, floods will become a greater risk resulting in injuries, drowning, and trauma especially in the elderly, disabled, and children.

Secondly, Latvia is fortunate enough to have yet to discover refugees that have been displaced due to natural disasters. However, that is not to say they are not at risk of natural disasters. As stated, Latvia is a country located on the Baltic Sea with the Gulf of Riga bordering a part of the north-east side of the country. With large bodies of waters surrounding the country, Latvia is vulnerable to floods and extreme weather conditions. Floods can be caused by numerous things however the most prevalent factor is be climate change. Rising temperatures will cause thermal expansion as water temperatures start to rise as well.

Lastly, Latvia is taking drastic measures to ensure their carbon footprint is as minimal as possible. One of which include a committee dedicated to researching the biodiversity in the country and how climate change may potentially cause health risks to its citizens through its water systems. In addition, Latvia has reported to begin ratifications of the Paris Agreement. Latvia is an environmentally active country that is definitely a proven leader to other small countries in that the size of the country has no significant effect in terms of environmental leadership.