Waste prevention country profile

Latvia

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European Environment Agency

Country profile: Latvia

General information

Name of the country/ region	Latvia
Geographical coverage of the waste prevention programme (national/ regional)	National
Type of programme (stand alone or integrated into waste management plan or into the circular economy strategy)	Integrated into the waste management plan
Title of programme and link to programme	'Atkritumu apsaimniekošanas valsts plāns 2021-2028' (National waste management plan 2021-2028) https://likumi.lv/ta/id/320476 and http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/documents/6951.
Duration of programme	2021 until 2028
Language	Latvian
Contact person in the country/region	Rudīte Vesere, Ministry of Climate and Energy, rudite.vesere@kem.gov.lv
Development process of the programme/ revision	Latvian National Waste Management Plan 2021-2028 was approved by Cabinet of Ministers in January 2021. Latvian National Waste Management Plan 2021-2028 comprises also the Waste prevention plan Ch 9. "Waste prevention state programme", Ch 10 "Food waste prevention programme", Ch 11 "Packaging waste prevention programme" and Ch 12 "Programme for development of re-use of goods and repair services"). The National waste management plan for 2021-2028 is based on the study Investment needs assessment for the development of the national waste management plan for 2021-2028" by Geo Consultants Ltd, the multidisciplinary expert team and proposals developed. The plan also takes stock from the report "Investment needs assessment for the development of the State waste management plan for 2021-2028", by Gateway Baltics Ltd.
Foreseen budget for implementation of the programme	Estimated costs and financing options are included in the waste management plan. Sources of funding are EU funds, investments by economic operators, waste producers and operators and waste management fees, which are applied in the implementation of the polluter pays principle and the principle of extended producer responsibility. Budgeted action specifically addressing waste prevention are e.g., the establishment of an infrastructure for the collection of goods and to create centers for repairing and preparing for re-use of goods and implementation of the food waste prevention program.

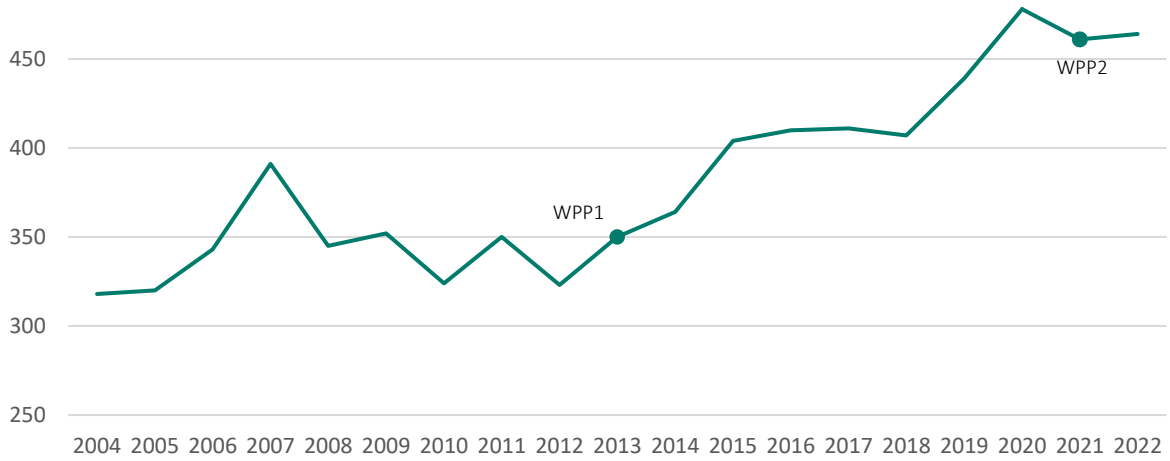
WASTE GENERATION

The following figures illustrate the progress towards waste prevention and decoupling of waste generation from economic growth in Latvia:

Municipal solid waste (MSW)

Latvia's municipal waste generation has increased over the past decade with drops in 2011-2012 and 2018 (Figure 1). In 2022, the country generated 464 kg/cap of municipal waste, which is significantly below the (estimated) EU27 average of 513 kg/cap.

Figure 1 Municipal waste generation in Latvia (kg per capita), 2004-2022

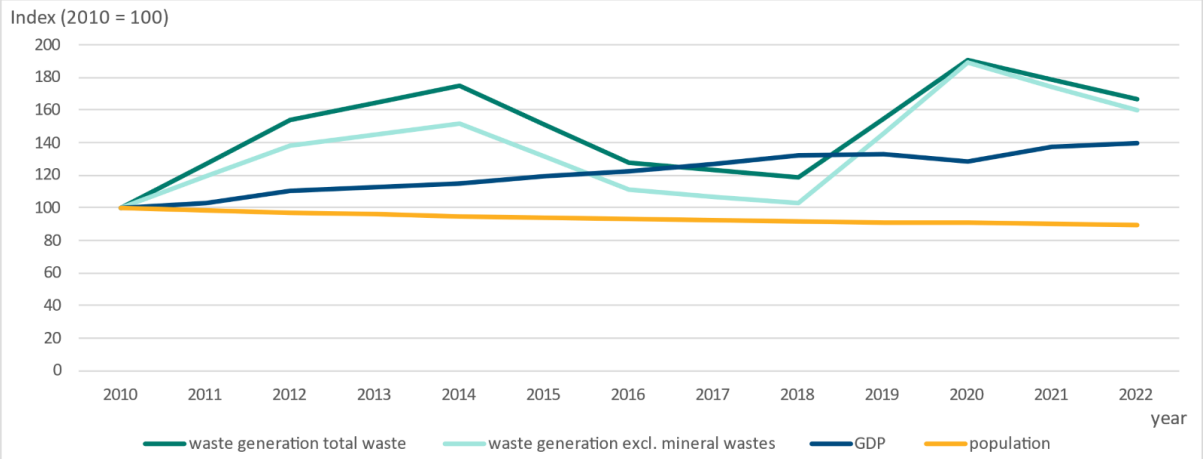


Source: Eurostat [ENV_WASMUN].
Note: Change in reporting methodology for waste exported for recycling in 2019. As of reference year 2020, new reporting rules apply for calculating recycled municipal waste pursuant to the targets laid down in Article 11.2(c-e) of Directive 2008/98/EC. Latvia applied the new calculation rules from 2020 onwards.

Total waste

The total amount of waste generated in Latvia increased strongly between 2010–2014, decreased until 2018 and has significantly increased since (Figure 2). This trend is primarily driven by the largest waste categories, namely household and similar wastes, and sorting residues (which are part of the mixed ordinary wastes category). When excluding mineral waste, waste generation shows a similar trend, as mineral wastes are not dominating waste generation in Latvia. Latvia's GDP is quite steady with a small increasing trend but dropped slightly in 2019, most likely due to the Covid-19 outbreak. Population is slightly declining and would not have a strong impact on waste generation trends. Due to the strong variations in waste generation, no clear indications of decoupling between economic growth and waste generation can be seen.

Figure 2 Generation of waste (total and excluding major mineral wastes), population and economic development, 2010-2022



Source: Eurostat [ENV_WASGEN, NAMA_10_PC, DEMO_GIND].
Note: Waste generation data for odd years are interpolated.

WASTE PREVENTION PROGRAMME

Objectives and priorities

1.	Waste prevention objectives of the Programme - quantitative objectives (waste reduction) - qualitative objectives (reduction of hazardous substances/ environmental impacts)	The overarching objectives of the waste management plan are: - To prevent waste generation and to ensure a significant reduction of the total amount of waste generated, using the best available waste prevention options and best available techniques, increasing resource efficiency and promoting the development of a more sustainable consumer behaviour model; - To ensure the rational use of waste as a resource on the basis of the basic principles of the circular economy and to ensure that resources are returned as far as possible to the economic circuit in a way that is useful to the economy; - To ensure that the waste generated is not hazardous or presents a low risk to the environment and human health by promoting relevant product policies, restrictions on hazardous substances and substances harmful to the environment and raising consumer awareness; - To ensure that the amount of waste to be disposed of is reduced and that waste is disposed of in a manner that is safe for human health and the environment. Of the objectives mentioned qualitative and quantitative prevention relates specially to the first and the third objective. The implementation of these programmes is supported by actions of the European Union LIFE programme 2018-2020 financed project "Waste To Resources Latvia - boosting regional sustainability and circularity" (LIFE Waste To Resources IP, LIFE20 IPE/LV/000014). Project implementation period: 01.11.2021.-31.12.2028. In LIFE Waste To Resources IP several measures to improve separated waste collection system by piloting complex management approaches for priority waste streams (biological and food waste, textiles, electronics and ICT, packaging waste etc.) and ensuring safe disposal of specific types of hazardous waste are planned.
2.	Sectors covered	The waste prevention programme is linked to the Action Plan for the Transition and Circular Economy 2020-2027 and the specific action directions and measures set out thereon. Thus, no specific sector is excluded.
3.	Priority waste types	• Food waste • Household waste • Hazardous waste • EEE • Textiles • Furniture • Packaging; • Building materials and construction product

4.	Target groups	All sectors, public, industry and households are included

Targets, indicators and monitoring

1. Indicators used to monitor progress

The Latvian waste plan and prevention programme includes 10 quantitative indicators relating to the generation of household, industrial and hazardous waste. Target year is 2028.
The indicators are:

No.	Quantitative indicator	Unit of measurement	Base year (2021)	2028
1.	Amount of waste generated by households (households)	kg per capita. per year	459	Not more than 400
2.	Total amount of municipal (household) waste generated	t / year	869 285	Not more than 650 thousand.
3.	Total amount of hazardous waste generated	t / year	111 180	Not more than 50 thousand
4.	Total amount of recycled municipal (household) waste	% of annual production	[44]	55[151]
5.	Total amount of hazardous waste recycled	% of annual production	17	75
6.	Total amount of industrial waste recycled	% of annual production	84	85
7.	Total amount of municipal (household) waste disposed of	% of annual production	53	Not more than 40%
9.	Total amount of industrial waste disposed of	% of annual production	6	Not more than 25%
10.	Total amount of hazardous waste disposed of	% of annual production	4	Not more than 25%

2. Quantitative targets

- Amount of waste generated in households diminish to 400 kg/ capita and year from 459 kg/capita in 2021.
- Total amount of municipal (household) waste generated to be < 650 000 t/year. In 2021 generation was 869 285 t.
- Total hazardous waste generated to decrease from 111 180 ton in 2021 to < 50 0000 ton in 2028.
- Total recycled municipal (household) waste to increase from 44 % of annual waste generation in 2021 to 55 % in 2028.
- Total recycled hazardous waste to increase from 17 % of annual waste generation in 2021 to 75 % in 2028.
- Total recycled production waste to increase from 84 % of annual waste generation in 2021 to 85 % in 2028.
- Total municipal (household) waste disposed of to decrease from 53 in 2021 to <40 % in 2028.

3.	Monitoring mechanism of the programme	Implementation will be followed up on a 3 annual basis.
4.	Evaluation of the programme	See above

Prevention measures

Implemented prevention measures according to Article 9	Implemented waste prevention actions have been monitored on a 3-annual basis. The consolidate report is available at: http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/documents/4276. Quantitative targets relate e.g., to the generation of household, municipal and hazardous waste.

The waste prevention programme includes the following measures that are proposed to avoid waste generation (Chapter 1.5):

Table 1: Specific waste prevention measures structured according to Art 9 WFD

Promote and support sustainable consumption models	• Implementation supported by LIFE Waste To Resources IP. • Specific governmental measures are not written into the waste prevention programme.
Encourage the design, manufacturing and use of products that are resource-efficient, durable (including in terms of life span and absence of planned obsolence), reparable, re-usable and upgradable.	• Implementation supported by LIFE Waste To Resources IP. • Specific governmental measures are not written into the waste prevention programme.
Target products containing critical raw materials to prevent that those materials become waste.	• Under the current framework (European Commission's Industrial Strategy)[1], the storage and dismantling of End-of-Life Vehicles and WEEE must ensure the separation of components containing critical raw materials. • Promoting the re-use of products that are the main sources of critical raw materials in order to prevent these raw materials from becoming waste (including batteries, accumulators, WEEE) is included in the budget of the plan.
Encourage the re-use of products and the setting up of systems promoting repair and re-use activities, including in particular for electrical and electronic equipment, textiles and furniture, as well as packaging and construction materials and products.	• Implementation supported by LIFE Waste To Resources IP. • The program includes actions relating to promoting reuse of electrical and electronic equipment. • Draft regulatory enactments will be developed during the programme. • To have overview of the current situation with post-consumption textile flows, the stakeholders involved, as well as challenges and possible solutions, NGO Green Liberty has carried out research on collection and use of post-consumption textiles in Latvia (2023)

[1] https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/european-industrial-strategy_lv

Encourage, as appropriate and without prejudice to intellectual property rights , the availability of spare parts, instruction manuals, technical information, or other instruments, equipment or software enabling the repair and re-use of products without compromising their quality and safety.	• Implementation supported by LIFE Waste To Resources IP. • Further actions are planned e.g., in relation to the Action Plan for the Transition to a Circular Economy 2020-2027.
Reduce waste generation in processes related to industrial production, extraction of minerals, manufacturing, construction and demolition, taking into account best available techniques.	• Implementation supported by LIFE Waste To Resources IP. • Waste minimization actions are generally applied in the commercial sector, where the main goal is to make a profit and the reuse of materials in technological processes is an opportunity to reduce operating costs. For example, in the construction of roads, the removed asphalt surface is used in the composition of the restored road surface. In construction and building, construction materials are purchased to the extent that no residues occur and only finishing (extra) materials that may be required by the customer during the warranty period are left.
Reduce the generation of food waste in primary production, in processing and manufacturing, in retail and other distribution of food, in restaurants and food services as well as in households as a contribution to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal to reduce by 50 % per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and to reduce food losses along production and supply chains by 2030.	• Implementation supported by LIFE Waste To Resources IP. • The national plan on food waste prevention ‘Pārtikas atkritumu rašanās novēršanas programma 2021-2028’ will be implemented and further developed. • The Food Bank Paēdušai Latvijai “For a fed Latvia”, is a food program run by the Latvian Samaritan Association, which helps the disadvantage population by issuing food parcels. The parcels contain food donated both by producers, processors and traders.
Encourage food donation and other redistribution for human consumption, prioritising human use over animal feed and the reprocessing into non-food products.	• Legal risks and liabilities for food donations are minimized through regulations (EU/178/2002). Food may be donated to organisations that are engaged in charity and are registered with the Food and Veterinary Service in accordance with regulatory enactments regarding the procedure for recognition and registration of food businesses. Only prepacked and clearly labelled food may be donated. In turn, charities must ensure the traceability of food for donation and storage conditions, if any, on the label. • Improving the possibilities of direct food donation from shops promotes the reduction of food waste. Latvia will therefore specify in the regulatory enactments the conditions for donating food and non-food products and to expand the range of organizations that may need to donate food products (for example, nursing homes).

Promote the reduction of the content of hazardous substances in materials and products, without prejudice to harmonised legal requirements concerning those materials and products laid down at Union level, and ensure that any supplier of an article as defined in point 33 of Article 3 of Regulation (EC) No. 1907/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council provides the information pursuant to article 33(1) of that regulation to the European Chemicals Agency as from 5 January 2021.	• Implementation supported by LIFE Waste To Resources IP. • Specific governmental measures are not written into the waste prevention programme.
Reduce the generation of waste, in particular waste that is not suitable for preparing for re-use or recycling.	• Latvia plans to further increase environmental tax rates for the disposal of municipal waste in municipal landfills to promote waste prevention of currently landfilled waste.
Identify products that are the main sources of littering, notably in natural and marine environments, and take appropriate measures to prevent and reduce litter from such products, where Member States decide to implement this obligation through market restrictions, they shall ensure that such restrictions are proportionate and non-discriminatory.	• Implementation supported by LIFE Waste To Resources IP. • Latvia plans to continue and improve the Environmental Education Foundation's annual campaign "My Sea", which has been implemented since 2012. • Latvia will improve the implementation of EU Regulation 1224/2009 on the reporting of lost nets and the recovery of lost fishing gear and carry out a study on the amount of plastic waste generated by fishing, aquaculture and shipping activities and on economic instruments to promote the re-use and recycling of such waste. Measures to reduce marine litter (marine pollutant waste) on land have been developed on the basis of the HELCOM Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter.
Aim to halt the generation of marine litter as a contribution towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal to prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds.	• Latvia will take measures to motivate companies to produce products that are strong enough to be reused and recycled, as well as to use less harmful raw materials, focusing on products that are more common in marine and coastal areas. • Encourage voluntary agreements with retailers to reduce the consumption of plastic bags. • Establish and implement a beverage deposit system and, where possible, promote refill systems. The system began operating on February 1st, 2022. • Provide special waste bins for cigarette buds and other used tobacco products in public smoking areas, such as beaches and outdoor restaurants, bars, ferries). Regulated by the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 781. • Promote measures to reduce land-based marine pollution by providing sanitary infrastructure on the coast and inland nature tourism facilities. Regulated by the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 781.

	• Facilitate the collection of waste from recreational craft in marinas (for example, in accordance with the requirements of the eco-certificate “Blue Flag” for waste reception and management in marinas).
Develop and support information campaigns to raise awareness about waste prevention and littering.	• Implementation supported by LIFE Waste To Resources IP. • Promote educational activities on marine litter in synergy with other activities in the field of sustainable development and cooperation with society (including in relation to waste prevention and the promotion of sustainable consumption and production). • Promote curricula, including the recreational sector (such as diving and sailing schools), which develops awareness, understanding and respect for the marine environment. • Support participation in international, EU, Baltic Sea regional and national processes and initiatives for the prevention and reduction of marine pollution. • To continue and improve the campaign “My Sea” for monitoring beach waste, assessing the situation and promoting public participation. • Information campaigns for children, young people and consumers on the occurrence and prevention of marine litter (e.g., on the collection of food and drink packaging or plastic bags after use), taking into account information materials already available and using graphic materials, including beaches areas.

FOOD WASTE PREVENTION

Food waste generation

In 2018, the total amount of food waste generated in Latvia reached 319 000 tons, with primary production accounting for 5% (16 000 tons); processing and production 37 % (117 000 tons); trade <1 % (2 000 tons). 185 000 tons end up in the municipal solid waste, and the part is mainly discharged by households and catering. This fraction is equivalent to about 96 kg per person.

The information has been generated using the methodology and guide approved by the EU for the determination of food waste and surpluses. The methodology was adapted to the situation of Latvia and to the needs of enterprises and households in 2019. As not all producers of food waste and surpluses are obliged to report the amount of waste generated, the information summarised above is indicative.

Measures to prevent food waste

The Latvian waste prevention plan includes various measures to prevent the generation of food waste relating to facilitating food donations, awareness raising and research and development support for zero waste actions and technologies.

Improvement of food donation system

- Continue to improve the regulations on food donation systems
- Preparation of food donation guidelines (by 2024)
- Development of food donation and HSP prevention activities
- Information measures to promote food donation and reduction of PA

Prevention of food waste in production

- Cooperation with industry associations - preparation of industry guidelines for food waste prevention (by 2025)
- Continue to support the promotion of food trade directly from producers 2023

Raising awareness and informing consumers about the Food waste prevention and reduction

- Dialogue with producers, processors and traders on reducing generation of food waste. Support for the implementation of zero waste technologies and solutions.
- Promotion of good practice in food waste prevention
- Awareness-raising information events for consumers (especially target groups of children and youth) on the prevention and reduction of food waste
- Information measures for consumers to increase the understanding of food shelf life of food and reducing food waste
- Informing the public on food donations

Food waste measurements and monitoring

- Development of the food waste monitoring system (2023/2027)

Support for research and innovation aimed at reducing the food waste generation

REUSE OF PRODUCTS

Data

According to 2021 data reported to the EEA according to Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2021/19 (EEA, 2024) Latvia re-used:

- 13 467 tonnes of textiles;
- 20 475 tonnes of electrical and electronic devices;
- 71 106 tonnes of furniture.

It should be noted that this data has been reported for the first time. More information about the interpretation and limitations of the data set are available (EEA, 2024).

Measures to support reuse

The repair and reuse sector in Latvia has been preliminary assessed in order to have a baseline for measuring the progress. Policy work include to evaluate and, if necessary, improve the accounting system of enterprises by introducing the accounting of reused materials and the accounting of goods written off to charity. Also, regulative specifications or guidelines will be prepared for procedures by which waste prepared for re-use and to which this information shall be provided.

As for supporting reuse and repair, Latvia's waste prevention programme touches especially upon electronics and electrical equipment, vehicles, packaging (plastics), furniture, textiles and building materials and construction products.

Support the reuse of construction materials in construction processes involves inclusion in Green public procurement, standards especially for re-use of topsoil and asphalt. Measures include promoting waste minimisation construction practices (training, inclusion of criteria in tenders for the best construction, award for the most environmentally friendly construction).

The reuse of clothing and shoes is already deeply established in the Latvian market. In order to reduce the import of second-hand clothes and to encourage the re-use and repair of clothes placed on the market, extending the EPR system is important. Moreover, more purposeful public education is planned to further support the use of services provided by local small businesses and the possibilities of changing the existing owners of household items.

NGO activities include repair café events organised on voluntary basis (Repair café RĪGA https://repaircafe.lv/). Ziedot.lv has listed drop-off points for donation of unwanted, still usable items in Riga.

Also, Latvia's plan for modernisation of preparation for reuse and recycling equipment is focused on selected flows as construction waste, electrical and electronic equipment, end-of-life vehicles, etc.

Best practice examples

Food bank

The Food Bank Paēdušai Latvijai "For a fed Latvia", is a food program run by the Latvian Samaritan Association, which helps the needy population by issuing food parcels. The parcels contain food donated by producers, processors and traders. Accepts an unlimited number of high-quality, usable products that do not require special temperatures for storage. Perishable products with a short shelf life at room temperature will only be accepted if it is possible to deliver them quickly to the beneficiary. The Food Bank also accepts hygiene and household items such as toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, washing powder, shampoo, pampers and other items. Food parcels are distributed to residents throughout Latvia in cooperation with local charities and municipal social services. No brokerage or commission is charged on donations. All donations are used in full to complete food parcels.

Links to circular economy

Waste prevention is an integral part of the comprehensive transformation towards a circular economy. It reduces the input of natural resources into the economy as well as the necessary efforts to collect and recycle waste.

Approaches for improving circularity are often highly interlinked with successful waste prevention. The following table shows which circular strategies are explicitly integrated into Latvia´s waste prevention programme.

Topic	Addressed in the programme	Comments
Eco-design	Yes	Inter alia eco-design of packaging, and substitution of plastic with biodegradable materials will be promoted
Repair, refurbishment and remanufacture	Yes	Promotion of repair businesses e.g., for textile and shoes.
Recycling	Yes	increasing material recycling is mentioned e.g., in combination with preparation for reuse
Economic incentives and finance	Yes	The programme includes a list of planned economic policy tools
Circular business models	Yes	Actions are planned to align with EU's Circular Economy strategy.
Eco-innovation	Yes	E.g., promoting the development, implementation and application of eco-innovations in product packaging and product design.
Governance, skills and knowledge	Yes	E.g., by integrating waste prevention into curricula.