



LATVIA



INTRODUCTION

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. Latvia reestablished its independence in 1991 following the breakup of the Soviet Union.

GOVERNMENT

Chief of State

President Egils LEVITS

Head of Government

Prime Minister Krisjanis KARINS

Government Type

parliamentary republic

Capital

Riga

Legislature

unicameral Parliament or Saeima (100 seats)

GEOGRAPHY

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

ECONOMY

Economic Overview

high-income, EU-member Baltic economy; export-driven; major bribery and money-laundering scandals suggest widespread financial corruption; strong but gradual post COVID-19 recovery; regional tension with Belarus; highly developed transit services

GDP (Purchasing Power Parity) \$56.92 billion (2020 est.)

GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity) \$29,900 (2020 est.)

Industries - processed foods, processed wood products, textiles, processed metals, pharmaceuticals, railroad cars, synthetic fibers, electronics

Agricultural products - wheat, milk, rapeseed, barley, oats, potatoes, rye, beans, pork, poultry

Exports \$20.23 billion (2020 est.)

lumber, broadcasting equipment, whiskey and other hard liquors, wheat, packaged medicines (2019)

partners: Lithuania 16%, Estonia 10%, Russia 9%, Germany 7%, Sweden 6%, UK 6% (2019)

Imports \$19.84 billion (2020 est.)

refined petroleum, broadcasting equipment, cars, packaged medicines, aircraft (2019)

partners: Russia 21%, Lithuania 14%, Germany 9%, Poland 7%, Estonia 7% (2019)

PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Population

1.9 mil. (July 2021 est.)

Population Growth

-1.1% (2021 est.)

Ethnicity

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.)

Language

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

Religion

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

