LATVIA

INTRODUCTION
Several eastern Baltic tribes merged in medieval times to form the ethnic core of the Latvian people (ca. 8th-12th centuries A.D.). The region subsequently came under the control of Germans, Poles, Swedes, and finally, Russians. Latvia reestablished its independence in 1991 following the breakup of the Soviet Union.

GOVERNMENT
Chief of State
President Egils LEVITS
Head of Government
Prime Minister Krisjanis KARINS
Government Type
parliamentary republic
Capital
Riga
Legislature
unicameral Parliament or Saeima (100 seats)

ECONOMY
Economic Overview
high-income, EU-member Baltic economy; export-driven; major bribery and money-laundering scandals suggest widespread financial corruption; strong but gradual post COVID-19 recovery; regional tension with Belarus; highly developed transit services
GDP (Purchasing Power Parity) $56.92 billion (2020 est.)
GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity) $29,900 (2020 est.)
Industries - processed foods, processed wood products, textiles, processed metals, pharmaceuticals, railroad cars, synthetic fibers, electronics
Agricultural products - wheat, milk, rapeseed, barley, oats, potatoes, rye, beans, pork, poultry
Exports $20.23 billion (2020 est.)
Lumber, broadcasting equipment, whiskey and other hard liquors, wheat, packaged medicines (2019)
partners: Lithuania 16%, Estonia 10%, Russia 9%, Germany 7%, Sweden 6%, UK 6% (2019)
Imports $19.84 billion (2020 est.)
Refined petroleum, broadcasting equipment, cars, packaged medicines, aircraft (2019)
partners: Russia 21%, Lithuania 14%, Germany 9%, Poland 7%, Estonia 7% (2019)

GEOGRAPHY
Area
Total: 64,589 sq km
Land: 62,249 sq km
Water: 2,340 sq km
Climate
maritime; wet, moderate winters
Natural Resources
peat, limestone, dolomite, amber, hydropower, timber, arable land

PEOPLE & SOCIETY
Population
1.9 mil. (July 2021 est.)
Population Growth
-1.1% (2021 est.)
Ethnicity
Latvian 62.2%, Russian 25.2%, Belarusian 3.2%, Ukrainian 2.2%, Polish 2.1%, Lithuanian 1.2%, other 1.5%, unspecified 2.3% (2018 est.)
Language
Latvian (official) 56.3%, Russian 33.8%, other 0.6% (includes Polish, Ukrainian, and Belarusian), unspecified 9.4% (2011 est.)
Religion
Lutheran 36.2%, Roman Catholic 19.5%, Orthodox 19.1%, other Christian 1.6%, other 0.1%, unspecified/none 23.5% (2017 est.)

as of October 2021