[eGovernment in]

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Latvia

Latvija

What's Inside

Country Profile
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European Commission

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Country Profile

Basic Data and Indicators

Basic data

Population (1.000): 2.306,4 inhabitants (2005)

GDP at market prices: 12.837,3 million Euros (2005)

GDP per inhabitant in PPS (Purchasing Power Standards, EU-25=100): 47,2 (2005)

GDP growth rate: 10,2% (2005)

Inflation rate: 6,9% (2005)

Unemployment rate: 8,9% (2005)

Government debt/GDP: 11,9% (2005)

Public balance (government deficit or surplus/GDP): 0,2% (2005)

Source: Numerical data provided by Eurostat

Area: 65.000 km^2

Capital city: Riga

EU Official Languages: Latvian

Currency: Lats

Source: Europa Website

Political Structure

Latvia is a Parliamentary Republic, established in 1991 following the fall of the Soviet Union.

Legislative power is held by a unicameral Parliament (Saeima), which is made up of 100 members elected every four years (proportional system; universal suffrage; 5% parliamentary threshold).

The Head of State is the President, elected by parliament for a four-year term of office, and serving largely representative functions. The Head of Government is the Prime Minister selected by the President. The Cabinet, composed of the Prime Minister and the Ministers chosen by the Prime Minister, is approved by and accountable to Parliament.

Latvia's current constitution (*Satversme*) was adopted on February 15, 1922. The key articles of Satversme were renewed in May 1990 and the whole constitution came into force again in 1993.

Latvia became a member of the European Union on 1 May 2004.

Current Head of State: Vaira Vike-Freiberga (since 17 June 1999).

Current Head of Government: Aigars Kalvītis (since 2 December 2004).

Information Society indicators

Percentage of households with Internet access: 31% (2005)

Percentage of enterprises with Internet access: 74% (2004)

Percentage of individuals using the Internet at least once a week: 36% (2005)

Percentage of households with a broadband connection: 14% (2005)

Percentage of enterprises with a broadband connection: 48% (2005)

Percentage of individuals having purchased/ordered online in the last three months: 3% (2005)

Percentage of enterprises having received orders online within the previous year: 1% (2005)

Percentage of individuals using the Internet for interacting with public authorities:

obtaining information 12,2%, downloading forms 4,9%, returning filled forms 5,0% (2005)

Percentage of enterprises using the Internet for interacting with public authorities:

obtaining information 32%, downloading forms 30%, returning filled forms 15% (2005)

Source: Eurostat

eGovernment History

Main developments and key milestones (in reverse chronological order)

For the latest developments, see: eGovernment News - Latvia

July 2006

- The Latvian Cabinet of Ministers has given the go-ahead for plans to outsource the maintenance of central information systems in a meeting on 4 July. EGovernment Affairs Minister Ina Gudele projected that the savings from outsourcing could amount to as much as 100.000 Latvian lat (more than €140.000) over a period of five years. Gudele expressed her confidence in the ability of specialist companies to maintain government information systems better than state institutions could. The upkeep of such infrastructure as the filing systems of national and local government institutions, income databases, etc., will be farmed out. The draft concept presented by Gudele offered several options for the maintenance of information systems of national importance.
- An EU-backed project will digitise some 5 million items from the collections of more than 100 Latvian museums to enable a wider public to access this rich national heritage. The Joint Catalogue of the Collections of National Museums was launched with funding from the European Regional Development Fund in 2005 and will end in 2007. The government's Culture Information Systems agency then put the project out to tender. Rix Technologies, a Latvian IT company, won this public contract. The project will provide the museums with an internet connection, PC stations, scanners and digital cameras. Staff will receive training on how to digitise their collections. The electronic catalogue will be freely available on the internet for all to see.
- Latvian Minister for eGovernment Affairs, Ina Gudele, has recently given her approval to a scheme to introduce a range of tax incentives aimed at encouraging citizens to invest in the technology needed to get them on-line, using the growing array of eGovernment services on offer.
- Ina Gudele, the Latvian Minister for Electronic Government Affairs, has also recently confirmed that the introduction of the electronic signature is advancing smoothly and, as a result, a whole new range of eGovernment services should soon be available.

June 2006

A Latvian initiative to promote the spread of broadband in the country, particularly in less accessible regions, has received approval from the European Commission who has deemed it compatible with EC Treaty State aid rules.

March 2006

Being far from home can leave you feeling a little cut off. A new internet service launched by the Latvian government is aimed at helping its citizens abroad keep in touch with events at home, as well as establish links with Latvian communities in their host country.

October 2005

The Latvian Government adopts the '**Conception on eProcurement system**', which aim is the completion of an eEnabled public procurement system streamlining public purchases and reducing bureaucracy and the risk of corruption.

September 2005

- The Latvian Government adopts the eGovernment Action Programme 2005-2009, which sets the priorities and path for the future development of state and municipal information systems and eServices.
- The Latvian Government decides to develop new Guidelines for the development of the Information Society in Latvia in compliance with the EU's Lisbon Strategy objectives and the European initiative i2010.

June 2005

The Latvian Government signs an **agreement on the introduction of qualified digital signatures in Latvia** with State joint stock company Latvia Post and Lattelekom LTD. The main goals of the Latvian digital signature project are the development of the infrastructure for the use of digital signatures, the selection of reliable service providers, as well as the implementation of qualified digital signatures and of a set of eServices requiring the use of digital signatures.

February 2005

The Latvian Government signs a **cooperation agreement with Microsoft** on the cooperation in the use of Microsoft software in public sector. The agreement also aims at facilitating the development of education and science in Latvia.

January 2005

The Secretariat of the Minister for Special Assignments for Electronic Government Affairs takes over the functions of the Information Society Bureau (ISB) and becomes responsible for eGovernment policy development, implementation and coordination.

December 2004

The Latvian Parliament approves the composition of a new government, including the appointment of a **Minister for Special Assignments for Electronic Government Affairs**.

November 2004

The Latvian Parliament adopts the Law on Information Society Services, transposing EU Directive 2000/31/EC on certain legal aspects of information society services, in particular electronic commerce.

September 2004

- The Information Society National Council is established and its composition is approved. The aim of the Information Society National Council, which is chaired by the Prime Minister, is to facilitate the development of a knowledge-oriented society.
- The **eGovernment Coordination Council** is established, with the aim is to coordinate the implementation of Latvia's e-government programme. The Council is chaired by the director of the State Chancellery.
- The **National programme** "Development and Improvement of eGovernment Infrastructure Base for 2004-2006" is adopted. The aim of the programme is to fill the existing gaps in the State and municipal e-government infrastructure and to provide the basis for eGovernment systems in rural areas, using EU structural funds.

May 2004

Latvia joins the European Union and connects its government data network to the pan-European administrative network **TESTA**, developed in the framework of the IDA programme.

January 2004

- The Government adopts the **conception** "Use of Information Technology in the Improvement of a Public Procurement System" that defines Latvia's public e-procurement strategy. The conception has three objectives: the development of a public procurement portal with the possibility of electronic notification; the implementation of electronic catalogues and eAuctions; and the setting up of a central public procurement body. The target is to realise 33% of all public procurement procedures electronically by 2008, with a view to save EUR 1 million per year after 2008.
- All functions of the Ministry of Transport and Communications related to development of e-government and Information Society are taken over by the Information Society Bureau (ISB) within the State Chancellery. The ISB becomes the sole responsible entity for development of Information Society and eGovernment policy, as well as for coordination and monitoring of eGovernment implementation.

May 2003

An **Information Society Bureau (ISB)** is established in the State Chancellery, with responsibility for the development of information society policy and coordination of its implementation. The Head of the Bureau directly reports to the Prime Minister and to the Director of the State Chancellery.

October 2002

The Latvian Parliament adopts the Law on Electronic Documents, transposing the EU Directive on a Community framework for electronic signatures (1999/93/EC) and defining the legal status of electronic documents and digital signatures. The Law, which comes into force in January 2003, sets an obligation for state and local government institutions to accept electronic documents from natural persons and legal persons no later than 1 January 2004.

August 2002

- The Cabinet of Ministers adopts the eGovernment Conception, which sets the strategic principles and a functional model for implementing eGovernment in Latvia. Its main objective is to create a citizen-oriented, democratic and effective state administration.
- The government portal **LVonline.lv** is launched with a view to provide a single access point to government information and services.

May 2002

- The Latvian Parliament adopts the Law on State Information Systems, which provides a legal framework for the operation of state information systems and the cooperation of involved organisational units. The aim of the law is to ensure the availability and quality of the informative services provided by state and local government institutions in the state information systems.
- The Latvian Parliament adopts the Law on Personal Identification Documents, which states that an identity card or passport is the mandatory personal identification document for all Latvia residents (citizens or non-citizens) aged 15 years or more.

November 2001

The Cabinet of Ministers adopts the **Conception of State Unified Libraries Information System**. The main goal of the project is to develop coordinated state and public libraries information system, to provide universal information services for readers both in information search and delivery of books, publications, references and documents from Latvia's and international information sources.

July 2001

The Cabinet of Ministers adopts the Public Administration Reform Strategy 2001-2006, which has five broad objectives: ensure uniform, purposeful,

forward-looking and future-oriented public administration; ensure stable and efficient financial and budgetary management; gain trust of citizens in public administration and achieve public involvement in state governance processes; provide high quality public services to citizens; and ensure that public administration employs motivated, highly qualified and honest (responsible and ethical) staff.

2000 and before.....

In December **2000**, the Cabinet of Ministers adopts the Strategic Guidelines of Social Economic Programme e-Latvia, intended to improve the effectiveness and competitiveness of Latvia in the global economy. In addition to significant action in the areas of eCommerce and eGovernment, the programme is also aimed at promoting access to basic information technology knowledge. The implementation of the programme is foreseen for the period to the end of 2004.

In July **2000**, an updated version of the National Programme "Informatics" is approved; in particular to better take into account the priorities of the eEurope action plan adopted by EU Heads of State and Government in Feira in June 2000. The updated programme "Informatics 2000" also pays special attention to the importance of ICT as a branch of the national economy to increase the GDP and living standards, and to the training of skilled IT specialists.

In May **2000**, the Cabinet of Ministers adopts the "Conception of Identification Cards", which foresees the introduction of an electronic identification card in the country. On 11 September 2001 the Cabinet of Ministers adopts the amendments in the conception and entrusts the Ministry of Interior together with Ministry of Foreign Affairs to work out the draft law of passports and identification cards. In 2005 this conception will be revised again.

In March **2000**, the Latvian Parliament adopts the Law on Personal Data Protection, due to come into force in January 2001. The law is based on standard fair information practices and is fully compliant with the EU Data Protection Directive. The aim of this Law is to protect the fundamental human rights and freedoms of natural persons, in particular the inviolability of private life, with respect to the processing of personal data.

In **1999**, the Cabinet of Ministers adopts the National Programme "Informatics". Covering the period 1999-2005, the programme aims to develop the Information Society and to integrate Latvia more effectively into the process of globalisation. The programme comprises 13 sub-programmes and 122 individual projects. It provides a detailed analysis of the current situation, objectives of the separate sub-programmes, tasks and priorities, risk factors, and a description of the suggested course of execution of the programme. The financing needed for its execution is approximately LVL 243 million (EUR 349 million). Responsibility for coordinating its implementation lies with the Ministry of Transport and Communication, Department of Informatics (until the end of 2003).

In **1998**, the Latvian Parliament adopts the Freedom of Information Law, which purpose is to ensure public access to information held by central and local government institutions for the performance of their legal functions. This Law determines a uniform procedure by which natural and legal persons are entitled to obtain information from public bodies and to utilise it.

A project of **Integrated State Significance Information System** (mega system) is developed that determines principles of integration of prime registers, state and local governments' information systems.

eGovernment Strategy

Main strategic objectives and principles

Latvia's eGovernment Action Programme 2005-2009, adopted by the Government on 29 September 2005, is based on Latvia's eGovernment Conception and on the Public Administration Reform Strategy 2001-2006. The programme is closely aligned with the eEurope 2005 Action Plan and the new EU strategy "**i2010 – A European Information Society for growth and employment**" adopted by the European Commission on 01 June 2005. The basic action lines of the Programme are: to improve state and municipal information technology infrastructure and collaboration between State Registers, to create new channels for government services based on the one-stop agency principle, to develop new e-services – primarily the most required by citizens and business, to improve the quality of public services using ICT solutions, to create new state information systems and to develop municipalities' information systems. The financing resources for the eGovernment Action Programme are State budget resources, co-funding of EU Structural Funds and others.

The document Latvia's eGovernment Conception, adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers on 20 August 2002, establishes Latvia's national eGovernment strategy.

Vision and mission

The basis of eGovernment development is the vision of Latvia as a developed, dynamic and prosperous country, one of whose basic features is a **democratic and efficient state administration**, oriented towards fulfilling citizen needs and that can ensure the competitiveness of the country as well as the welfare of its inhabitants.

Taking into consideration the global movement towards the Information Society and the specific issued faced by Latvia's state administration, the Government's primary aim is to enable a steady modernisation of public administration by making use of the opportunities offered by Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and e-business methods, an improvement of the quality and effectiveness of public services, as well as an increased civic participation in public affairs.

Objectives

The overall objectives of Latvia's eGovernment programme are:

- **Better government** – improvement of the quality of public services.
- **Cheaper government** – improvement of administration effectiveness and reduction of costs.
- **More democratic government** – increase of society participation in the work of state administration.

In order to reach these strategic objectives, the following specific goals have been set:

- Gradual eEnabling of public service provision – until 2007.
- Implementation of eDemocracy mechanisms (elections, referendums, polls and political communication on the Internet) – until 2006.

- Integration of services according to customers' life events, using one-stop agencies, call centres, as well as electronic means of communication – until 2005.
- Transformation of state administration institutions into customer-oriented organisations, substantially improving their work efficiency – until 2005.
- Alignment of Latvia's administration institutions with European Union structures and cooperation with other countries – until 2005.

Principles

The development of eGovernment must be based on the following principles:

- Society participation in state administration.
- Orientation towards the needs of customers/citizens.
- Integration (consolidation) of services on the basis of life events.
- Multi-channel provision of services, including electronic provision.
- Equal opportunities for all.
- Concentration of public bodies on basic tasks and use of private sector expertise through outsourcing.

In September 2004, the Latvian Government adopted the National Programme "Development and Improvement of e-Government Infrastructure Base for 2004-2006", whose aim is to fill the existing gaps in the State and municipal eGovernment infrastructure and to provide the basis for eGovernment systems in central and local government, using EU structural funds. This programme sets a number of short-term objectives:

1. To improve the existing state information systems until their valuable functioning, ensuring the online availability of state and local government services to residents.
2. To provide state institutions, local governments, schools, libraries, archives and museums with the necessary computer engineering and computer network connections.
3. To organize their work with state and local government and specialised information systems appropriately.
4. To improve the access infrastructure.
5. To improve the existing state and local government information systems and develop new ones, in compliance with Latvia's eGovernment Conception, integrating their mutual operation in unified state system.
6. To ensure secure data information transmission and storage, continuous operation of infrastructure.
7. To develop state and local governments' electronic services, optimising administration processes and facilitating the residents' access to services.
8. To ensure the possibility for residents to receive state and local government information and services, using one-stop agencies, various telecommunication services and Internet connections, giving residents the opportunity to freely choose their preferred communication and interaction channel with public administrations.
9. To ensure the improvement of state and local government employees' ICT skills and competences for performing their tasks and duties in delivering services to citizens. To improve current training programmes and develop new ones for the improvement of employees' and residents' competence.
10. To ensure that the development of services does not fall behind the development of new information systems, but is integrated harmoniously in the newly built environment to deliver the necessary services for residents and for businesses.
11. To develop and implement in state and local governments working environment operation model oriented to the optimisation of processes, allowing several institutions to operate, coordinate their activities and perform tasks in common. It will facilitate the information exchange between institutions and will ensure the professional growth of

specialists among the employees of state and local governments.

Latvia's eGovernment drive forms part of a wider policy for the development of the **Information Society**, whose objectives and priorities were set in several official documents adopted in recent years. The National Programme "Informatics", adopted on 30 March 1999 and covering the period from 1999 to 2005, sets the basis of Latvia's IT policy. Its main objective is to develop the Information society in Latvia, taking into consideration the trends of technology development in the world and in Europe, as well as the specific situation and requirements of the country. The use of ICT in state administration and local government is one of the key priorities of the programme. As one of the realisation mechanisms of the National programme "Informatics", the Government adopted on 12 December 2000 the Strategic Guidelines of the Socio-Economic Programme e-Latvia, whose objectives correspond to those of the eEurope Action plan and aim at creating the environment required for the development of electronic commerce and electronic government applications and transactions. On 13 September 2005, the Latvian Government made the decision to develop new Guidelines for the development of the Information Society in Latvia in compliance with the EU's Lisbon Strategy objectives and the European initiative i2010.

eGovernment development level in Latvia.....

To make available for society a number of online services – customs and tax electronic declarations, services of Latvia's Register of Enterprises, employment search services, library services, shopping information, various branch industry statistics, possibilities of communication and interaction.

To support and develop the work of local governments, local government system modules and commercial domain software (only in large cities) have been unified. Individual cities have introduced electronic services (e-Riga, eVentspils, eCesis etc.)

Internet management and security.....

Latvia approves the necessity to support Internet security in global level as an important stability factor. Security measures shall begin in national level and continue cross-borders and globally. In compliance with law on Information society services the Consumer rights protection centre will supervise the spam.

Internet solutions in public policies field shall be based on communication and cooperation which give the opportunities to residents fully use the modern technologies.

To put into practice this principle it is planned to represent the state inside the global network with A State portal in 2006. Also in 2005 a national regulation for state institutions home pages introduction and maintenance has been developed.

eGovernment Legal Framework

Main legal texts impacting on the development of eGovernment

eGovernment legislation.....

Law on State Information Systems (2002)

Adopted in May 2002, the Law on State Information Systems provides a legal framework for the operation of state information systems and the cooperation of involved organisational units. The aim of the law is to ensure the availability and quality of the informative services provided by state and local government institutions in the state information systems. Some Regulations adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers promote the implementation of the Law on State Information Systems: Regulations of Registration of the State Information Systems (2 August 2005), Technical Requirements for the State Information Systems (11 October, 2005), General Security Requirements for the State Information Systems (11 October, 2005).

Freedom of Information legislation.....

Law on Freedom of Information (1998)

The Law on Freedom of Information was adopted by the Latvian Parliament on 29 October 1998 and signed into law by the State President in November 1998. It guarantees public access to all information held by State administrative institutions and Local Government institutions in "any technically feasible form" not specifically restricted by law. Public bodies must respond to requests for information within 15 days. Information can only be restricted if there is a law; the information is for internal use of an institution; it is a trade secret not relating to public procurements or information about the private life of an individual; or if it concerns certification, examination, project, tender and similar evaluation procedures. Appeals can be made internally to a higher body or directly to a court. The law was amended in 2003 to give the State Data Inspectorate oversight authority starting in January 2004.

Data Protection/Privacy legislation.....

Law on Personal Data Protection (2000)

The Law on Personal Data Protection was adopted by the Latvian Parliament on 23 March 2000 and came into force on 1 January 2001. The law is based on standard fair information practices and is fully compliant with the EU Data Protection Directive (95/46/EC). The aim of this Law is to protect the fundamental human rights and freedoms of natural persons, in particular the inviolability of private life, with respect to the processing of personal data. Application of the Law is overseen by the State Data Inspectorate.

eCommerce legislation.....

Law on Information Society Services (2004)

The Law on Information Society Services, transposing EU Directive 2000/31/EC on certain legal aspects of information society services, in particular electronic commerce, was passed by the Latvian Parliament on 4 November 2004. This Law governs the procedure of provision of electronic services and conditions to be observed by e-service providers, requirements regarding protection of consumer rights, and responsibility of e-service providers.

eCommunications legislation.....

Law on Electronic Communications (2004)

The new Law on Electronic Communications was adopted by the Latvian Parliament on 28 October 2004 and entered into force on 1 December 2004. The aim of this Law is to promote and regulate the provision of electronic communications services, transposing the EU's new regulatory framework for electronic communications. The law provides for forms of various electronic networks, including both public and private electronic networks. The law also provides for duties

and rights of providers, subscribers, and users of electronic networks.

eSignatures/eIdentity legislation.....

Law on Electronic Documents (2002)

The Electronic Document Law was adopted by the Latvian Parliament on 31 October 2002 and came into force on 1 January 2003. It transposes the EU Directive on a Community framework for electronic signatures (1999/93/EC) and defines the legal status of electronic documents and digital signatures. The Law sets an obligation for state and local government institutions to accept electronic documents from natural persons and legal persons no later than 1 January 2004. This requirement is not fulfilled until now due to the lack of certification service provider. However, on 15 June 2005 the Latvian Government signed an agreement with Latvia Post and Lattelekom LTD on the introduction of qualified digital signatures, which should pave the way for the development of e-services requiring the use of digital signatures.

eProcurement legislation.....

Public procurement is currently regulated in national legislation by the Law on Procurement for State or Local Government Needs (July 2001, amended in June 2004) and the Law on Procurement for Public Services Providers needs (October 2004). The latter implements Directive 2004/17/EC and thus regulates the use of electronic communication means in the public procurement process for the utility sector. The use of electronic communication means in public procurement is not yet regulated for the general government sector, but will be so when Directive 2004/18/EC is implemented by the end of 2005.

Re-use of Public Sector Information.....

Legislation implementing Directive 2003/98/EC of 17 November 2003 on the re-use of public sector information is expected to be adopted in 2005.

Status of transposition of PSI-directive:

Latvia has notified full transposition.

eGovernment Actors

Main roles and responsibilities

National eGovernment.....

Policy/Strategy

Minister for Special Assignments for eGovernment Affairs

The Minister for Special Assignments for Electronic Government Affairs was appointed in the new Latvian Government approved by Parliament in December 2004. The Minister holds political responsibility for the development and implementation of the state policy in the field of electronic government and Information Society. He is also in charge of organising the activities related to the implementation of information technologies in state administration to ensure the modernisation and effectiveness of state administration. On 1 January 2005, the Secretariat of the new Minister took over the functions of the Information Society Bureau (ISB) and became responsible for eGovernment policy development, implementation and coordination. The Secretariat is also in charge of providing organisational arrangements for the work of the Information Society National Council, chaired by the Prime Minister, of monitoring the implementation of the Council's decisions, and of preparing reports to the Prime Minister and the Cabinet of Ministers.

Coordination

1. **Secretariat of the Minister for Special Assignments for eGovernment Affairs**

The Secretariat of the Minister for Special Assignments for Electronic Government Affairs is responsible for e-government, information society and information technology policy development, implementation and coordination. The Secretariat is facilitating and coordinating the development of local governments electronic services and represents the country's interests in relevant international organisations and EU institutions. The Secretariat also has responsibility to ensure the operation of the Information Society National Council and the Electronic Government Coordination Council, and to coordinate the cooperation of state administration and local government institutions in the development of electronic services.

To facilitate the usage of ICTs options and to lower the knowledge gap;

Tasks

- To put in order eGovernment normative documentation (Organizing and technical normative of State Information system, data exchange provisions, legal power of register data);
- To improve the collaboration between State Registers – in 2005 for 30% but in 2009 up to 100% of State and local government registers shall be connected in unified system;
- To develop different types of services and make technical and organizing infrastructure services available and easy accessible for usage;
- To develop new e-services – by 2009 significantly enlarge their proportion: in 2006 it is foreseen to introduce 25 e-government

services, by 2007 - 30 services but by 2008 and 2009 – 60 services;

- To support the projects initiated by local governments also adoptable in other municipalities;
- To inform and educate the society so they can fully use ICTs options while using e-government services.

2. Information Society National Council

The Information Society National Council, chaired by the Prime Minister, is established to provide high-level leadership on e-government and Information Society issues and to coordinate and promote all related development processes. The Council is formed by the Cabinet of Ministers and the representatives of Latvia's Local Governments Association and other institutions or councils. It is a consultative institution and coordinating institution, which aim is to facilitate the development of the Information Society in Latvia and to favour the inclusion of the country in the global and European knowledge economy.

3. eGovernment Coordination Council

The aim of the e-Government Coordination Council is to facilitate the implementation of eGovernment strategic guidelines and the realisation of eGovernment projects. The Council, which is chaired by the Minister for Special Assignments for Electronic Government Affairs, comprises representatives of all ministries, Latvia's Local Governments Association, State Revenue Service and Latvia's Large Cities Association.

Implementation

1. State Information Network Agency (VITA)

The State Information Network Agency was set up in 1997 to fulfil the need for improved data availability in national information systems. Since then, the Agency has been in charge of implementing and operating key components of the country's e-government infrastructure such as the 'State-Significant Data Transmission Network' (VNDPT), a nationwide network serving government and municipal institutions throughout Latvia. The Agency provides data networking and security services to government institutions, local governments, as well as private enterprises.

2. Central Government and bodies

As in most countries, the different ministries and agencies hold responsibility for the implementation of their own ICT projects.

Support

1. **Secretariat of the Minister for Special Assignments for eGovernment Affairs**
2. **State Information Network Agency (VITA)**

Audit/Assurance

State Audit Office of the Republic of Latvia

The State Audit Office is the Supreme Audit Institution of the Republic of Latvia. Its mandate is wide and covers all public bodies, at national and local level. The State Audit Office is required by law to submit a report on the execution of the state and local government budgets, and provides an annual opinion about the correctness of the financial statements of the ministries, central state institutions and local governments.

Data Protection

State Data Inspectorate

The State Data Inspectorate supervises personal data protection in Latvia. It also controls the observation of information systems security requirements concerning of personal data processing, and maintains a register of systems processing personal data.

Regional & Local eGovernment.....

Strategy

Minister for Special Assignments for eGovernment Affairs

The Minister for Special Assignments for Electronic Government Affairs holds political responsibility for the development and implementation of the state policy in the field of electronic government and Information Society, at national as well as at local level.

Coordination

1. **Secretariat of the Minister for Special Assignments for eGovernment Affairs**
2. **Information Society National Council**
3. **eGovernment Coordination Council**

Implementation

1. **Ministry of Regional Development and Local Governments**

   The Ministry of Regional Development and Local Governments is responsible for the implementation of the Local Governments Unified Information System's project.

2. **Local and Regional Governments**

   Local and regional authorities hold responsibility for the implementation of their own ICT projects.

Support

1. **State Information Network Agency (VITA)**

   The State Information Network Agency provides data networking and security services to government institutions as well as local governments and private enterprises.

2. **Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments (LALRG)**

   The Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments (LALRG) represents local and regional governments of the Republic of Latvia on a voluntary basis. Its members currently include: all 60 towns and cities of the country, all 26 districts (rajons), 391 out of 444 rural municipalities (pagasts), and 22 of 26 amalgamated municipalities (novads). The LALRG has the authority to represent local and regional governments in the negotiations with central government.

Audit/Assurance

State Audit Office of the Republic of Latvia

The mandate of the State Audit Office covers all public bodies, at national and local level.

eGovernment Who's Who

Main eGovernment decision-makers and executives

Minister responsible for eGovernment

Name: Ina Gudele

Job title: Minister for Special Assignments for Electronic Government Affairs

Picture:

Contact details:

Kr. Valdemāra iela 33

Rīga, LV-1010

Latvia

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E-mail: ministrs@eps.gov.lv

Head of eGovernment (i.e. head of eGovernment agency/directorate)

Name: Viesturs Krievans

Job title: Head of the Secretariat of the Minister for Special Assignments for eGovernment Affairs

Picture:

Contact details:

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Latvia

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eGovernment Infrastructure

Main eGovernment infrastructure components

Portal

latvija.lv

The latvija.lv portal, which was launched in August 2006, provides people living in Latvia and abroad with Internet resources relating to state institutions as well as a centralised access point to public eServices.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs launched in March 2006 a new internet portal (http://www.latviesi.com) for Latvian citizens living or working abroad. The portal contains information about Latvian organisations and communities abroad.

Network

1. National Data Transmission Network (VNDP)

Set up and operated by the State Information Network Agency (VITA), the VNDP is a nationwide network serving government and municipal institutions and organisations throughout Latvia. Connection to the VNDP Network provides data interchanges with registers and databases of national significance and information interchanges with EU bodies through the dedicated TESTA II network. The VNDP is based on 32 network nodes, located in each of the country's territorial districts, as well as in the capital city of Riga and the towns of Jurmala and Sigulda. VNDP is a multifunctional, vertically integrated voice and data transmission network. The network guarantees clients excellent connection speed and provides dedicated lines and dynamically adjustable bandwidth customised to serve different networks in each government institution. The part of VNDP intended for public access provides government institutions and municipal organisations with a means to display information of public interest.

Furthermore, the "State Information Network Agency" (VITA) is planning to start materialising several projects of state level importance, including the

construction of a united state security and emergency radio network (SANDRA) complying with EU standards, the creation of the 112 call communication service as well as a the set-up of a public key certification centre.

2. 'Network of Light' – The National Unified Library Information System

The SULIN project was launched in 2003. Among its objectives was the set-up of the 'Network of Light' connecting all of Latvia's public libraries into a unified network which is based on modern IT infrastructure to render universal information services for readers, i.e: information retrieval; delivery of necessary books, publications and documents from Latvian and international information sources. The unified system is currently in place in the eight libraries which are deemed to be of national importance. Users can search through the unified library catalogue and then order the necessary printed works. These are delivered through the library that is closest to the client's home. All of the other libraries will be hooked up by the end of 2007. In addition, libraries provide public and free internet access points.

eIdentification infrastructure.....

Following the adoption of the Law on Personal Identification Documents (2002) which states that identification documents shall contain a machine readable zone, the Cabinet of Ministers adopted a Regulation On the citizen's identity cards, non-citizens identity cards, citizen's passports, non-citizens passports and stateless person's travel documents, which among other things provides for the inclusion of electronic chips in future identity cards. The chip shall contain the holder's personal identity number, name, sex and digital picture, as well as an electronic signature. Pursuant to the Digital Signature project, an **infrastructure for eSignature** is being established. As from October 2006, the Latvian Post service started issuing certified **eSignature cards** that can be used to sign documents electronically and access a variety of on-line eServices. It is expected that these cards will be widely used once the full range of eServices currently being developed are up and running. This state-wide secure eSignature will be notably used for declarations and tax reports. Currently, within the framework of a pilot project, 25 state and municipal services are being made available on-line – most of these will require the use of the eSignature card. Experts have expressed confidence as to the security of the eSignature cards. The stored information is well protected and it would be very complicated and costly to forge a card. Nevertheless, users are being urged to be careful when using the card and to protect PIN codes and other important information.

As regards the **ePassports**, the first ones are scheduled to be issued in the third quarter of 2007. The new passports will feature a chip that stores biometric data to maximize anti-counterfeiting security. Initially the data will comprise a digital photo and two of the passport holder's fingerprints will also be included from 2008 onwards. In total, 1.1 million ePassports will be produced by 2012. Company Giesecke & Devrient, which has been awarded the contract, will handle all system integration activities for the Latvian government, as well as manufacturing and supplying the new documents.

eProcurement infrastructure.....

eProcurement system

In January 2004 the Latvian Government adopted an eProcurement strategy ("Use of information technology in the improvement of a public procurement system") that foresees the implementation of electronic catalogues and electronic auctions, as well as of a public procurement portal. It is projected that one third of all public procurement procedures will be done electronically by 2008. A 'Conception for a System of Electronic Procurement' was furthermore adopted on 5 October 2005. The resulting eProcurement system allows state and municipal authorities to purchase standard goods and services electronically. The Electronic Procurement Agency (EPSA), established in January 2006, is now responsible for organising and managing the eProcurement system. During the year 2006, EPSA concluded its first eProcurement agreement for the supply of printing equipment to state and municipal authorities. The agreement marks a first step for the national eProcurement system which is set to expand significantly in 2007.

Knowledge Management infrastructure

There is currently no government-wide knowledge management infrastructure in Latvia.

Other.....

The Latvian Education Informatisation System (LIIS)

On June 13, 1997, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia and the University of Latvia signed an agreement, "On the Latvian Education Informatisation System". The goal of the project is to increase the quality of education in the ICT field, increase and provide uniform access to information, gain the necessary skills for a meaningful use of information in the developing information society. In this light, the LIIS project covers the whole information grid: education content, management, information services, infrastructure and user training at several levels – schools, school boards and Ministry of

Education and Science. The project is supported by modern technological information technologies, such as the Platform independent software Lotus Notes, which is being used at all levels to support a unified approach to document storage and management, and ORACLE for effective maintenance software and for linking with state level registries. At infrastructural level, the LIIS project has had major impact on the ratio of Internet connectivity of schools, which passed from 9 % in 1997 to 97 % in 2002.

eGovernment Services for Citizens

Availability and sophistication of eServices for Citizens

The information in this section is based on the common list of 20 basic public services (12 for citizens, 8 for businesses) adopted by the Council of the EU in March 2001, and on the methodology used to assess their level of online availability and sophistication in the eEurope benchmarking exercises (see: *eGovernment indicators for benchmarking eEurope*).

The 12 services for citizens are as follows:

1. Income Tax Declaration
2. Job Searches by labour Offices
3. Social Security Contributions
4. Personal Documents
5. Car Registration
6. Application for Building Permission
7. Declaration to the Police
8. Public Libraries
9. Certificates (birth, marriage) Request and Delivery
10. Enrolment in Higher Education
11. Announcement of moving (change of address)
12. Health-related services (e.g. appointments for hospitals)

For each service, the sophistication stage reached is indicated, with reference to the maximum stage possible for the service.

- Stage 1 - Information: online information about public services
- Stage 2 - Interaction: downloading of forms
- Stage 3 - Two-way interaction: processing of forms, including authentication
- Stage 4 - Transaction: full case handling, decision and delivery (payment)

1. Income taxes (declaration, notification of assessment)

Responsibility: Central Government, State Revenue Service (VID)

Website: http://www.vid.gov.lv/

Sophistication stage: 1/4

Description: The Electronic Declaration System enables Latvian taxpayers to submit tax returns, declarations and other documents via Internet by filling in appropriate web form or by transferring XML file containing corresponding data and send it to the State Revenue Service (VID). PIN codes and passwords are used to authenticate users, and information exchange is secured by SSL protocol. All the necessary checks of declarations data are performed and users are informed of the results of these checks online and by email. 50 different types of declarations can be submitted via Internet, this without sending additionally a hard copy since 2005, when a law granted full legal force to eDocuments.

2. Job search services by labour offices

Responsibility: Central Government, State Employment Agency

Website: http://www.nva.lv/index.php?id=139

Sophistication stage: 4/4

Description: The State Employment Agency's Online Job Market enables job seekers to put their CVs in database, as well as to view the vacancies placed by employers. Employers can access the CVs database, as well as register their vacancy and place the information about the needed employees.

3. Social security benefits

a. Unemployment benefits

Responsibility: Central Government, State Social Insurance Agency

Website: http://www.vsaa.lv/vsaa/content/?cat=678

Sophistication stage: 2/4

Description: Information and application forms available for download.

b. Family allowances

Responsibility: Central Government, State Social Insurance Agency

Website: http://www.vsaa.lv/

Sophistication stage: 3/4

Description: Family allowances applications can be submitted and processed online.

c. Medical costs (reimbursement or direct settlement)

Responsibility: Central Government, Health Compulsory Insurance State Agency

Website: http://www.voava.lv/

Sophistication stage: 3/4

Description: The tasks of health insurance in Latvia are to cover the costs of health services provided to insured persons, to prevent and cure diseases, to finance the certain part of medicines and medical products. There is no refund system in Latvia. If the health service provider has a contract with the Agency, all costs incurred are directly reimbursed by the Agency. The patient should pay only the amount of own contribution – the patient fee

d. Student grants

Responsibility: Central Government, Ministry of Education and Science

Website: http://www.izm.gov.lv/

Sophistication stage: 2/4

Description: Information and forms to download.

4. Personal documents (passport and driving licence)

a. Passport

Responsibility: Central Government, Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs

Website: http://www.ocma.gov.lv/

Sophistication stage: 1-2/3

Description: Information only.

b. Driving license

Responsibility:	Central Government, Road Traffic Safety Directorate
Website:	http://www.csdd.lv/default.php?pageID=1090928610
Sophistication stage:	1-2/3
Description:	Information only.

5. Car registration (new, used and imported cars)

Responsibility:	Central Government, Road Traffic Safety Directorate
Website:	http://www.csdd.lv/default.php?pageID=1087882596
Sophistication stage:	1-2/4
Description:	Information only.

6. Application for building / planning permission

Responsibility:	Local Government
Website:	http://www.em.gov.lv/em/2nd/?cat=56
Sophistication stage:	0-1/4
Description:	The Website of the Ministry of Economics provides information related to planning and construction permits. Applications are handled by local authorities.

7. Declaration to the police (e.g. in case of theft)

Responsibility:	Central Government, State Police
Website:	http://www.vp.gov.lv/
Sophistication stage:	1-2/3
Description:	Information only.

8. Public libraries (availability of catalogues and search tools)

Responsibility: Central Government, Ministry of Culture

Website: http://www.km.gov.lv/UI/Main.asp?id=115

Sophistication stage: 0-1/4

Description: The Ministry of Culture's website provides information about public libraries and links to the websites of the different libraries, many of which have their own electronic catalogues. A National Unified Library Information System is currently being implemented, which will link Latvia's around 2.000 public libraries through a single network and produce a unified library catalogue. Users will be able to search the catalogue and order the necessary print works, which will be delivered through the library that is closest to their place of residence. The unified system is already in place in eight libraries that are deemed to be of national importance. All other libraries will be linked to the single network by the year 2007.

9. Certificates (birth, marriage): request and delivery

Responsibility: Central Government (Ministry of Justice) and Local Government, General Registry Offices

Website: http://www.tiesas.lv/index.php?id=4

Sophistication stage: 0-1/3

Description: Information only. General Registry Offices are institutions that belong to the judicial system and register civil status – marriage, birth and death. Establishment of a General Registry Office is within the competence of local authorities.

10. Enrolment in higher education/university

Responsibility: Central Government, Ministry of Education and Science, Universities

Website: http://www.aip.lv/saites.htm

Sophistication stage: 1-2/4

Description: There is no centralised enrolment in higher education institutions or universities. The regulations of each university can be slightly different, and information about the admission procedure is available on the websites of each university. Some universities have application forms for download and offer electronic registration to individual courses. Some universities also offer electronic registration form for taking part in admission tests that can be submitted electronically.

11. Announcement of moving (change of address)

Responsibility:	Local Government
Website:	http://www.pmlp.gov.lv/?_p=426&menu__id=146
Sophistication stage:	2/3
Description:	Declaration forms are available for download on the Website of the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs. In case of change of place of residence, the person has to declare it in the respective local government institution where the new place of residence is located in one month's time. Legislation is currently being considered to enable residents to declare their change of address by post or electronically directly with the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs.

12. Health related services (interactive advice on the availability of services in different hospitals; appointments for hospitals)

Responsibility:	Central Government, Ministry of Health
Website:	http://www.vm.gov.lv/
Sophistication stage:	0-1/4
Description:	Information only. In 2004 the Government adopted Basic Guidelines on eHealth, which foresee the implementation of health care information systems and of electronic health records, the development of telemedicine, and the development of a centralised healthcare portal.

Source: The online sophistication ratings are in agreement with the report 'Online Availability of Public Services: How is Europe Progressing?' carried out for the European Commission

eGovernment Services for Businesses

Availability and sophistication of eServices for Businesses

The information in this section is based on the common list of 20 basic public services (12 for citizens, 8 for businesses) adopted by the Council of the EU in March 2001, and on the methodology used to assess their level of online availability and sophistication in the eEurope benchmarking exercises (see: *eGovernment indicators for benchmarking eEurope*).

The 8 services for businesses are as follows:

1. Social security contributions for employees
2. Corporation Tax: declaration, notification
3. VAT: declaration, notification
4. Registration of a new company
5. Submission of data to statistical offices
6. Customs declaration
7. Environment-related permits
8. Public procurement

For each service, the sophistication stage reached is indicated, with reference to the maximum stage possible for the service.

- Stage 1 - Information: online information about public services
- Stage 2 - Interaction: downloading of forms
- Stage 3 - Two-way interaction: processing of forms, including authentication
- Stage 4 - Transaction: full case handling, decision and delivery (payment)

1. Social contribution for employees

Responsibility: Central Government, State Revenue Service

Website: http://www2.vid.gov.lv/

Sophistication stage: 3/4

Description: The Electronic Declaration System enables Latvian taxpayers to submit tax returns and social contributions declarations online. It is technically possible to submit 50 different declarations and statements electronically, but as the regulations concerning the procedure of elaboration, processing, storage and circulation of electronic documents have not yet been adopted, these documents still have to be submitted also in paper form and the Electronic Declaration System is still in demo version. It is planned that it will become fully functional and transactional in 2005.

2. Corporation tax: declaration, notification

Responsibility: Central Government, State Revenue Service

Website: http://www2.vid.gov.lv/

Sophistication stage: 4/4

Description: The Electronic Declaration System enables Latvian taxpayers to submit tax returns and social contributions declarations online. It is technically possible to submit 50 different declarations and statements electronically, but as the regulations concerning the procedure of elaboration, processing, storage and circulation of electronic documents have not yet been adopted, these documents still have to be submitted also in paper form and the Electronic Declaration System is still in demo version. It is planned that it will become fully functional and transactional in 2005.

3. VAT: declaration, notification

Responsibility: Central Government, State Revenue Service

Website: http://www2.vid.gov.lv/

Sophistication stage: 3/4

Description: The Electronic Declaration System enables Latvian taxpayers to submit tax returns and social contributions declarations online. It is technically possible to submit 50 different declarations and statements electronically, but as the regulations concerning the procedure of elaboration, processing, storage and circulation of electronic documents have not yet been adopted, these documents still have to be submitted also in paper form and the Electronic Declaration System is still in demo version. It is planned that it will become fully functional and transactional in 2005.

4. Registration of a new company

Responsibility:	Central Government, Register of Enterprises
Website:	http://www.ur.gov.lv/
Sophistication stage:	2/4
Description:	Information and forms to download.

5. Submission of data to statistical offices

Responsibility:	Central Government, Central Statistical Bureau
Website:	http://www.csb.gov.lv/
Sophistication stage:	1-2/3
Description:	Forms of statistical reports are available, and companies can complete and submit statistical questionnaires electronically through the e-questionnaire system.

6. Customs declarations

Responsibility:	Central Government, State Revenue Service
Website:	http://www.vid.gov.lv/
Sophistication stage:	3/4
Description:	Customs declaration forms are available for download. Entrepreneurs have to use the Computerised Transit Control System (NCTS) to submit their customs declarations. The permit to use the Entrepreneurs Module of the NCTS system is issued after signing the contract with the Customs Board of State Revenue Service.

7. Environment-related permits (incl. reporting)

Responsibility:	Central Government, Ministry of Environment, Regional Environmental Boards
Websites:	http://www.varam.gov.lv/
Sophistication stage:	1/4
Description:	Information only. Some Regional Environmental Boards have forms to download on their websites. The functions of Regional Environmental Boards include the issuance and coordination of permits (licences) for the use of natural resources and for performing the polluting activities.

8. Public procurement

Responsibility:	Central Government, Procurement Monitoring Bureau
Website:	http://www.iub.gov.lv/
Sophistication stage:	3/4
Description:	The Procurement Monitoring Bureau, supervised by the Ministry of Finance, is the administrative authority in charge of monitoring the conformity of procurement procedures with legal and regulatory requirements. It also provides methodological assistance and consultations and organises training for institutions (contracting authorities), for suppliers of goods, providers of services and performers of construction work. Its website provides access to calls for tenders, supports online notification of tenders and limited interaction (online filling of forms). The implementation of electronic catalogues and electronic auctions, as well as of a public procurement portal, is foreseen for the coming years.

Source: The online sophistication ratings are in agreement with the report 'Online Availability of Public Services: How is Europe Progressing?' carried out for the European Commission

European Commission - IDABC eGovernment Observatory

The eGovernment Observatory is an information tool on eGovernment developments across Europe. It provides decision-makers and professionals with information resources and insight into strategies, initiatives and projects in Europe and beyond.

The eGovernment Observatory is an IDABC project. IDABC is the European Commission programme that promotes the delivery of e-government services in the EU

The eGovernment factsheets are one of the observatory services. They present an overview of the eGovernment situation and progress in European countries. The factsheets are updated every six months.

http://ec.europa.eu/idabc/egovo

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