



Latvia

Highlights in 2008

In 2008, the Latvian government launched preparations for a new Environment Policy Strategy 2009-2015. It will include targets and propose actions to tackle

environmental problems and is scheduled to be adopted in the first half of 2009.

Latvia became eligible for International Emissions Trading in April. Furthermore, the Energy Efficiency Action Plan for 2008-2010 was approved by the government in May. Key measures include reduction of heat energy losses in heat networks, a decrease in energy consumption in apartments and the establishment of new cogeneration power plants using renewable energy resources. Also the new Building Energy Performance Law was adopted in 2008. This law aims to transpose the requirements of the EU Directive on energy performance of buildings to the national level.

Climate change and energy

	Latvia				EU-27 total	rank in EU-27
	2000	2005	2006	target		
Total Kyoto GHG emissions						
– million tons (Mt) CO ₂ eq.	10.0	11.1	11.6	23.8 (by 2008-2012)	5142.8	
– from energy supply and use, including transport (Mt CO ₂ eq.)	7.4	8.1	8.5		4098.7	
– from transport (Mt CO ₂ eq.)	2.2	3.1	3.5		992.3	
					EU-27 average	rank in EU-27
– per capita (tons CO ₂ eq.)	4.2	4.8	5		10.4	1
– per GDP (tons CO ₂ eq. per 1000€ GDP)	1 179.6	883.9	824.5		495.7	19
– trend (% change compared to base year*)	-61.3%	-57.0%	-55.1%	-8.0% (by 2008-12)	-10.8%	2

* Base year for CO₂, N₂O and CH₄ is 1990 and for F-gases is 1995.

		target	EU-27 average
– Projected 2010 emissions trend compared to base year*			
– with existing measures, Kyoto mechanisms and carbon sinks	-46.1%	-8.0%	-13.4%
– with existing and additional measures, Kyoto mechanisms and carbon sinks	-46.1%	(by 2008-12)	-16.3%

* Base year for CO₂, N₂O and CH₄ is 1990 and for F-gases is 1995.

	Latvia			target	EU-27 average	rank in EU-27
	2000	2005	2006			
Average CO ₂ emissions from new passenger cars sold (grams CO ₂ /km)	191.0 (2004)	181.8 (2006)	182.2 (2007)	130 by 2012-15 for EU-27	157.5	26
Electricity produced from renewable energy sources (% of gross electricity consumption)	47.7%	(2006) 37.7%	(2007) 36.4%	49.3%	15.6%	3
– from hydropower	47.6%	36.5%	35.2%	(by 2010)	9.2%	
– from wind	0.1%	0.6%	0.7%		3.1%	
– from biomass		0.6%	0.6%		3.0%	
Combined heat and power (CHP) generation (% of gross electricity generation)	n.a.	30.7%	42.6%	18% by 2010 for EU-15	10.9%	1
Energy consumption per capita (kg oil eq.)	1 578	1 952	2 021		3 694	2
Energy intensity - Energy consumption per 1000€ GDP (kg oil eq.)	759	614	563		202	20

The Kyoto target for Latvia for the period 2008-2012 is -8 % compared to base year levels. In 2006, the country's greenhouse gas emissions were already 55% lower than the base year emissions. Latvia is well on the way towards fulfilling this commitment as the most recent projections for 2010 show. In December 2008 Latvia agreed not to increase its greenhouse gas emissions in non-ETS

sectors (e.g. buildings, road transport and farming) by more than 17% by 2020 compared to 2005 levels. Furthermore, Latvia has committed to achieving by 2020 a share of energy from renewable sources in gross final energy consumption of 40% (up from 33% in 2005).

The government measures on climate change are outlined in the Climate Change Mitigation Programme for 2005-2010. This includes the following priorities: raising energy efficiency, designing a modern transport system (i.e. optimising traffic flows in cities; promoting public transport in Riga; developing bicycle infrastructure) and implementing best available technologies.

Latvia became eligible for International Emissions Trading in April 2008. The Latvian government has already adopted a national strategy of Assigned Amount Unit (AAU) management, allocating around 40 million AAUs for Green Investment Scheme (GIS), of which 8-10 million were to be sold during a pilot transaction in late 2008. Latvia expects to gain experience through the pilot transaction, which will shed light on the secondary legislation for the GIS. The Ministry of Environment has already started negotiations with a limited number of buyers on the AAU transaction in the pilot phase.

The Latvian government has decided to build a power plant based on coal mixed with biomass. In 2008, it took further discussions on implementation of

the project, including identification of the site for the power plant and execution of an environmental impact assessment (EIA). The plan is to build the power plant in the Liepāja region. However, no final decision on the EIA and whether the power plant can be built has been taken yet.

The Energy Efficiency Action Plan for 2008-2010 was approved by the government in May 2008. The key measures proposed aim to reduce heat energy losses in the heat networks, to promote the establishment of new cogeneration power plants using renewable energy resources and to decrease heat energy consumption in apartments. The aim is to achieve a decrease in final energy consumption by 67 GWh, or 0.2% of total final energy consumption.

The Building Energy performance Law which transposes the Directive on energy performance of buildings, was adopted in 2008. It sets requirements for certification of energy auditors and energy certificates for buildings.

Nature and biodiversity

	2000	2006	Latvia 2007	2008	target	EU-27 average	rank in EU-27
Natura 2000 area (sites designated under the Habitats and Birds Directives) as a % of terrestrial area		11.0%	11.0%	11.0%		17.0%	
Sufficiency of site designation under the Habitats Directive			89.4%	89.4%	100%		
Area occupied by organic farming (% of Utilised Agricultural Area)	0.3%	10.3%	9.8%			4.2%	2
Freight transport (billion tkm)	18.1	27.6	31.5			EU total 2505.0	
– % road	26.5%	39.0%	41.9%			76.9%	1 of 26
– % rail	73.5%	61.0%	58.1%			17.4%	1 of 26

Latvia has 98 Special Protection Areas (SPA) and 331 Sites of Community Importance (SCI) under the Natura 2000 network. In total these cover 11% of its land area. A total of 103 Natura 2000 sites have completed/agreed management plans, with 12 under development. In addition to the Special Protection Areas, micro reserves have been established since 2008 for the protection of plant species, animal species, and biotopes.

The new National Environmental Policy Strategy for 2009-2015 is under development and will be adopted in the first part of 2009. This new strategy includes a chapter on biological diversity, where the main goal is to ensure a

balance between the interests of nature protection and economic activity. The strategy proposes: to improve the Natura 2000 network in accordance with the most recent scientific studies and to finalise the introduction of a monitoring system; to elaborate and implement a nature protection communication strategy; and to promote research into the impact on species and biotopes of different economic activities. By 2012, a new National Programme on Biological Diversity is to be elaborated.

Under the Cohesion and Structural Funds for the period 2007-2013, the amount Latvia plans to spend on biodiversity and nature protection is € 26 million.

Environment and health

	Latvia				EU-27 average	rank in EU-27
	2000	2005	2006	Ceiling		
Urban population exposure to air pollution by particles (annual mean concentration, $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	30.0	30.0	
Urban population exposure to air pollution by ozone (SOMO35 level, $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3 \cdot \text{day}$)	n.a.	308	1 758	n.a.	4 417	1 out of 23
Air pollutant emissions (thousand tonnes)				(by 2010)	EU27 total	
– sulphur dioxides (SO_2)	10	4	3	101	7946	
– nitrogen oxides (NO_x)	37	40	44	61	11198	
– non-methane volatile organic compounds (NMVOCs)	56	63	65	136	9391	
– ammonia (NH_3)	12	14	15	44	4006	
	1991	Latest available year (2005)				
Water exploitation index	1.3%			0.7%	n.a.	1

Concerning air quality, the day and night limit values for solid particles were sometimes (depending on weather conditions) exceeded from March to June 2008 in larger cities like Riga. Furthermore, the majority of inhabitants in the

households in rural areas are using water from private wells, which in some cases may not comply with the requirements on drinking water quality.

Natural resources and waste

	Latvia			Target	EU-27 average	rank in EU-27
	2000	2006	2007			
Municipal waste generated (kg per capita)	270	411	377		522	4
– % landfilled	93.3%	71.0%	85.4%		41.0%	24
– % incinerated	0%	0.5%	0.5%		19.9%	
	2004	2005	2006			
Recycling of packaging waste (as % of total packaging waste)	45.6%	47%	42.2%	55%-80% (by 2015)	56.5 %	19

The State Waste Management Plan 2006- 2012 adopted by the government in 2005 set the following priorities: decoupling of waste generation and economic development; overall reduction in the volumes of waste generated through improved waste prevention initiatives; better resource efficiency and a shift to more sustainable consumption patterns.

It seeks to establish 10 new landfills for disposal of municipal waste by 2009 and to close existing dumpsites by 2009 and to re-cultivate them by 2012. These goals are implemented by regional waste management plans which were approved by the government in late 2007 and 2008. They include more detailed provisions, e.g. action programmes, activities for improvement of the waste management system, institutional responsibilities, financing and potential financing sources.

In accordance with the government's Action Plan, recommendations were given in 2008 on how to promote Green Public Procurement (GPP) in public sector institutions. The recommendations are mainly based on the GPP Training Toolkit of the European Commission.

Better regulation and implementation

	Latvia			EU-27 total
	31/12/2006	31/12/2007	31/12/2008	
Infringements of EU environmental legislation	3	9	12	481

Use of market-based instruments

	Latvia			EU-27 average
	2000	2005	2006	
Share of environmental taxes in total tax revenue	8.1%	9.2%	7.9%	6.4%

The Law on Natural Resource Tax was amended in 2008. It increased several taxes, e.g. on municipal waste storage in landfills and on packaging materials.

Outlook for 2009

Adoption of the new Environmental Policy Strategy 2009-2015 is planned in the first half of 2009. Under the provisions of the Building Energy Performance Law, regulations on the certification of energy auditors and on the issuing of energy certificates for buildings will be adopted in 2009. Furthermore, alignment with the international Emissions Trading System is planned for 2009.

Preparation of a new National Sustainable Development Strategy is under way. In October, a public forum took place and the adoption of a new National Sustainable Development strategy is planned for 2009.

According to the Action Strategy of the Ministry of Environment 2007-2009 work will continue on the following: development of water management systems for municipalities; waste management development and improvement; restoration of historically polluted sites; nature protection infrastructure for conservation of biodiversity; development of effective heat supply systems based on modern technologies to reduce air pollution and climate change; and reduction of environmental risks, including flooding.

