



Brussels, 7.7.2025  
SWD(2025) 315 final

**COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT**

**2025 Environmental Implementation Review  
Country Report - LATVIA**

*Accompanying the document*

**Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the  
European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions**

**2025 Environmental Implementation Review for prosperity and security**

{COM(2025) 420 final} - {SWD(2025) 300 final} - {SWD(2025) 301 final} -  
{SWD(2025) 302 final} - {SWD(2025) 303 final} - {SWD(2025) 304 final} -  
{SWD(2025) 305 final} - {SWD(2025) 306 final} - {SWD(2025) 307 final} -  
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## Executive summary

In May 2016, the European Commission launched the Environmental Implementation Review, a regular reporting tool based on analysis, dialogue and collaboration with EU Member States to improve the implementation of existing EU environmental policy and legislation <sup>(1)</sup>. Following previous cycles in 2017, 2019 and 2022, this report assesses the progress made while describing the main outstanding challenges and opportunities regarding environmental legal implementation in Latvia. The purpose of this report is to provide information on the implementation performance and highlight the most effective ways to address the implementation gaps that impact human health and the environment and hamper the economic development and competitiveness of the country. The report relies on detailed sectoral implementation reports collected or issued by the Commission under specific environmental legislation.

The main challenges set out below have been selected from Part I of this report, 'Thematic areas', taking into consideration factors such as the gravity of the environmental implementation issue in light of the impact on the quality of life of citizens, the distance to target and financial implications.

Latvia faces significant challenges in transitioning to a **circular economy**, requiring urgent action to boost its circular material use rate, fully implement its policy framework and adopt upstream circularity measures. While progress has been made with initiatives like the deposit system for beverage packaging, introduction of extended producer responsibility system for new and used textile products and updates to green public procurement, municipal waste recycling and biowaste collection remain key weaknesses. Despite a municipal waste recycling rate of 51 % in 2022, close to the EU-27 average, Latvia risks falling short of the 2035 landfill reduction goal of 10%, with 44 % of municipal waste still being landfilled.

Latvia, known for its rich **natural capital**, with vast forests and abundant water resources, often takes its biodiversity for granted and lacks a national biodiversity strategy and sufficient investments to protect and restore its natural capital. Economic interests like logging and peat extraction often overshadow biodiversity goals. Less than 10 % of protected habitats have favourable conservation status and habitats such as semi-natural grasslands, forests, bogs, and coastal habitats are declining due to

land-use change and pressures from forestry and agriculture. While Latvia has mapped all its habitats and species, it has yet to expand the Natura 2000 network and faces criticism for afforesting degraded peatlands, a practice that undermines climate goals and sustainability. **Drained peatlands** contribute disproportionately to greenhouse gas emissions, while clear-cutting caused significant loss of some forest habitats outside Natura 2000 areas before they could be designated as habitats of community importance.

As to **water pollution**, the assessment of the 3rd river basin management plans shows some improvement in the ecological status of surface water bodies and a deterioration in their chemical status compared to the previous reporting period.

Latvia's land use, land-use change, and forestry (**LULUCF**) sector has become a net greenhouse gas emitter in recent years. High emissions from cropland and grassland suggest significant emissions from organic-rich soils such as drained peatlands and decreasing forest stocks, which are the main drivers of LULUCF emissions in the country.

The overall **environmental investment needs** to enable Latvia to meet its objectives in the areas of pollution prevention and control, circular economy and waste, water protection and management, and biodiversity and ecosystems is estimated to be EUR 2 billion per year. A significant part of the estimated requirement, around EUR 1 billion per year, can be attributed to the need to support biodiversity and ecosystems. The current **environmental investment gap** in Latvia stands at an estimated EUR 1.2 billion per year, representing around 3 % of the national gross domestic product, being considerably higher than the EU average (0.77 %).

On **environmental governance**, Latvia provides broad rights to legal standing to the public regarding environmental matters. With environmental impact assessment report preparation completed within 6 to 18 months and the official decision and explanation from authorities about the environmental impacts of a project finalized in as little as two months, Latvia has one of the fastest impact assessment procedures in the EU. Enhancing the **administrative capacity** of Latvia's environmental authorities is crucial for better implementation of EU environmental policies and increased absorption of EU funding and technical support.

<sup>(1)</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – Delivering the benefits of EU environmental policies through a regular

environmental implementation review, COM(2016) 316 final of 27 May 2016, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2016%3A316%3AFIN>.

## Part I: Thematic areas

### 1. Circular economy and waste management

#### Transitioning to a circular economy

Advancing the transition to a circular economy in the EU will reduce the environmental and climate impact of our industrial systems by reducing input materials, keeping products and materials in the loop for longer and reducing waste generation, thus decoupling economic growth from resource consumption. A circular economy has considerable potential to increase competitiveness and job creation and will also promote innovation and provide access to new markets. With the 2020 circular economy action plan (CEAP)<sup>(2)</sup> measures either in place or legislatively advanced, Member States will now have to focus on a swift and effective implementation.

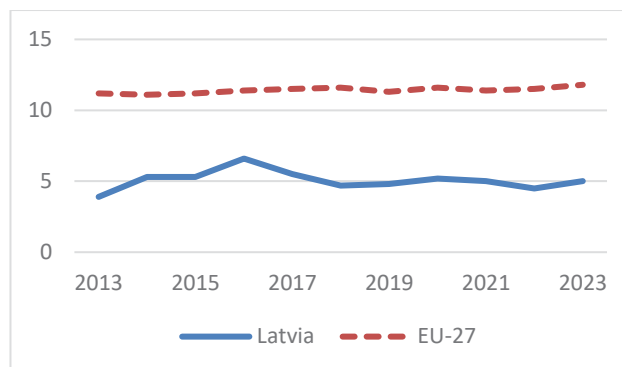
The 2020 CEAP launched the legislative process for a set of initiatives that will now have to be implemented by national governments across the EU. These initiatives were all introduced following a holistic life-cycle approach, with measures addressing the different stages of a product's life cycle, from design through use to end of life.

In the CEAP, the EU sets as its overarching objective the doubling of its circular material use rate (CMUR) by 2030.

The CMUR is a measure of one aspect of circularity: the share of the total amount of material used in the economy that is accounted for by recycled waste. A higher CMUR value means that more secondary materials were used as a substitute for raw materials, thus reducing the environmental impacts of extracting primary material.

Latvia's circular use of material has been relatively steady since the initial decline from its highest point in 2016. The rate stood at 5 % in 2023, well below the EU average of 11.8 % (Figure 1).

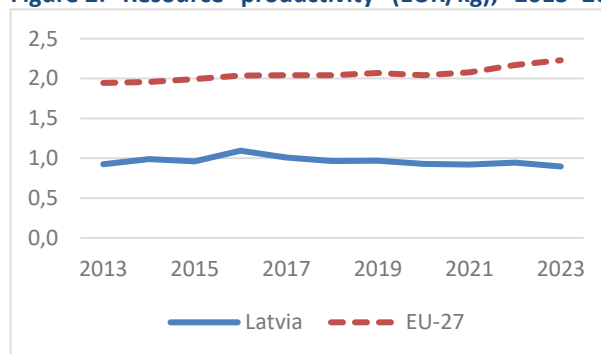
Figure 1: CMUR (%), 2013–2023



Source: Eurostat, 'Circular material use rate', env\_ac\_cur, last updated 13 November 2024, accessed 9 December 2024, [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/product/view/env\\_ac\\_cur](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/product/view/env_ac_cur).

Resource productivity measures the total amount of materials directly used by an economy in relation to gross domestic product (GDP). Improving resource productivity can help to minimise negative impacts on the environment and reduce dependency on volatile raw material markets. As shown in Figure 2, with EUR 0.9 generated per kg of material consumed in 2023, Latvia's resource productivity is less than half the EU average of EUR 2.23 per kg.

Figure 2: Resource productivity (EUR/kg), 2013–2023



NB: The unit of measurement used is EUR/kg chain-linked volume (2015). Chain-linked volumes focus on changes on quantities and prices of commodities in previous years, taking account of inflation, and are indexed to the nearest appropriate year, in this case 2015.

Source: Eurostat, 'Resource productivity', env\_ac\_rp, last updated 7 August 2024, accessed 9 December 2024, [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/product/view/env\\_ac\\_rp](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/product/view/env_ac_rp).

<sup>(2)</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – A new circular economy action plan for a cleaner and more competitive Europe,

COM(2020) 98 final of 11 March 2020, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2020%3A98%3AFIN>.

## Policies and measures

In parallel with European initiatives under the CEAP, Member States are encouraged to adopt and implement circular strategies at the national, regional and city levels. These should be tailored to each national and local reality, to harness the proximity economy's<sup>(3)</sup> potential, while following the principles of a holistic whole-value-chain approach.

Since the launch of the online European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform in 2017<sup>(4)</sup> national, regional and local authorities have used the platform to share their strategies, roadmaps and good practices, for example alternative business models and innovative technologies.

In September 2020, Latvia adopted its action plan for the transition to a circular economy for 2021–2027<sup>(5)</sup>. The plan contains seven initiatives to be implemented by 2027: transitioning from waste to resource management, improving resource productivity, establishing preconditions for the reuse of goods, promoting services over goods, focusing on priority sectors, strengthening the role of local authorities and engaging and informing the public.

The implementation of the action plan has started, and several measures have been adopted. These include a deposit system for beverage packaging, a law on reducing the consumption of plastic products, and end-of-waste criteria for new waste categories.

Latvia is currently establishing a committee to oversee the implementation of the plan.

## Green public procurement

Public procurement accounts for a large proportion of European consumption, with public authorities' purchasing power representing around 14 % of EU GDP. Public procurement using green or circular criteria (life-cycle analysis, PaaS (platform as a service), second hand) can help drive the demand for sustainable products that meet reparability and recyclability standards.

Public procurement in Latvia accounts for 15.3 % of GDP and green public procurement (GPP) accounts for 2.3 % of Latvia's GDP<sup>(6)</sup>. In 2023, the proportion of GPP was 15 %

in financial terms (down from 29.9 % in 2022) and 11.9 % in terms of the share of the total number of all public purchases (down from 14.7 % in 2022).

On 1 August 2023, amendments to the Cabinet Regulation on GPP<sup>(7)</sup> came into force, introducing changes to requirements in five mandatory categories. The most significant updates included mandatory GPP requirements for two new groups: construction of third-category buildings as of 2024, and light passenger and commercial vehicles as of August 2023. These groups, due to their substantial financial impact, were moved from voluntary to mandatory application, which is expected to improve the statistical GPP indicators in the coming years.

## The EU Ecolabel and the eco-management and audit scheme

The number of EU Ecolabel product groups and the number of eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS)-licensed organisations in each country provide some indication of the extent to which the private sector and national stakeholders in that country are actively engaged in the transition to a circular economy. The EU Ecolabel is awarded to products with best-in-class environmental performance. EMAS is a voluntary environment management scheme aimed at reducing the environmental impacts of organisations.

As of September 2024, Latvia had 929 products out of 98 977, and 6 licences out of 2 983 registered in the EU Ecolabel scheme, which shows very low take-up and only a slight increase from the previous report<sup>(8)</sup>. Latvia is the only Member State with no organisations actively registered in EMAS<sup>(9)</sup>.

The CMUR of Latvia increased by 0.5 percentage points in 2023. This represents some progress towards the 2022 priority action to take measures to increase the rate.

## 2025 priority actions

- Speed up the transition to a circular economy by implementing an updated national strategy and the EU framework and recommendations, in particular to complement it with upstream circularity measures.

<sup>(3)</sup> European Commission, 'Proximity and social economy ecosystem', European Commission website, [https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/sectors/proximity-and-social-economy\\_en](https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/sectors/proximity-and-social-economy_en).

<sup>(4)</sup> Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform (<https://circulareconomy.europa.eu/platform/en/strategies>).

<sup>(5)</sup> <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/317168-par-ricibas-planu-parejai-uz-aprites-ekonomiku-20202027-gadam>.

<sup>(6)</sup> Cabinet of Ministers, *Par zaļā iepirkuma īstenošanu valsts pārvaldē 2023. gadā* [On the implementation of green procurement in public administration in 2023], information report, 2024, <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/352388-par-zala-iepirkuma>

[istenosanu-valsts-parvalde-2023-gada](https://likumi.lv/ta/id/343571-grozijumi-ministru-kabineta-2017-gada-20-juniija-noteikumos-nr-353-prasibas-zalajam-publikajam-iepirkumam-un-to-piemerosanas-ka...).

<sup>(7)</sup> <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/343571-grozijumi-ministru-kabineta-2017-gada-20-juniija-noteikumos-nr-353-prasibas-zalajam-publikajam-iepirkumam-un-to-piemerosanas-ka...>

<sup>(8)</sup> European Commission, 'EU Ecolabel facts and figures', European Commission website, accessed 4 February 2025, <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/facts-and-figures.html>.

<sup>(9)</sup> As of October 2024. European Commission, 'Published organisations', EMAS Register, accessed 4 February 2025, <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/emas2/public/registration/list>.

- Adopt measures to increase the CMUR.

## Waste management

Turning waste into a resource is supported by:

- (i) addressing the full life cycle of products, from conception to end of life, by setting requirements on the design of products to ensure that they are more sustainable;
- (ii) fully implementing EU waste legislation, which includes the waste hierarchy, the obligation to ensure separate collection of waste, landfill diversion targets, etc.;
- (iii) reducing waste generation per capita and in absolute terms;
- (iv) increasing the recycling rates of waste containing critical raw materials (CRMs), with a view to reducing dependencies and building resilient value chains, and stimulating demand for recycled content in all products;
- (v) limiting energy recovery to non-recyclable materials; and
- (vi) phasing out landfilling of recyclable or recoverable waste.

One of the main objectives of the EU Waste Law is to decouple economic growth from its environmental impacts.

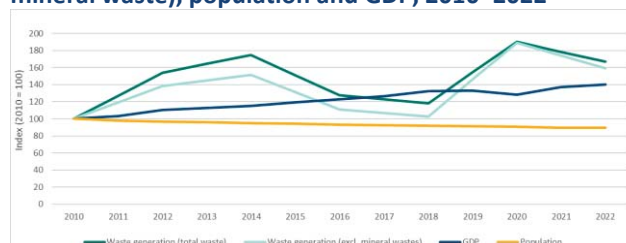
The EU's approach to waste management is based on the waste treatment hierarchy: prevention, preparing for reuse, recycling, recovery and, as the least preferred option, disposal (which includes landfilling and incineration without energy recovery).

All legislative proposals in the field of waste management put forward by the Commission since 2021 are intended to encourage Member States to promote better product design, to require producers to cover the costs of managing the waste resulting from their products and to ensure that waste is managed at the higher levels of the waste hierarchy.

The total amount of waste generated in Latvia increased considerably between 2010 and 2014, then decreased until 2018 and significantly increased after that (Figure 3). Waste generation in Latvia has fluctuated heavily in the

12 years covered, with an overall significant increase. No conclusions on the decoupling of waste generation from economic development can, however, be drawn from the available data.

**Figure 3: Generation of waste (total and excluding major mineral waste), population and GDP, 2010–2022<sup>10</sup>**



NB: Waste generation data for odd years are interpolated.

### Critical raw materials

Latvia does not keep specific records of waste containing CRMs.

### Construction and demolition waste

Construction and demolition waste accounts for almost 40 % of all waste generated in the EU. A recent study<sup>(11)</sup> by the Joint Research Centre shows that recycling and preparation for reuse are preferred over incineration and landfilling from an environmental perspective for most of the different streams of construction and demolition waste. However, the economics are often unfavourable for recycling and preparation for reuse and recycling compared with incineration and landfilling. If available technology were to be applied, it is estimated that the increase in recycling and preparation for reuse would lead to an additional 33 Mt of greenhouse gas (GHG) emission savings annually (more than, for example, the combined annual GHG emissions from Estonia, Latvia and Luxembourg).

The rate of recycling and preparation for reuse of mineral construction and demolition waste in Latvia in 2022 was 87 %, compared with the EU average of 79.8 %. Measures to further increase the rate of recycling and preparation for reuse of construction and demolition waste include separate collection at the source – for instance, through digitalised pre-demolition audits<sup>(12)</sup> ('resource

<sup>(10)</sup> Sources: Eurostat, 'GDP and main components (output, expenditure and income)', nama\_10\_gdp, accessed 15 October 2024, [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/nama\\_10\\_gdp\\_cust\\_om\\_9301905/default/table](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/nama_10_gdp_cust_om_9301905/default/table); Eurostat, 'Generation of waste by waste category, hazardousness and NACE Rev. 2 activity', env\_wasgen, last updated 30 September 2024, accessed 22 October 2024, [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/env\\_wasgen/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/env_wasgen/default/table?lang=en); Eurostat, 'Population change – Demographic balance and crude rates at national level', demo\_grind, accessed 15 October 2024, [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/demo\\_grind/default/table?lang=en&category=demo.demo\\_ind](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/demo_grind/default/table?lang=en&category=demo.demo_ind).

<sup>(11)</sup> European Commission: Joint Research Centre, Cristobal Garcia, J., Caro, D. et al., *Techno-economic and environmental assessment of construction and demolition waste management in the European Union*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2024, <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC135470>.

<sup>(12)</sup> European Commission: Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, *EU Construction & Demolition Waste Management Protocol including guidelines for*

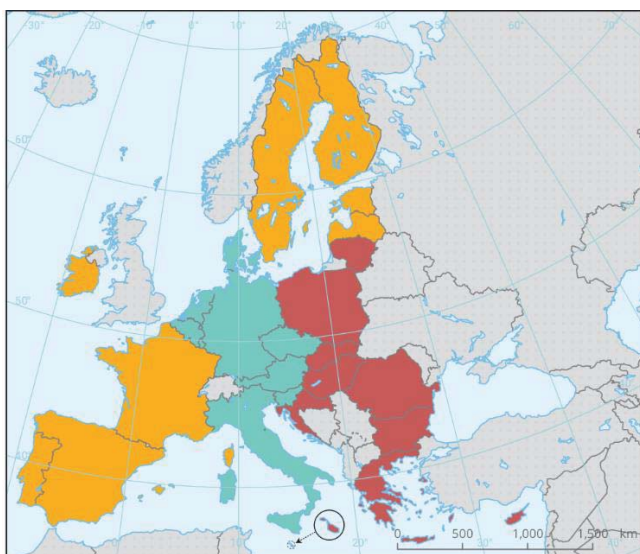


assessments’); extended producer responsibility (EPR) and other economic instruments; and upstream measures such as increasing the recycled content in construction products and the circular design<sup>(13)</sup> of construction works.

### Boosting implementation – the 2023 *Waste Early Warning Report*

This section focuses on the management of municipal waste<sup>(14)</sup>, for which EU law sets mandatory recycling targets. In June 2023, the Commission published the *Waste Early Warning Report*<sup>(15)</sup> identifying the general trends in waste management and the Member States at risk of missing 2025 waste targets (see Figure 4). Latvia is at risk of missing the preparing for reuse and recycling target for municipal waste but not at risk of missing the recycling target for packaging waste. Latvia is also at risk of not meeting the 2035 target of a maximum of 10 % of municipal waste being landfilled.

**Figure 4: Member States’ prospects of meeting the preparing for reuse and recycling targets for municipal waste and packaging waste**



■ Member States not at risk of missing the 55 % preparing for reuse and recycling target for

municipal waste and the 65 % recycling target for packaging waste

■ Member States at risk of missing the preparing for reuse and recycling target for municipal waste but not at risk of missing the recycling target for packaging waste

■ Member States at risk of missing both targets

■ Outside coverage

Source: European Environment Agency (EEA), ‘Many EU Member States not on track to meet recycling targets for municipal waste and packaging waste’, briefing No 28/2022, Copenhagen, 2023. Reference data © ESRI.

Under certain conditions, EU waste legislation enables some Member States to postpone the deadlines for reaching certain waste management targets for municipal and packaging waste. Member States that want to use this possibility have to notify the Commission 24 months in advance of the deadline and submit an implementation plan laying down the steps they envisage to reach the postponed targets within a new time frame. Regarding the 2025 targets, 11 Member States, not including Latvia, have used this prerogative.

In the *Waste Early Warning Report*, the Commission recommended that Member States accelerate their efforts to improve their recycling performance. The Commission is, on one hand, working together with the national authorities and stakeholders to speed up the implementation of measures necessary to meet the targets, including through dedicated financing. On the other hand, the Commission is pursuing enforcement actions against those Member States that, based on data submitted to the Commission, do not achieve the targets of the Waste Framework Directive<sup>(16)</sup>, the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive<sup>(17)</sup> and the Directive on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment<sup>(18)</sup>.

As Latvia also failed to attain the municipal waste recycling target for 2021 set out in the Waste Framework Directive, a letter of formal notice was sent to it on 25 July 2025. However, as Latvia informed the Commission, this target was achieved for 2022.

*pre-demolition and pre-renovation audits of construction works – Updated edition 2024*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2024, <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/d63d5a8f-64e8-11ef-a8ba-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>.

<sup>(13)</sup> European Commission, *Circular Economy – Principles for buildings design*, Brussels, 2020, <https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/39984>.

<sup>(14)</sup> Municipal waste consists of (i) mixed waste and separately collected waste from households, including paper and cardboard, glass, metals, plastics, biowaste, wood, textiles, packaging, waste electrical and electronic equipment, waste batteries and accumulators, and bulky waste, including mattresses and furniture; and (ii) mixed waste and separately collected waste from other sources, where such waste is similar in nature and

composition to waste from households (Directive 2008/98/EC, Article 3.2b).

<sup>(15)</sup> [https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/waste-early-warning-report\\_en](https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/waste-early-warning-report_en).

<sup>(16)</sup> Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on waste and repealing certain Directives, [Directive - 2008/98 - EN - Waste framework directive - EUR-Lex](#).

<sup>(17)</sup> Directive 2012/19/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 July 2012 on waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) (OJ L 197, 24.7.2012, p. 38), [Directive - 2012/19 - EN - EUR-Lex](#).

<sup>(18)</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32012L0019>.

### Municipal waste

Latvia’s municipal waste generation has mostly increased over the past decade (Figure 5). In 2022, the country generated 464 kg of municipal waste per capita, which is significantly below the estimated EU-27 average of 513 kg per capita.

Latvia has a recycling rate of 51 %, which is very close to the EU-27 average of 49 %. The preparing for reuse and recycling rate increased strongly, from 9 % in 2010 to 51 % in 2022 (Figure 6) <sup>(19)</sup>.

The landfill rate has decreased steadily since 2010 and, in 2022, 44 % of Latvia’s municipal waste was still being landfilled, while incineration played a minor role. However, the absolute volumes of municipal waste sent to landfill remained fairly stable.

In 2024, Latvia introduced bio-waste collection providing residents with separate bio-waste containers, but not yet sufficiently, and local governments continue to work on this issue.

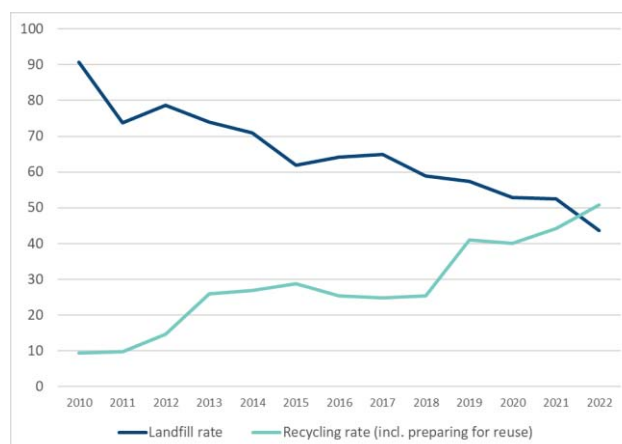
Additionally, as of July 2024, Latvia introduced an extended producer responsibility system for new and used textile products,<sup>20</sup> thus contributing to their recycling and promoting sustainable practices.

**Figure 5: Municipal waste management and recycling (including preparation for reuse), 2010–2022**



Source: Eurostat, ‘Municipal waste by waste management operations’, env\_wasmun, accessed 22 October 2024, [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ENV\\_WASMUN/default/table](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ENV_WASMUN/default/table).

**Figure 6: Recycling (including preparation for reuse) and landfill rates (%), 2010–2022**



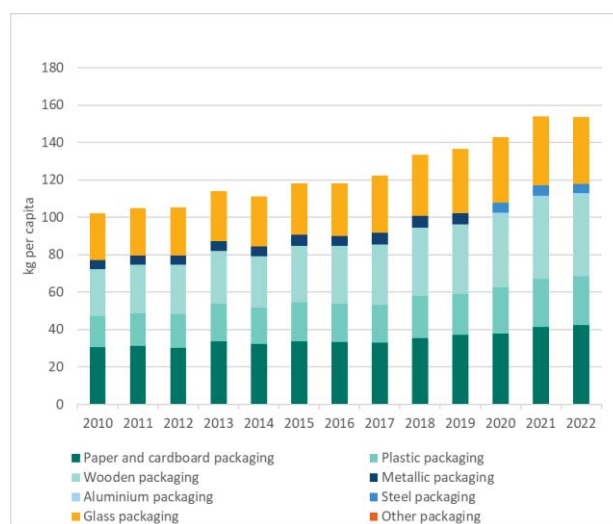
NB: The reporting methodology for waste exported for recycling changed in 2019. As of reference year 2020, new reporting rules apply to calculating recycled municipal waste pursuant to the targets laid down in Article 11(2)(c–e) of Directive 2008/98/EC. Latvia has applied the new calculation rules since 2020.

Source: Eurostat, ‘Municipal waste by waste management operations’, env\_wasmun, accessed 22 October 2024, [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ENV\\_WASMUN/default/table](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ENV_WASMUN/default/table).

### Packaging waste

Latvia’s packaging waste generation has significantly increased since 2010 (Figure 7). The country generated 153 kg per capita in 2022, which is significantly below the estimated European average of 186 kg per capita in the same year <sup>(21)</sup>.

**Figure 7: Packaging waste generation, 2010–2022**



<sup>(19)</sup> EEA, *Early warning assessment related to the 2025 targets for municipal and packaging waste – Latvia*, Copenhagen, 2022, <https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/many-eu-member-states/latvia/view>.

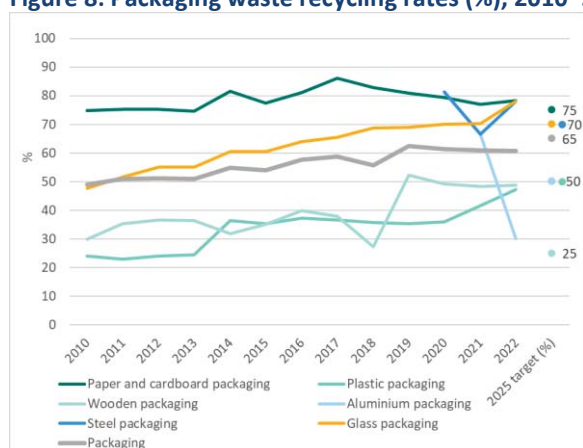
<sup>(20)</sup> [Cabinet Regulations No. 359 dd. 11.06.2024.](#)  
<sup>(21)</sup> The EU average might have been influenced by not all Member States fully applying the reporting rules for packaging waste set out in Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2019/665.

Source: Eurostat, 'Packaging waste by waste management operations', env\_waspac, last updated 23 October 2024, accessed 28 October 2024, [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ENV\\_WASPAC\\_custom\\_842634/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ENV_WASPAC_custom_842634/default/table?lang=en).

Latvia's overall packaging waste recycling rate has increased since 2010 (Figure 8), reaching 61 % in 2022. The recycling rate is mainly driven by the recycling of paper and cardboard, wooden and glass packaging waste, as these types of waste make up the largest shares of overall packaging waste. The recycling rates for paper and cardboard and glass packaging waste were at the same high level of 78 %.

The recycling rate for plastic packaging increased from 24 % in 2010 to 47 % in 2022, but stagnated from 2020 onwards. From reference year 2020 onwards, it has been mandatory to report steel and aluminium packaging separately. The recycling rate of steel packaging waste exceeded the 2025 target, while the rate for aluminium packaging waste dropped below the target in 2022 (to 30 %).

**Figure 8: Packaging waste recycling rates (%), 2010–2022**



Source: Eurostat, 'Packaging waste by waste management operations', env\_waspac, last updated 23 October 2024, accessed 28 October 2024, [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ENV\\_WASPAC\\_custom\\_842634/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ENV_WASPAC_custom_842634/default/table?lang=en).

### Policies to encourage waste prevention

Waste management plans and waste prevention programmes are instrumental to the full implementation of EU waste legislation. They set out key provisions and investments to ensure compliance with existing and new legal requirements (e.g. on waste prevention, on separate collection for certain waste streams, on recycling and on landfill targets).

Latvia has a national waste prevention programme that covers 2021–2028 and has four main objectives. These are preventing waste generation, ensuring the rational use of waste as a resource, reducing the hazardousness of waste and reducing waste disposal (EEA, 2023).

Priority waste streams for waste prevention are food waste, household waste, hazardous waste, electrical and

electronic equipment, textiles, furniture, packaging, building materials and construction products.

Latvia has also developed a strategy for circular economy: the action plan for the transition to a circular economy for 2020–2027.

Since Latvia's national waste prevention programme is integrated into the national waste management plan, the funding also follows this approach and no specific budget is assigned to the implementation of the waste prevention measures. The funding comes from investments by economic operators, waste producers and operators as well as waste management fees and EU funds.

### Policies to encourage separate collection and recycling

Latvia has not implemented a pay-as-you-throw (PAYT) system at the national level. PAYT is currently only implemented in one municipality in Latvia. Several municipalities have already assessed the potential of introducing PAYT and concluded that it would be too expensive.

Bring point collection is the predominant collection system in Latvia for all recyclables, as well as for residual waste. Except for food waste, all waste streams are collected separately at bring points and civic amenity sites. There is also door-to-door commingled collection of recyclables in some rural areas, where the population density is too low for the arrangement of bring points.

Waste from electrical and electronic equipment is collected both at civic amenity sites and through take back schemes at retailers.

Biowaste is collected separately in only a few municipalities. In general, residents are provided with means of separate collection for biowaste, but this is not yet sufficient, and local governments are continuing work on this issue. Municipalities also support citizens with home composting by providing containers.

Separate collection is mandatory for waste collected from all household and non-household sources. In Latvia, the collection currently does not distinguish between packaging waste and non-packaging waste.

Latvia has an EPR system in place, covering packaging waste from both household and non-household sources for all packaging materials. However, Latvia has no advanced fee modulation. Latvia applies packaging taxes to all types of packaging waste.

There is also a newly established deposit return system for plastic, aluminium and glass beverage packaging, which was expanded to cover additional types of beverage packaging in 2023.

### Policies to discourage landfilling or incineration

Latvia has introduced an escalator system to increase the landfill tax on municipal waste. The tax also covers outputs of mechanical biological treatment plants that are landfilled. The tax is considerably higher than the EU average. Latvia is also planning to introduce a ban on landfilling municipal waste suitable for preparation for reuse, recycling or recovery as of 2030. Latvia has an incineration tax.

60 % of the resource tax revenue from waste disposal is paid into the basic state budget and 40 % is paid into the basic budget of the local municipality where the waste disposal takes place.

Latvia has made some progress on setting up the separate collection of waste, including biowaste, and the review and/or harmonisation of minimum service standards for separate collection to ensure high capture rates of recyclable waste. However, it has made no progress on setting mandatory recycling targets for municipalities and using measures to tackle non-compliance (e.g. fines).

Latvia has also made no progress in developing and running implementation support programmes for municipalities to help support efforts to organise separate collection and improve recycling performance. Finally, there was no progress made in improving the functioning of EPR systems, in line with the general minimum requirements in the Waste Framework Directive.

### 2025 priority actions

- Improve separate collection at source, e.g. through economic instruments, investing in infrastructure for separate collection, sorting and recycling, and increasing public awareness.
- Improve municipal waste preparation for reuse and recycling.
- Invest in waste prevention measures to reduce the total amount of waste generated.
- Ensure the achievement of the 2025 waste targets, following the recommendations made by the Commission in the Early Warning Report.

## 2. Biodiversity and natural capital

### Global and EU biodiversity frameworks

Biological diversity and healthy ecosystems are critical for our societies, underpin our economies and well-being and are essential for climate change adaptation and mitigation. The Kunming–Montreal global biodiversity framework (GBF), adopted in December 2022, sets comprehensive and measurable targets to tackle biodiversity loss by 2030. To implement this global framework and integrate biodiversity considerations into national decision-making, the EU – as well as all Member States – had to submit national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs), or to communicate national targets aligned with the global targets, by the end of 2024. The EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 (BDS) aims to put EU biodiversity on a path to recovery by 2030. It sets quantified targets intended to protect and restore nature and manage ecosystems in a sustainable manner, as well as measures to enable implementation and commitments to support global biodiversity. A BDS actions tracker<sup>(22)</sup> and a dashboard of indicators<sup>(23)</sup> provide information on implementation progress. The recently adopted EU Nature Restoration Regulation<sup>(24)</sup> is the first EU-wide, comprehensive law of its kind and a key instrument for the EU to deliver on the global biodiversity targets for 2030. It lays down an overarching objective at the EU level to put in place effective restoration measures on 20 % of EU land and sea by 2030 and for all ecosystems in need of restoration by 2050. To achieve this, it sets binding targets for Member States to restore and maintain ecosystems, as well as an effective implementation framework based on national restoration plans.

The BDS is the main instrument used by the EU to deliver on its obligation under the GBF. The Commission has submitted to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) its report on GBF-aligned EU targets that stem from the BDS and from other policy instruments under the European Green Deal.

Member States' NBSAPs need to provide coherent frameworks for national delivery on the global and EU 2030 biodiversity targets. In line with the global

obligations, NBSAPs should also include a biodiversity financing plan and a capacity-building plan, based on needs assessments, as well as an overview of the national indicators used to measure progress.

The Commission encourages Latvia to adopt an NBSAP aligned with the global biodiversity objectives, as there is currently no NBSAP in Latvia. The 2021–2027 environmental policy guidelines<sup>(25)</sup> contain a short chapter on biodiversity (Chapter 6), with two key objectives: conservation of biodiversity and valuable landscapes, and preservation and management of natural capital. The guidelines state that, in the last decade, biodiversity in Latvia has continued to deteriorate due to the intensification of land use, land-use change and fragmentation of ecosystems.

The EU aims to allocate to biodiversity objectives at least 7.5 % of annual spending under the EU budget in 2024, rising to 10 % in 2026 and 2027. For more details on biodiversity financing and investments for Latvia, see 'Biodiversity and ecosystems' in Chapter 5.

#### 2025 priority action

- Submit to the CBD an updated NBSAP or national targets following the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

#### Nature protection and restoration – Natura 2000

Natura 2000<sup>(26)</sup>, the largest coordinated network of protected areas in the world, is key to the achievement of the objectives set out in the Birds and Habitats Directives. These objectives are to ensure the long-term protection, conservation and survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats and the ecosystems they underpin. Key milestones towards meeting the objectives of the Birds and Habitats Directives are (i) the setting up of a complete and coherent Natura 2000 network; (ii) the designation of

<sup>(22)</sup> EU Biodiversity Strategy Actions Tracker (<https://dopa.jrc.ec.europa.eu/kcbd/actions-tracker/>).

<sup>(23)</sup> EU Biodiversity Strategy Dashboard (<https://dopa.jrc.ec.europa.eu/kcbd/EUBDS2030-dashboard/?version=1>).

<sup>(24)</sup> Regulation (EU) 2024/1991 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2024 on nature restoration and amending Regulation (EU) 2022/869 (OJ L, 2024/1991, 29.7.2024), <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1991/oj>; see also the Commission web page on the law

([https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/nature-restoration-law\\_en](https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/nature-restoration-law_en)).

<sup>(25)</sup> <https://www.varam.gov.lv/lv/vides-politikas-pamatnostadnes-2021-2027-gadam>.

<sup>(26)</sup> Natura 2000 comprises sites of community importance (SCIs), designated pursuant to the Habitats Directive, as well as special protection areas (SPAs), classified pursuant to the Birds Directive. Numbers of protected areas in Figure 9 do not add up to the total of SCIs plus SPAs, because some SCIs and SPAs overlap. An SAC is an SCI designated by a Member State.

sites of community importance (SCIs) as special areas of conservation (SACs) <sup>(27)</sup>; and (iii) effective management of all Natura 2000 sites through the setting of site-specific conservation objectives and measures.

### Setting up a complete and coherent network of Natura 2000 sites

The setting up of a complete and coherent network of Natura 2000 sites is a cornerstone of the EU's international commitments, under the BDS and GBF, to legally protect a minimum of 30 % of its land area and 30 % of its sea area by 2030.

Meeting these commitments requires the full implementation of Article 3 of the Habitats Directive. The Natura 2000 network should represent a complete and coherent ecological network composed of sites hosting natural habitat types and species of community interest. Natura 2000 will enable the natural habitat types and the species' habitats concerned to be maintained or, where appropriate, restored to a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

Latvia hosts 61 habitat types <sup>(28)</sup> and 109 species <sup>(29)</sup> covered by the Habitats Directive. The country also hosts 81 bird taxa listed in the Birds Directive Annex I <sup>(30)</sup>.

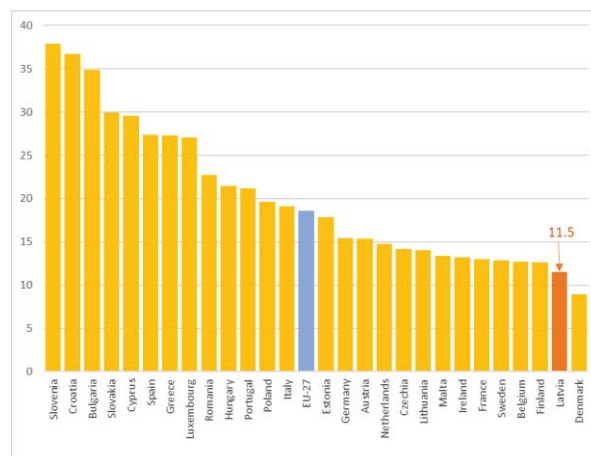
As shown in Figure 9, in 2023, 11.5 % of Latvia's territory was covered by Natura 2000 sites, which is the second smallest coverage in the EU (the EU average 18.6 %). The latest assessment of SCIs within the Natura 2000 network shows that there are insufficiencies in the coverage of Latvia's Natura 2000 network.

There are currently 333 Natura 2000 sites in Latvia. The insufficiencies identified in the latest assessment indicate that Latvia still needs to complete its Natura 2000 network. An infringement procedure has been open since November 2019 <sup>(31)</sup>.

Considering both areas covered by Natura 2000 and other nationally designated protected areas, Latvia

legally protects 18.1 % of its terrestrial area (EU-27 coverage: 26.1 %) and 15.8 % of its marine area (EU-27 coverage: 12.3 %) <sup>(32)</sup>.

**Figure 9: Natura 2000 terrestrial protected area coverage per Member State (%), 2023**



Source: European Environment Agency (EEA), 'Natura 2000 Barometer', 2023 data, accessed March 2025, <https://www.eea.europa.eu/data-and-maps/dashboards/natura-2000-barometer>.

### Designating special areas of conservation and setting site-specific conservation objectives and measures

To ensure that SCIs contribute to the objectives of the Habitats Directive, Member States must designate them as SACs, setting site-specific conservation objectives <sup>(33)</sup> based on the ecological needs of the species and habitats present on the sites. Such site-specific conservation objectives should define attributes and targets that describe the habitats' or species' condition as favourable or unfavourable, addressing key pressures and threats. Under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, Member States must establish and implement measures to achieve these objectives.

The six-year deadline set by the Habitats Directive to designate SCIs as SACs and establish appropriate

<sup>(27)</sup> SCIs are designated pursuant to the Habitats Directive, whereas SPAs are designated pursuant to the Birds Directive. Figures of coverage do not add up because some SCIs and SPAs overlap.

<sup>(28)</sup> European Environment Agency (EEA), 'Number of habitats and species per Member State', Article 17 dashboard, Annex I total, 19 December 2019, <https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/biodiversity/state-of-nature-in-the-eu/article-17-national-summary-dashboards/general-information-on-habitats-and-species>.

<sup>(29)</sup> EEA, 'Number of habitats and species per Member State', Article 17 dashboard, 19 December 2019, <https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/biodiversity/state-of-nature-in-the-eu/article-17-national-summary-dashboards/general-information-on-habitats-and-species>.

<sup>(30)</sup> EEA, 'Number of bird species/populations per Member State', Article 12 dashboard, Annex I total, last updated 11 May 2023, <https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/biodiversity/state-of-nature-in-the-eu/article-12-national-summary-dashboards/general-information-on-bird-species-populations>.

[dashboards/general-information-on-bird-species-populations](https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/biodiversity/state-of-nature-in-the-eu/article-12-national-summary-dashboards/general-information-on-bird-species-populations). This counting only takes into account bird taxa for which information was requested. <https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/biodiversity/state-of-nature-in-the-eu/article-12-national-summary-dashboards/general-information-on-bird-species-populations>

<sup>(31)</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/inf\\_19\\_6304](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/inf_19_6304).

<sup>(32)</sup> Eurostat dataset env\_bio4, 2022 data, accessed 12 March 2025

<sup>(33)</sup> The site-specific conservation objectives define the conditions to be achieved by species (Article 1(i) of the Habitats Directive) and habitat types (Article 1(e) of the Habitats Directive) within the sites in order to maximise the contribution of the sites to achieving favourable conservation status at the national, biogeographical or European level.

conservation objectives and measures has expired for all sites in Latvia.

The Commission opened an infringement procedure against Latvia in 2020 for its failure to designate SACs and set appropriate conservation objectives and measures. The infringement procedure is ongoing (a reasoned opinion was issued on 9 June 2021). As a result, Latvia has now fully designated all SACs, providing information on the location and the species and habitat types for which the sites were designated. Additionally, Latvia is in the process of setting site-specific conservation objectives and developing the necessary conservation measures for all SACs, to comply with the ecological requirements of the natural habitat types and species concerned.

### 2025 priority actions

- Complete the Natura 2000 site designation process.
- Ensure the effective implementation of Natura 2000 management plans and sufficient administrative capacity and financing both for Natura 2000 and the implementation of the Nature Restoration Regulation. Ensure implementation of Prioritised Actions Framework 2021-2027 (PAFs).

### Recovery of species

One objective set by the BDS is that, by 2030, there should be no further deterioration in conservation trends or the status of any protected species. The BDS also states that Member States should ensure that at least 30 % of species not currently in favourable conservation status achieve that status or show progress towards doing so (e.g. by exhibiting positive population dynamics or stable or increasing range and habitat size), by 2030. According to the European Environment Agency (EEA), based on reporting required under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive, a quarter of species in the EU were of good conservation status as of 2018 <sup>(34)</sup>.

One of the primary objectives of the Habitats Directive is the maintenance of or restoration to favourable conservation status of all species of community interest. Moreover, the Birds Directive also aims to ensure that all wild birds in the EU enjoy a secure status. In order to achieve these objectives, it will be necessary to address key pressures and threats. The Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive lay down rules establishing site-based and species protection regimes to address these threats.

<sup>(34)</sup> EEA, *State of Nature in the EU: Results from reporting under the Nature Directives 2013–2018*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2020, <https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/state-of-nature-in-the-eu-2020>.

<sup>(35)</sup>

Under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive, Member States are required to report on the conservation status of habitats and species every six years. The current reporting cycle, covering the years 2019 to 2024, is due for submission in July 2025. Figures 10 and 11 show the latest available conservation status data.

According to the report submitted by Latvia on the conservation status of habitats and species covered by Article 17 of the Habitats Directive for 2013–2018, 82 % of habitats and 52.3 % of species were classified as having unfavourable status.

Regarding birds, 41.3 % of breeding species showed short-term increases or stable population trends (for wintering species, this figure was 66.6 %).

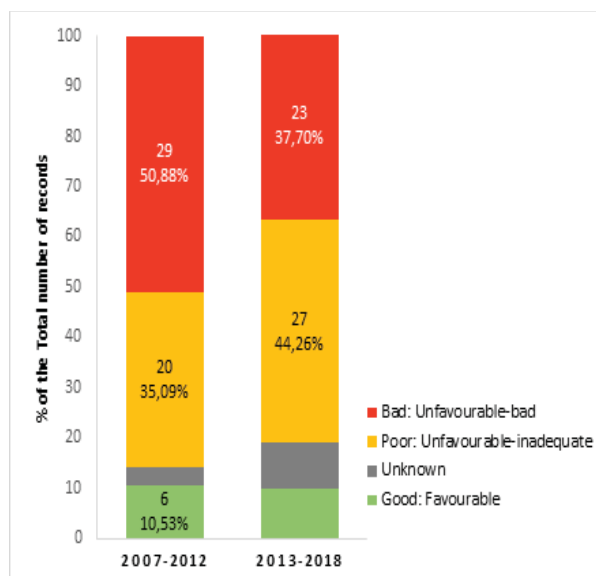
To ensure that the recovery of species is achieved in Latvia, the Commission opened an infringement calling on Latvia to bring its national legislation into line with the Habitats Directive, especially as regards the protection of the lynx. Latvia has since amended its legislation to remove the lynx from the list of huntable species (Annex V) and included it in the national list of strictly protected species (Annex IV). However, the Commission still considers the species system of Latvia not in line with the requirements of the directive in relation to its obligations under Articles 12 and 16 <sup>(35)</sup>. The Commission therefore issued a reasoned opinion in October 2024 calling on Latvia to bring its rules on species protection into line with the Habitats Directive <sup>(36)</sup>.

The major pressures reported for habitats and species listed under the Habitats Directive include forestry, agriculture, extraction of resources, development, human-induced changes to water regimes, mixed source pollution and alien and problematic species. The major pressures for bird species are agriculture, forestry, development, natural processes and climate change.

<sup>(36)</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/inf\\_22\\_1769?msclid=240d7077c24b11eca3f8b0c6ba5a4f12](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/inf_22_1769?msclid=240d7077c24b11eca3f8b0c6ba5a4f12).

<sup>(36)</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/inf\\_24\\_4561](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/inf_24_4561).

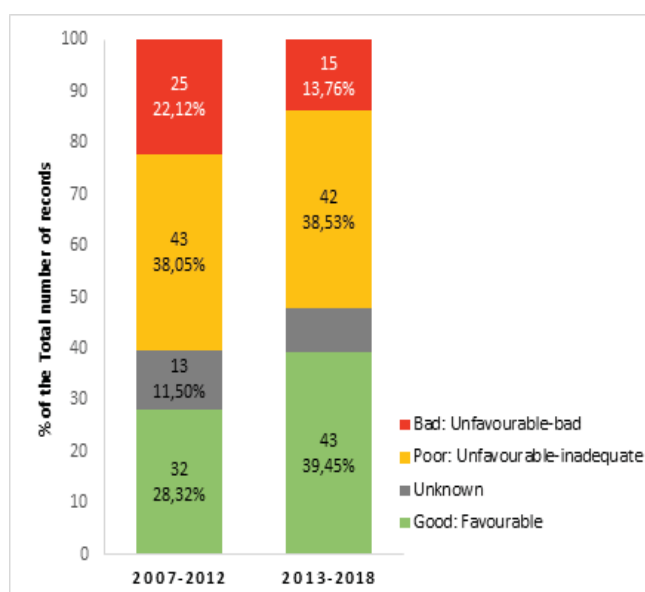
**Figure 10: Assessments of conservation status of habitats for the 2007–2012 and 2013–2018 reporting periods**



NB: The values shown for 2007–2012 and 2013–2018 are not necessarily directly comparable because changes in area conservation status in a Member State may result from changes to methods or use of better data, rather than reflecting genuine changes.

Source: EEA, 'Conservation status and trends of habitats and species', 19 December 2019, accessed March 2025, <https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/biodiversity/state-of-nature-in-the-eu/article-17-national-summary-dashboards/conservation-status-and-trends>.

**Figure 11: Assessments of conservation status of species for the 2007–2012 and 2013–2018 reporting periods**



<sup>(37)</sup> <https://latvianature.daba.gov.lv/en/about/>.

<sup>(38)</sup> <https://latvianature.daba.gov.lv/ziedu-plavas/>.

<sup>(39)</sup> <https://environment.ec.europa.eu/news/working-together->

NB: The values shown for 2007–2012 and 2013–2018 are not necessarily directly comparable because changes in area conservation status in a Member State may result from changes to methods or use of better data, rather than reflecting genuine changes.

Source: EEA, 'Conservation status and trends of habitats and species', 19 December 2019, accessed March 2025, <https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/biodiversity/state-of-nature-in-the-eu/article-17-national-summary-dashboards/conservation-status-and-trends>.

The fact that less than 10 % of protected habitats have favourable conservation status and the downward trend compared with the previous period indicate that Latvia faces significant challenges in protecting its biodiversity. All semi-natural grasslands, more than 90 % of forests, and most bogs, mires, fens, dunes and coastal habitats still have unfavourable status. The main causes are changes in land use and pressures from forestry and agriculture.

As an example of good practice, Latvia, with the support of the financial instrument for the environment (LIFE) programme, is implementing the LIFE integrated project 'Optimising the governance and management of the Natura 2000 protected areas network in Latvia' (LatviaNature) (LIFE19 IPE/LV/000010) <sup>(37)</sup>. The project has a budget of EUR 19.5 million and will run until the end of 2028. As part of the project, the pilot programme 'Blooming meadows' <sup>(38)</sup> was developed to increase the biodiversity in potentially biologically valuable grasslands. This project was a finalist in the 2024 Natura 2000 Awards in the category 'Working together for nature' for its work in relation to voluntary mechanisms for conservation on private land <sup>(39)</sup>.

[improve-biodiversity-private-lands-natura-2000-latvia-2024-03-14\\_en](https://environment.ec.europa.eu/news/working-together-improve-biodiversity-private-lands-natura-2000-latvia-2024-03-14_en).



Another project that concluded at the end of 2023, 'Restoration of EU protected habitats and species' <sup>(40)</sup>, co-funded by the EU Cohesion Fund and Latvian state budget, helped 30 Natura 2000 sites to achieve favourable conservation status for their habitats and species. Although the project's budget was rather modest (EUR 3.53 million), it covered a large area and a wide range of activities, and was a good example of successful nationwide collaboration between state institutions, state enterprises and municipalities <sup>(41)</sup>. It can be upscaled and replicated in the context of national nature restoration plans.

Latvia has proceeded with and finalised the mapping of all habitats and species; however, it has not completed the identification of new sites for the Natura 2000 network or the expansion of existing sites. Latvia must address the insufficiencies that remain in its Natura 2000 network.

### 2025 priority actions

- Strengthen the integration of biodiversity actions into other policies, e.g. energy, agriculture, fisheries, forestry, urban and infrastructure planning and sustainable tourism, and promote communication between stakeholders.
- Reinforce action for habitats and species in unfavourable conservation status, for example through restoration measures, increased connectivity, better policy coordination and integration, and increased funding.

## Recovery of ecosystems

### Agricultural ecosystems

The BDS works alongside the common agricultural policy (CAP) to support the transition to sustainable agriculture.

The strategy has set five common agriculture-related targets for 2030, namely to:

- reduce by 50 % the overall use of – and risk from – chemical pesticides;
- reduce by 50 % the use of more hazardous pesticides;
- reduce by 50 % losses of nutrients from fertilisers (which will result in a 20 % reduction in the use of fertilisers) while ensuring that there is no deterioration of soil fertility;

- restore at least 10 % of agricultural area to have high-diversity landscape features; and
- increase the area under organic farming to at least 25 %.

The "Vision for agriculture and food" <sup>(42)</sup>, adopted by the European Commission in February 2025, sets a roadmap to an agri-food system that is attractive, competitive, sustainable and fair for current and future generations. To ensure a sustainable future for EU agriculture, it is crucial that these four priority areas are pursued together, and that public and private support are adequately targeted toward this objective.

The CAP and national CAP strategic plans are key instruments to facilitate and strengthen the efforts of European farmers to protect biodiversity and the environment at large. The Commission approved Member States' CAP strategic plans in 2022 for the programming period 2023-2027. The CAP is the largest source of funding dedicated to supporting biodiversity and plays a significant role in implementing EU environmental policy. Strategic plans should continue to support the protection of soil, water, air quality and biodiversity.

While certain CAP result indicators focus on interventions favouring sustainable agriculture practices that regenerate the ecosystems, the impact of these measures is difficult to assess. The uptake of the eco-schemes is voluntary for farmers.

The utilised agricultural area in Latvia increased from 1 840 900 ha in 2012 to 1 970 700 ha in 2023 <sup>(43)</sup>.

Landscape features are small fragments of non-productive and typically – but not exclusively – semi-natural vegetation present in or adjacent to agricultural land. They provide ecosystem services and support for biodiversity. The indicator 'share of agricultural land covered with landscape features' is the ratio between the area covered by landscape features and the area covered by agricultural land. Based on the Land Use/Cover Area Frame Survey landscape features estimates, the share of agricultural land covered by non-productive landscape features in Latvia is 4.3 %, below the EU average. At the EU level, landscape features cover 5.6 % of agricultural land.

<sup>(40)</sup> <https://www.daba.gov.lv/lv/projekts/biotopu-un-sugu-dzivotnu-atjaunosana>.

<sup>(41)</sup> Led by the Nature Conservation Agency of Latvia and implemented in collaboration with 10 Latvian municipalities and 2 enterprises: the joint stock company Latvia's State Forests and the state enterprise Latvian State Roads.

<sup>(42)</sup> [https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/overview-vision-agriculture-food/vision-agriculture-and-food\\_en](https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/overview-vision-agriculture-food/vision-agriculture-and-food_en)

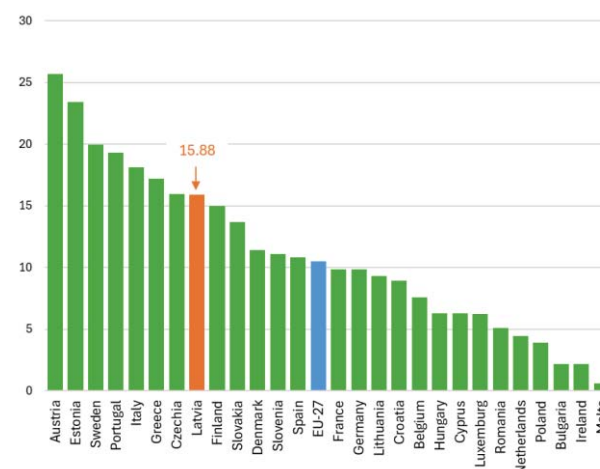
<sup>(43)</sup> Eurostat, dataset 'Utilised agricultural area by categories', tag00025, accessed 5 December 2024, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tag00025/default/table?lang=en>.

In 2024, the CAP basic regulations were amended <sup>(44)</sup> regarding, inter alia, the standards for good agricultural and environmental condition (GAEC) of land. These changes removed the obligation for farmers benefiting from CAP area-related support to have a minimum share of 3–4 % of non-productive area or landscape features in their farms. The amended regulations do not remove the obligation under the GAEC 8 to maintain existing landscape features and set out an obligation for Member States to establish and provide support for eco-schemes covering practices for the maintenance of non-productive areas, such as land lying fallow, and for the establishment of new landscape features on arable land.

The recently adopted Nature Restoration Regulation <sup>(45)</sup> focuses on the restoration of agricultural ecosystems and requires Member States to put in place measures that aim to achieve an increasing trend at the national level in at least two out of three indicators for agricultural ecosystems <sup>(46)</sup>. One of these indicators is the ‘share of agricultural land with high-diversity landscape features’.

Organic farming practices are highly beneficial to biodiversity. As shown in Figure 12, it is estimated that 15.88 % of Latvia’s land area is used for organic farming. This is higher than the EU average of 10.50 % <sup>(47)</sup>, meaning Latvia is contributing to achieving the target of 25 % of the EU’s agricultural land being used for organic farming by 2030.

**Figure 12: Share of total utilised agricultural area occupied by organic farming per Member State (%), 2022**



Source: Eurostat, ‘Area under organic farming’, sgd\_02\_40, accessed 5 December 2024, [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/sgd\\_02\\_40/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/sgd_02_40/default/table?lang=en).

### 2025 priority action

- Implement environmental eco-schemes and agri-environmental measures and practices to address the environmental needs of Latvia.

### Soil ecosystems

Soil is an essential, finite and extremely fragile resource. Its increasing degradation poses a threat to EU food security and climate resilience, adaptation and mitigation.

The EU soil strategy, adopted in November 2021, aims to support soil protection, sustainable soil management and the restoration of degraded soils to achieve the Green Deal objectives as well as land degradation neutrality by 2030.

This entails:

- preventing further soil degradation;
- making sustainable soil management the new normal;

<sup>(44)</sup> Regulation (EU) 2024/1468 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 amending Regulations (EU) 2021/2115 and (EU) 2021/2116 as regards good agricultural and environmental condition standards, schemes for climate, environment and animal welfare, amendment of the CAP strategic plans, review of the CAP strategic plans and exemptions from controls and penalties (OJ L, 2024/1468, 24.5.2024), <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1468/oj>.

<sup>(45)</sup> Regulation (EU) 2024/1991 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2024 on nature restoration and amending Regulation (EU) 2022/869 (OJ L, 2024/1991, 29.7.2024),

<http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1991/oj>.

<sup>(46)</sup> The three indicators are ‘grassland butterfly index’, ‘stock of organic carbon in cropland mineral soils’ and ‘share of agricultural land with high-diversity landscape features’.

<sup>(47)</sup> This is based on the latest available information from Eurostat, which is currently under review; European Commission, *Agriculture biologique au sein de l’union européenne*, factsheet, Brussels, 2024, [https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/document/download/c67458ed-ec50-4762-ae68-341763ab93c2\\_fr?filename=factsheet-organic-farming\\_fr.pdf&prefLang=en](https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/document/download/c67458ed-ec50-4762-ae68-341763ab93c2_fr?filename=factsheet-organic-farming_fr.pdf&prefLang=en).

## — taking action for ecosystem restoration.

The proposed directive on soil monitoring and resilience<sup>(48)</sup> aims to introduce the first comprehensive legislation on the protection of all soils in the EU. Should the directive be adopted, Member States will have to transpose it into national legislation and implement it, starting with putting in place the governance systems and a sound monitoring framework building on existing national soil monitoring frameworks. The objective of the proposed directive is to provide better and more comparable soil health data with the view of attaining healthy soils by 2050.

Degradation of soil ecosystems encompasses several aspects. The proposed directive requires Member States to assess soil health according to a set of common indicators and to define the necessary regeneration measures. The area of soil that is sealed is an important factor in monitoring land-use change and represents an important pressure on nature and biodiversity. Other soil issues related to land degradation are soil erosion, soil compaction, loss of soil organic carbon, soil contamination, soil salinisation and the presence in soil of nitrogen and phosphorus in excess. The impact assessment accompanying the proposal, which builds on the data available in the EU Soil Observatory, points to the following soil degradation issues in Latvia<sup>(49)</sup>.

The greatest contributor to Latvia's unhealthy soils is a high or very high susceptibility to topsoil compaction, which affects 13 % of the national territory, particularly in the eastern part of the country. 6 % of the land is considered peatlands experiencing degradation, and 4 % of the national territory is experiencing unsustainable soil erosion by water, wind, tillage, and harvest.

### Grasslands

Grasslands are among the most diverse ecosystems in the EU; they can contain as many as 80 different plant species per square metre and are home to a large variety of animals, ranging from small insects, birds and rodents to large herbivores. Grasslands are essential for agriculture and livestock herding. Natural grasslands also play an important role in storing carbon. However, changes in agricultural practices and land uses have caused grasslands to disappear at an alarming rate, making them one of Europe's most threatened

## ecosystems.

In Latvia, there are 10 of the grassland habitat types listed in Annex I to the Habitats Directive. According to the report produced for the latest reporting period (2013–2018) under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive, the overall assessments of all grasslands indicate they have an unfavourable conservation status. The major pressures on and threats to grasslands are agriculture, forestry, development, natural processes, alien and problematic species, climate change, human-induced changes in water regimes, and energy production processes.

The award-winning pilot programme 'Blooming meadows'<sup>(50)</sup> (2023–2026) of the LIFE integrated project LatviaNature supports landowners managing perennial grasslands (see '[Recovery of species](#)' for more information). The programme aims to boost biodiversity by naturalising grasslands, helping them qualify as protected grassland habitats of community importance, which would make landowners eligible for ongoing support.

### 2025 priority action

- Promote active management of grasslands through extensive grazing to maintain the condition of these semi-natural habitats.

### Wetlands/peatlands

Wetlands act as water sources and purifiers; they are the planet's greatest natural carbon stores and they are crucial to agriculture and fisheries. Peatlands are a special type of wetlands dominated by peat-forming plants such as *Sphagnum* mosses. Nearly all peatlands in the EU are habitat types listed in Annex I to the Habitats Directive. Drained peatlands under intensive agricultural use constitute only 3 % of the EU's utilised agricultural area. At the same time, they are responsible for 25 % of the GHG emissions from the EU's agricultural sector. Restoring peatlands brings multiple benefits, as peatlands improve water retention and quality, store carbon, reduce GHG emissions and increase biodiversity.

In Latvia, eight wetland/peatland habitat types are protected under Annex I to the Habitats Directive. According to the latest report<sup>(51)</sup> produced in accordance with Article 17 of the Habitats Directive, most of these habitats are classified as having

<sup>(48)</sup> Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on soil monitoring and resilience (Soil Monitoring Law), COM(2023) 416 final of 5 July 2023, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52023PC0416>.

<sup>(49)</sup> Commission staff working document – Impact assessment report: Annexes – Accompanying the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on soil monitoring

and resilience (Soil Monitoring Law), SWD(2023) 417 final of 5 July 2023, [https://environment.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-07/IMPACT\\_ASSESSMENT\\_REPORT\\_ANNEXES\\_SWD\\_2023\\_417\\_part4.pdf](https://environment.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-07/IMPACT_ASSESSMENT_REPORT_ANNEXES_SWD_2023_417_part4.pdf).

<sup>(50)</sup> <https://latvianature.daba.gov.lv/ziedu-plavas/>.

<sup>(51)</sup> The report covers the 2013–2018 reporting period.

unfavourable conservation status, with the exception of calcareous fens, which are considered in favourable condition. The threats to peatlands are human-induced changes to water regimes, resource extraction, forestry, natural processes, agriculture, development, invasive species and climate change.

Peatlands are unique and rare ecosystems that, despite only covering around 3-4% of the planet's land surface, contain up to one-third of the world's soil carbon, which is twice the amount of carbon as found in the world's forests<sup>(52)</sup>. Peatland restoration and sustainable management is highly important to both combat climate change and preserve biodiversity. Living peatlands not only sequester carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) but also provide a healthy habitat for valuable species and remove nitrates from polluted agricultural run-off through denitrification. Peatland loss also means biodiversity loss, more floods and droughts, degraded drinking water for local communities and eutrophication of open waters. This last impact should be avoided, especially around the Baltic Sea, which is affected by eutrophication at a level of 97 %. Damage is caused when peatlands are drained for agriculture and tree planting, with peat extracted for fuel or horticulture.

Peatland restoration experts have raised concerns about the Latvian trend towards the afforestation of degraded peatlands<sup>(53)</sup>. This approach violates the concept of sustainability by sacrificing the most space-effective carbon store of the terrestrial biosphere – peatlands – for a shorter-term, less space-effective and more vulnerable carbon store – namely, tree biomass. Afforesting peatlands would not only bring limited or no climate mitigation benefits, but also go against the Do No Significant Harm (DNSH) principle, as well as the Guidelines on Biodiversity-Friendly Afforestation, Reforestation and Tree Plantings<sup>54</sup> and the peatland restoration targets under the Nature Restoration Regulation. Thus, Latvia is required to evaluate the Just Transition Fund (JTF) projects in alignment with the DNSH principle.

Drained peatlands make up 6 % of Latvia's agricultural land (compared with the EU average of 3 %) but account for 71 % of the country's agricultural emissions, significantly higher than the EU average of 25 %<sup>(55)</sup>.

Restoring peatlands, notably by re-wetting and renaturalisation aligns with Latvia's long-term environmental and climate goals by preserving one of the most efficient carbon stores on the planet and contributing to the goals of the Nature Restoration Regulation, as well as land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) targets.

### 2025 priority action

- Implement peatland conservation and restoration measures and include such measures and objectives in the national restoration plans.

### Forest ecosystems

Forests are important carbon sinks, and conserving them is vital if the EU is to achieve climate neutrality by 2050. The EU forest strategy for 2030, adopted in July 2021, is a plan of actions to promote the many services that forests provide. Its key objective is to ensure healthy, diverse and resilient EU forests that contribute significantly to the achievement of the EU's biodiversity and climate ambitions. About 27 % of the forest area in the EU is covered by habitat types listed in Annex I to the Habitats Directive. Moreover, forests host several species protected under the Birds and Habitats Directives, including those for which there is a requirement to designate Natura 2000 sites and to protect breeding sites and resting places.

Several guidelines on forestry management were published in 2023. They covered biodiversity-friendly afforestation, reforestation and tree planting; closer-to-nature forest management; and defining, mapping, monitoring and strictly protecting primary and old-growth forests. Further guidance on payment schemes for ecosystems services has also been published.

In 2023, the Commission proposed a new forest monitoring law<sup>(56)</sup> that aims to create a comprehensive forest knowledge base, address information gaps and enable a better response to growing pressures on forests.

Assessments show that, of the 27 % of EU forest area protected under the Habitats Directive, less than 15 % is of favourable conservation status<sup>(57)</sup>. The share of

<sup>(52)</sup> [Global Peatlands Assessment: The State of the World's Peatlands | UNEP - UN Environment Programme.](#)

<sup>(53)</sup> [Active afforestation of drained peatlands is not a viable option under the EU Nature Restoration Law](#)

<sup>(54)</sup> European Commission, 2023, [Guidelines on Biodiversity-Friendly Afforestation, Reforestation and Tree Planting - European Commission](#)

<sup>(55)</sup> Heinrich Böll Foundation, German Federation for the Environment and Nature Conservation, Michael Succow Foundation, et al., *Peatland Atlas – Facts and figures about wet climate guardians*, 2023, p. 35,

<https://eu.boell.org/en/PeatlandAtlas>.

<sup>(56)</sup> Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on a monitoring framework for resilient European forests, COM(2023)728, 22 November 2023, [https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=COM\(2023\)728&lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=COM(2023)728&lang=en)

<sup>(57)</sup> EEA, *State of Nature in the EU: Results from reporting under the Nature Directives 2013–2018*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2020,

forested areas in the EU with a bad conservation status increased from 27 % in 2015 to 31 % in 2018.

Meanwhile, in Latvia, according to the report produced for the most recent reporting period (2013–2018), all forests protected under the Habitats Directive have a poor or bad status, or their status is unknown (Figure 13).

In Latvia, forests covered 54.9 % of the territory in 2020 <sup>(58)</sup>. Primary forests covered 4 800 ha <sup>(59)</sup>.

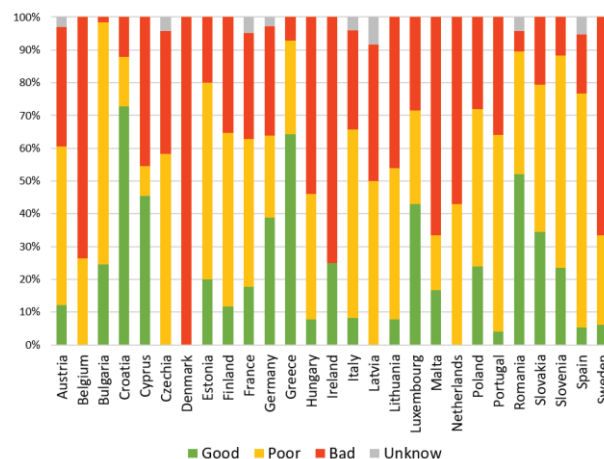
The Ministry of Smart Administration and Regional Development (VARAM) report adopted by the Cabinet in January 2025 indicates that between 2020 and 2023, a total of 9,100.8 hectares of forest habitats were destroyed. These habitats, identified through detailed habitat mapping and recorded in the “Ozols” nature database, were primarily lost due to clear-cutting practices, including significant losses in state-owned forests <sup>(60)</sup>.

In an infringement case against Latvia <sup>(61)</sup>, the Commission identified a number of gaps in Latvia’s Natura 2000 network in relation to multiple forest habitat types listed in the Habitats Directive (including 9080\*, 9050 and 91T0). According to latest update received from Latvia, for habitat types 9050 and 91T0, sufficient number of sites have been included in the Natura 2000 network. The Commission is currently assessing the progress made by Latvia in completing the Natura 2000 network in relation to those two habitat types. However, the Latvian authorities have indicated their intention to designate further sites for priority habitat type 9080\* and have preliminarily identified 74 sites for designation but have yet to finalise this work. To ensure the sufficiency of the network and the proper coverage of these vital habitat types in Latvia, the Commission urges the authorities to finalise these designations and to identify further sites where required. Such designations will only be effective if the sites are properly managed in accordance with the ecological requirements of the habitat types.

In particular, it must be ensured that the state-owned forestry company Latvia’s State Forests also fully complies with the requirements of the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive. This is especially crucial in view

of the large area of forest for which the company is responsible.

**Figure 13: Conservation status of forests protected under the Habitats Directive per Member State (% of assessments), 2013–2018**



Source: Commission staff working document – New EU forest strategy for 2030, SWD(2021) 652 final of 16 July 2021, p. 24, [eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52021SC0652](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52021SC0652).

According to a recent Cabinet of Ministers report (2024) <sup>(62)</sup>, the recently reorganised VARAM (now the Ministry of Smart Administration and Regional Development), in coordination with other ministries, will propose legal amendments and mechanisms by September 2025 to improve compensation for landowners in protected areas, thus promoting landowner involvement in preserving biodiversity and achieving climate goals. Measures will include land buy-backs, land-use change, compensation for the value of the forest stand in the form of a lump sum payment, and a support programme for landowners. These initiatives aim to balance conservation efforts with landowners’ rights by establishing updated compensation rates and methods. Additionally, the feasibility of a biodiversity credit market will be explored.

<https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/state-of-nature-in-the-eu-2020>.

<sup>(58)</sup> EEA, forest information system for Europe, ‘Countries – FISE country factsheets’, forest information system for Europe website, <https://forest.eea.europa.eu/countries>.

<sup>(59)</sup> Barredo, J., Brailescu, C., Teller, A. et al., *Mapping and assessment of primary and old-growth forests in Europe*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2021, p. 13, <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC124671>.

<sup>(60)</sup> VARAM, *On results of identification of distribution and quality of protected habitats and further action to find a balance between ensuring a favourable protection status of protected habitats and economic interests*, 24-TA-250, 2024.

<sup>(61)</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/inf\\_196304](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/inf_196304).

<sup>(62)</sup> Cabinet of Ministers, *Information report on proposals for providing compensation for restrictions on economic activity in protected areas and possible financial sources for covering compensation*, 24-TA-2287, 2024, <https://tapportals.mk.gov.lv/structuralizer/data/nodes/b6e9bb11-3a70-49ad-96d0-ec3ddcb1dcc3/preview>.

The EU Timber Regulation (EUTR)<sup>(63)</sup> prohibits the placing on the EU market of illegally harvested timber.

On 29 June 2023, the Regulation on Deforestation-free Products (EUDR)<sup>(64)</sup> entered into force<sup>(65)</sup>. The regulation seeks to guarantee that products in the EU that are made using any of seven listed commodities have no links to deforestation. The Regulation on deforestation-free products repeals the EU Timber Regulation.

### 2025 priority action

- Improve conservation status of forests by promoting sustainable forest management and ensuring compliance with the Habitats Directive before granting/renewing permits for forest logging.

### Marine ecosystems

The Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) requires Member States to achieve good environmental status (GES) for their marine waters. To that end, Member States must draw up marine strategies for their marine waters and cooperate with other Member States sharing the same marine region or subregion. These marine strategies comprise different steps to be developed and implemented over six-year cycles.

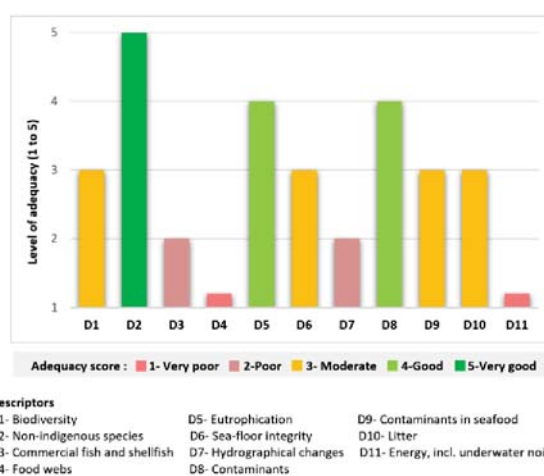
Since the 2022 Environmental Implementation Review (EIR) report, no additional data regarding Member States' set of GES characteristics for each descriptor in the MSFD have become available. Nevertheless, Member States have to report updates by 15 October 2024, and these will be assessed by the Commission. In the context of this next round of reporting, in accordance with the MSFD and the Commission GES decision<sup>(66)</sup>, Member States must include as part of their set of GES characteristics any threshold values for the descriptors in the MSFD that may have been established in cooperation with other Member States at the EU or regional level<sup>(67)</sup>.

The Commission assessed the updated monitoring programme reported by Member States in 2020<sup>(68)</sup>. At

that time, their updates on the elements, features and parameters identified monitoring gaps. The Commission recommended that Member States should prioritise work to address those gaps at all levels of implementation of the MSFD.

Member States also reported their updated programmes of measures, which are required under Article 13 of the MSFD and which must be updated every six years. The Commission has assessed Member States' programmes of measures.

**Figure 14: Level of adequacy of Latvia's updated programme of measures under Article 13 of the MSFD (2022 reporting exercise)**



Source: Technical assessment carried out by the European Commission, pursuant to Article 16 of the MSFD, based on the data reported by Latvia in September and October 2023.

Latvia's updated programme of measures shows contrasting levels of adequacy across different descriptors, scoring 'very good' for D2 (non-indigenous species) but 'very poor' for D4 (food webs) and D11 (energy, including underwater noise).

For non-indigenous species (D2), Latvia introduced new measures aiming to prevent NIS introduction through

<sup>(63)</sup> Regulation (EU) No 995/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2010 laying down the obligations of operators who place timber and timber products on the market (OJ L 295, 12.11.2010, p. 23), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32010R0995>.

<sup>(64)</sup> Regulation (EU) 2023/1115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 31 May 2023 on the making available on the Union market and the export from the Union of certain commodities and products associated with deforestation and forest degradation and repealing Regulation (EU) No 995/2010 (OJ L 150, 9.6.2023, p. 206), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32023R1115&qid=1687867231461>.

<sup>(65)</sup> The law will apply to large and medium-sized companies starting on December 30, 2025, and to micro and small enterprises

starting on June 30, 2026.

<sup>(66)</sup> Commission Decision (EU) 2017/848 of 17 May 2017 laying down criteria and methodological standards on good environmental status of marine waters and specifications and standardised methods for monitoring and assessment, and repealing Decision 2010/477/EU (OJ L 125, 18.5.2017, p. 43), <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2017/848/oj>.

<sup>(67)</sup> Communication from the Commission of 11 March 2024 – Commission notice on the threshold values set under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (Directive 2008/56/EC) and Commission Decision (EU) 2017/848 (OJ C, C/2024/2078, 11.3.2024), <http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/2078/oj>.

<sup>(68)</sup> [https://environment.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-04/C\\_2023\\_2203\\_F1\\_COMMUNICATION\\_FROM\\_COMMISSION\\_EN\\_V5\\_P1\\_2532109.PDF](https://environment.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-04/C_2023_2203_F1_COMMUNICATION_FROM_COMMISSION_EN_V5_P1_2532109.PDF).

shipping, based on the work of the International Ballast Water Convention, as well as implementing early warning systems and expanding the scope of measures to cover marine areas beyond coastal areas. Pressures were sufficiently quantified and the expected impact of these measures properly assessed.

For D3 (commercial fish and shellfish), D4 (food webs), D7 (hydrographical changes), D10 (litter) and D11 (energy, including underwater noise), however, no new measures were reported, leaving pressures for these descriptors inadequately addressed.

In 2022, Latvia received a priority action to ensure regional cooperation with Member States sharing the same marine (sub)regions to address predominant pressures.

Latvia worked closely with other Baltic Sea countries through regional organizations such as the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM). In October 2023, Latvia organised the 14th Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR), titled 'Safe and Sustainable Baltic Sea Region for Future Generations'.

### 2025 priority action

- Report updates on the assessment of the state of Latvia's marine waters, its target and its determinations of GES<sup>(69)</sup>, which are expected to include any threshold values for the descriptors in the MSFD that may have been established in cooperation with other Member States at the EU or regional level.

## Prevention and management of invasive alien species

Invasive alien species (IAS) are a major cause of biodiversity loss in the EU. Besides inflicting direct and indirect damage on nature and the economy, some IAS also carry and spread infectious diseases, posing a threat to humans and wildlife. Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 (the IAS Regulation) aims to prevent, minimise and

mitigate the adverse impacts of IAS on biodiversity. It focuses action on a list of IAS of EU concern (the 'Union list'), which is regularly updated<sup>(70)</sup>.

The third update of the Union list<sup>(71)</sup> entered into force on 2 August 2022. The fourth update is in preparation.

The IAS Regulation<sup>(72)</sup> currently lists 88 species subject to restrictions on keeping, importing, selling, breeding, growing and releasing into the environment. Member States are required to take measures to (i) prevent the introduction of IAS, (ii) ensure early detection and rapid eradication of IAS and (iii) manage species that are already widespread on their territory.

This aligns with target 6 of the GBF to reduce the introduction of IAS by at least 50 % by 2030 and minimise their impact.

Preventing the introduction and spread of IAS, and managing them, including through eradication and control, can result in a substantial cost saving. Studies estimate that the total cost of IAS in Europe (damages and management) amounted to EUR 116.61 billion between 1960 and 2020<sup>(73)</sup>. More recent studies have put this cost at USD 28 billion per year in the EU, increasing to USD 148.2 billion by 2040<sup>(74)</sup>, and at USD 423 billion annually at the global level<sup>(75)</sup>.

The spread of IAS is a significant problem throughout Latvia. As part of the LIFE integrated project LatviaNature<sup>(76)</sup>, Latvia is conducting a large scientific study (2023–2026) on controlling IAS, targeting five harmful species across 13 pilot areas, totalling more than 110 ha. The species being studied include Canadian goldenrod, Himalayan balsam, rugosa rose, spiked cornel and ash-leaved maple. Researchers are testing various control methods for each species, with plans informed by scientific publications and the experiences of Latvia's Nature Conservation Agency and international sources. The results will be used to develop national guidelines for managing IAS throughout Latvia by 2027.

The total number of IAS of Union concern in the country

<sup>(69)</sup> In accordance with Article 17 of Directive 2008/56/EC.

<sup>(70)</sup> Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2016/1141 of 13 July 2016 adopting a list of invasive alien species of Union concern pursuant to Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council (OJ L 189, 14.7.2016, p. 4), as amended by Commission Implementing Regulations (EU) 2017/1263, (EU) 2019/1262 and (EU) 2022/1203, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:02016R1141-20220802&from=EN>.

<sup>(71)</sup> Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/1203 of 12 July 2022 amending Implementing Regulation (EU) 2016/1141 to update the list of invasive alien species of Union concern (OJ L 186, 13.7.2022, p. 10), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32022R1203>.

<sup>(72)</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and

of the Council of 22 October 2014 on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species (OJ L 317, 4.11.2014, p. 35).

<sup>(73)</sup> Haubrock, P. J., Turbelin, A. J., Cuthbert, R. N. et al., 'Economic costs of invasive alien species across Europe', *NeoBiota*, Vol. 63, 2021, pp. 153–190.

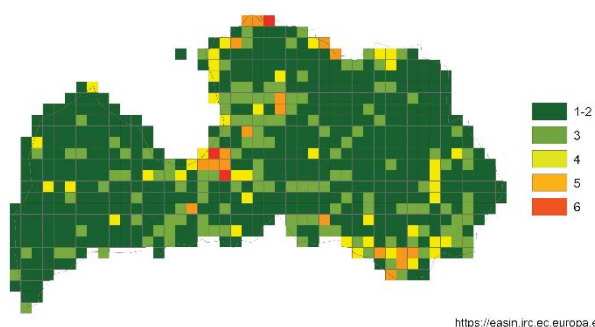
<sup>(74)</sup> Henry, M., Leung, B., Cuthbert, R. N. et al., 'Unveiling the hidden economic toll of biological invasions in the European Union', *Environmental Sciences Europe*, Vol. 35, No 1, 2023, p. 43.

<sup>(75)</sup> IPBES (Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services), *Summary for Policymakers – Invasive alien species assessment*, Bonn, 2023, <https://www.ipbes.net/document-library-catalogue/summary-policy-makers-invasive-alien-species-assessment>.

<sup>(76)</sup> <https://latvianature.daba.gov.lv/invazivo-sugu-ierobezosanas-teritorijas/>.

is 17. This includes 14 species recorded in the previous EIR (2021) and 3 additions. Of these additions, two were already on the Union concern list in 2021, and one was added later under Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/1203.

**Figure 15: Number of IAS of EU concern in Latvia**



In 2022, Latvia got a priority action to take the necessary steps to ensure full compliance with the requirements specified in Article 13 of the IAS Regulation. The priority action is fulfilled as Latvia has taken appropriate measures to comply with Article 13 of the IAS Regulation.

#### 2025 priority action

- Step up enforcement and the capacity of inspection authorities on IAS.

### Ecosystem assessment and accounting

The BDS calls on Member States to better integrate biodiversity considerations into public and business decision-making at all levels and to develop natural capital accounting.

Similarly, target 14 of the GBF <sup>(77)</sup> aims to ensure the full integration of biodiversity and its multiple values into

policy and planning and, as appropriate, national accounting. This requires effective and coherent biodiversity observation and reporting on ecosystem condition in the EU <sup>(78)</sup>.

The amended Regulation (EU) No 691/2011 on European environmental economic accounts <sup>(79)</sup> introduces new requirements for Member States to report on the condition of ecosystems including urban ecosystems, croplands, grasslands, forest and woodlands, coastal beaches, dunes and wetlands. Data reported by the Member States will feed into the second European ecosystem assessment, due in 2027, and can also be used to support policy decisions.

An ecosystem assessment is an analysis of the condition of ecosystems and the pressures acting on them, as well as the benefits that they provide to people, either directly or indirectly through the economy.

An increasing number of platforms, networks and communities of practice involve businesses in protecting biodiversity, including the EU Business & Biodiversity Platform <sup>(80)</sup>. These platforms and communities are key tools for promoting and facilitating natural capital assessments among businesses and financial services providers.

Natural capital assessments help private businesses to better understand both the negative and positive impacts that they have on nature, and to appreciate how nature contributes to their success. Such understanding contributes to the implementation of the EU's BDS.

Latvia has not signed and ratified the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

In 2022, Latvia received a priority action on supporting the mapping and assessment of ecosystems and their services, and ecosystem accounting development, as well as on supporting the development of national business and biodiversity platforms. The first part of the priority action cannot be assessed due to the lack of data. There is no progress on the second part: there is still no

<sup>(77)</sup> Decision 15/4 adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity: Kunming–Montreal global biodiversity framework (<https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-04-en.pdf>).

<sup>(78)</sup> European Commission: Joint Research Centre and EEA, *EU Ecosystem Assessment – Summary for policymakers*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2021, <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/81ff1498-b91d-11eb-8aca-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>.

<sup>(79)</sup> Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EU) No 691/2011 as regards introducing new environmental economic accounts modules, COM(2022) 329 final of 11 July 2022, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2022:329:FIN>.

<sup>(80)</sup> The EU Business & Biodiversity Platform ([https://green-business.ec.europa.eu/business-and-biodiversity\\_en](https://green-business.ec.europa.eu/business-and-biodiversity_en)) aims to promote the business case for biodiversity to businesses and financial institutions through workshops, seminars, reports and a cross-media communication strategy.



Latvian business and biodiversity network member of the EU Business & Biodiversity Platform.

#### 2025 priority action

- Support the development of the national business and biodiversity network.
- ratify the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization (ABS) to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

### 3. Zero pollution

#### Clean air

EU clean air policies and legislation have successfully reduced emissions of key air pollutants and significantly improved air quality, which is now moving towards the levels recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO). This has resulted in clear health benefits and reduced adverse impacts on ecosystems and biodiversity. However, to achieve the WHO-recommended levels, more efforts are needed, including full compliance with EU legislation. To guide these efforts, the EU zero pollution action plan sets targets for 2030 relative to 2005. These are to reduce the health impacts of air pollution by 55 % and to reduce the EU ecosystems threatened by air pollution by 25 %.

The EU has developed a comprehensive suite of air quality policies<sup>(81)</sup>. These set health-based EU air quality standards<sup>(82)</sup> and stipulate Member States' national emission reduction commitments<sup>(83)</sup> for several air pollutants.

The air quality in Latvia is generally good, with some exceptions.

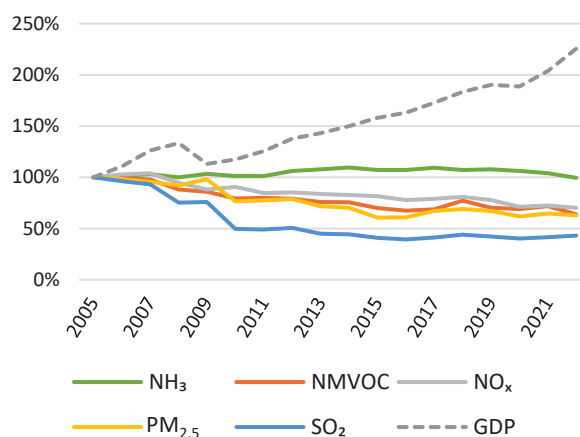
The latest available annual estimates (for 2022) by the EEA<sup>(84)</sup> for Latvia attribute 820 deaths each year (or 8 400 years of life lost (YLL)) to fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>)<sup>(85)</sup>, 120 deaths each year (or 1 300 YLL) to nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>)<sup>(86)</sup> and 220 deaths each year (or 2 300 YLL) to ozone<sup>(87)</sup>.

The emissions of several air pollutants have decreased significantly in Latvia since 2005, while GDP growth has continued (see Figure 16). According to the inventories submitted under Article 10(2) of the National Emission Reduction Commitments Directive (NECD)<sup>(88)</sup> in 2024, Latvia has met its emission reduction commitments for 2020–2029 for air pollutants nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>), non-methane volatile organic compounds (NMVOC), sulphur

dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) and PM<sub>2.5</sub>, and has not met them for ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>). According to the projections submitted under Article 10(2) of the NECD in 2023, Latvia is projected to meet its emission reduction commitments for 2030 onwards for NO<sub>x</sub>, NMVOC, SO<sub>2</sub>, NH<sub>3</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>.

Latvia submitted its first national air pollution control programme (NAPCP) to the Commission on 16 April 2020. An update was due four years afterwards. Latvia also needs to update its policies and measures to reduce air emissions.

**Figure 16: Emission trends of main pollutants / GDP in Latvia (%), 2005–2022**



Source: EEA, 'National air pollutant emissions data viewer 2005–2022', 25 June 2024, <https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/topics/in-depth/air-pollution/national-air-pollutant-emissions-data-viewer-2005-2022>.

<sup>(81)</sup> European Commission, 'Air', European Commission website, [https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/air\\_en](https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/air_en).

<sup>(82)</sup> European Commission, 'EU air quality standards', European Commission website, [https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/air/air-quality/eu-air-quality-standards\\_en](https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/air/air-quality/eu-air-quality-standards_en).

<sup>(83)</sup> European Commission, 'Reducing emissions of air pollutants', European Commission website, [https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/air/reducing-emissions-air-pollutants\\_en](https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/air/reducing-emissions-air-pollutants_en).

<sup>(84)</sup> EEA, *Harm to human health from air pollution in Europe: Burden of disease 2024*, briefing No 21/2024, Copenhagen, 2024, <https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/analysis/publications/harm-to-human-health-from-air-pollution-2024>.

<sup>(85)</sup> Particulate matter (PM) is a mixture of aerosol particles (solid and liquid) covering a wide range of sizes and chemical compositions. PM<sub>10</sub> refers to particles with a diameter of 10 µm or less. PM<sub>2.5</sub>

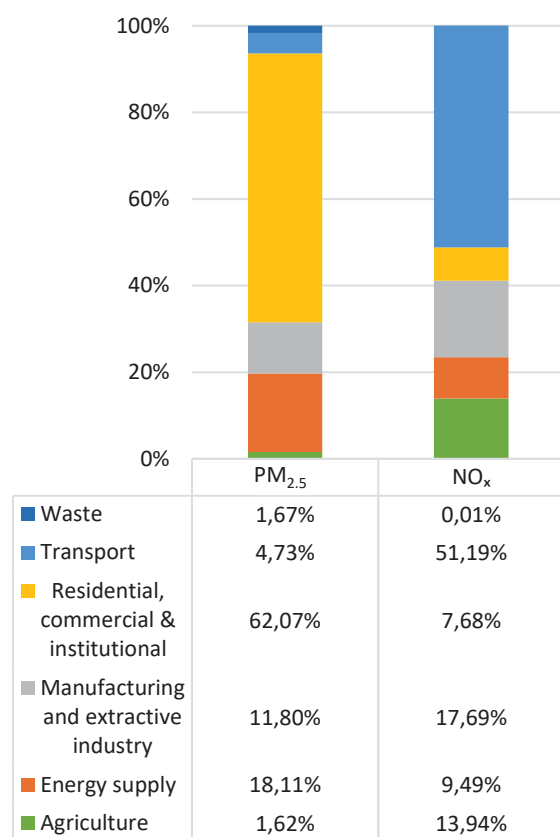
refers to particles with a diameter of 2.5 µm or less. PM is emitted from many human sources, including combustion.

<sup>(86)</sup> Nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) here pertains to a group of gases called NO<sub>x</sub>, which also comprises nitrogen monoxide (NO). NO<sub>x</sub> is emitted during fuel combustion – for example, from industrial facilities and the road transport sector.

<sup>(87)</sup> Low-level ozone is produced by photochemical action on pollution. This year, for the first time, the impact of long-term exposure to ozone has also been taken into account. In previous analysis by the EEA, only the impact of short-term exposure was estimated.

<sup>(88)</sup> Directive (EU) 2016/2284 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2016 on the reduction of national emissions of certain atmospheric pollutants, amending Directive 2003/35/EC and repealing Directive 2001/81/EC (OJ L 344, 17.12.2016, p. 1), [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L\\_.2016.344.01.0001.01.ENG](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2016.344.01.0001.01.ENG).

**Figure 17: PM<sub>2.5</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub> emissions by sector in Latvia (%), 2022**



Source: EEA, 'National air pollutant emissions data viewer 2005–2022', 25 June 2024, <https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/topics/in-depth/air-pollution/national-air-pollutant-emissions-data-viewer-2005-2022>.

In 2023, no exceedances above the limit values established by the Ambient Air Quality Directive (AAQD) <sup>(89)</sup> were registered in Latvia. However, the target value for benzo(a)pyrene concentration has not been met in one air quality zone <sup>(90)</sup>.

Infringement procedures have been opened for Member States not meeting the emission reduction commitments for 2020–2029; this includes a procedure for Latvia for NH<sub>3</sub>.

In the 2022 EIR, Latvia received three priority actions. The first priority action was to further reduce emissions in the context of the NAPCP. Latvia has not made progress on this, as the latest reported data show continued non-

compliance with the 2020–2029 emission reduction commitment for NH<sub>3</sub>. The second priority action was to ensure full compliance with EU air quality standards and maintain downward emission trends. Based on the latest data, Latvia has made some progress in this regard. However, exceedances above the target values remain for benzo(a)pyrene. Since 2019, downward emission trends have been reported for all main pollutants except for SO<sub>2</sub>. This situation requires further action. The third priority action received by Latvia was to ratify the Heavy Metals Protocol and the Persistent Organic Pollutants Protocol, which has been fulfilled.

### 2025 priority actions

- As part of the NAPCP, take action to reduce emissions of air pollutants.
- Ensure full compliance with the current AAQD standards, also in light of future stricter requirements under the revised AAQD.

### Industrial emissions

The main objectives of EU policy on industrial emissions are to:

- protect air, water and soil and to prevent harmful effects on human health and the environment;
- prevent and manage waste;
- improve energy and resource efficiency, including water;
- contribute to decarbonisation.

The cornerstone of the policy is the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED), which was revised in 2024 <sup>(91)</sup>. The revision improves the directive's contribution to the zero pollution objective. It has a strong focus on innovation, and builds solid links between depollution, decarbonisation and circularity, making it a key regulatory tool to accompany the green transformation of EU industry by 2050.

The overview of industrial activities regulated by the IED below is based on data reported to the EU Registry in 2022 <sup>(92)</sup>.

In Latvia, there were about 100 installations covered by the IED in 2022, around one third of them (33 %) being installations for the intensive rearing of poultry or pigs. The other main sectors are the waste management sector

<sup>(89)</sup> Directive 2008/50/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 May 2008 on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe (OJ L 152, 11.6.2008, p. 1), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32008L0050>.

<sup>(90)</sup> EEA, Eionet Central Data Repository (<https://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/>).

<sup>(91)</sup> Directive 2010/75/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 November 2010 on industrial and livestock rearing

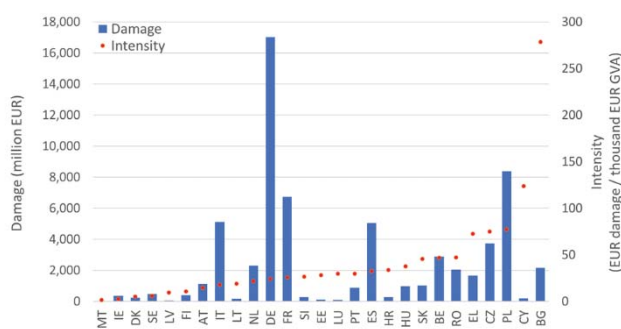
emissions (integrated pollution prevention and control) (OJ L 334, 17.12.2010, p. 17), as amended by Directive (EU) 2024/1785 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 April 2024, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02010L0075-20240804&qid=1725983863299>.

<sup>(92)</sup> EEA, European Industrial Emissions Portal, <https://industry.eea.europa.eu/>, 2022 being the baseline year for all reports.

(30 %), the energy sector (14 %) and the metals sector (6 %).

Figure 18 shows the damage to health and the environment due to the main industrial air pollutants. As this depends on, among other factors, the size of the industrial sector in each Member State, the figure also shows the ratio between the damage and the industrial activity (expressed in gross value added (GVA)), which gives an indication of the emissions ‘intensity’. Latvia has the second lowest damage in the EU and has one of the lowest emissions intensities (EUR 9.6/EUR 1 000 GVA), well below the EU average of EUR 27.5/EUR 1 000 GVA. The main industrial contributor to emissions to air <sup>(93)</sup> is the energy sector for NO<sub>x</sub>, SO<sub>2</sub>, dust and emissions of heavy metals.

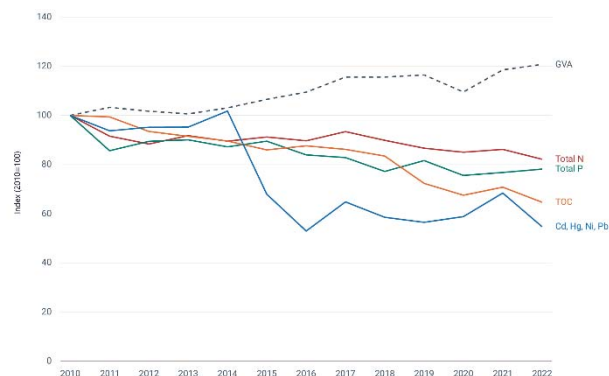
**Figure 18: Industrial air pollution damage and intensity per Member State, 2021**



Source: EEA, ‘Industrial pollution intensity indicators – EU large industry air pollution damage costs intensity’, European Industrial Emissions Portal, 2024, <https://industry.eea.europa.eu/analyse/industrial-emissions-indicator>.

Overall, the industrial emissions to water in the EU have decreased over time for all the main pollutants. On average in the EU, they appear to be decoupled from the industrial activity, which has increased over the same period (expressed in GVA), as shown in Figure 19.

**Figure 19: Industrial releases of pollutants to water and industrial activity in the EU-27**

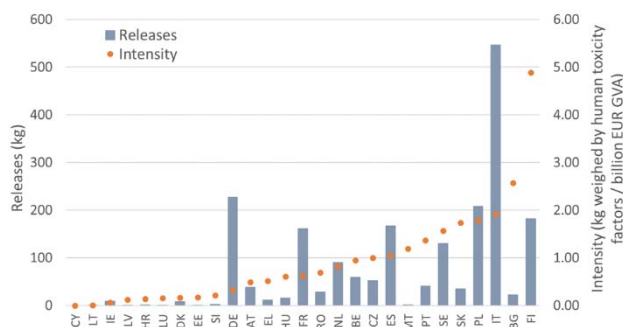


NB: Cd, cadmium; Hg, mercury; Ni, nickel; Pb, lead; TOC, total organic carbon; total N, total nitrogen; total P, total phosphorous.

Source: EEA, ‘Industrial pollutant releases to water in Europe’, 30 May 2024, <https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/analysis/indicators/industrial-pollutant-releases-to-water>.

Concerning Latvia in particular, Figure 21 shows the industrial emissions of heavy metals to water, taking into account the human toxicity of each metal, as well as the emissions intensity, based on its ratio with industrial activity (expressed in GVA). Latvia has one of the lowest emissions of heavy metals to water (weighted by human toxicity factors) and emissions intensities (well below the EU average of 0.864 kg/EUR 1 billion GVA). As shown in Figure 21, the main industrial contributor to emissions to water in Latvia is the chemical sector for heavy metals.

**Figure 20: Industrial releases and intensity of heavy metals to water per Member State, 2022**

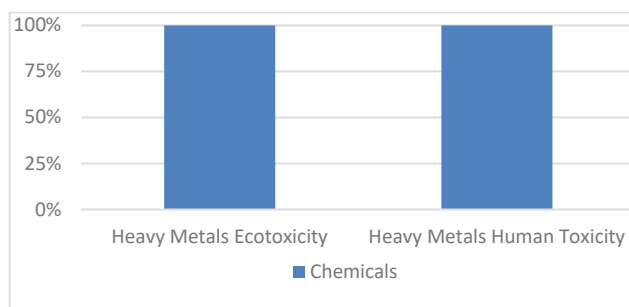


Source: EEA, ‘Industrial pollution intensity indicators – EU large industry water pollution intensity’, European Industrial Emissions Portal, 2024, <https://industry.eea.europa.eu/analyse/industrial-emissions-indicator>.

<sup>(93)</sup> European Environment Agency, LRTAP, Air pollutant emissions data viewer (Gothenburg Protocol, LRTAP Convention) 1990-2022,

<https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/topics/in-depth-air-pollution/air-pollutant-emissions-data-viewer-1990-2022>.

**Figure 21: Relative releases to water from industry in Latvia (%), 2022**



Source: EEA, 'Industrial reporting under the Industrial Emissions Directive 2010/75/EU and European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register Regulation (EC) No 166/2006 – ver. 12.0 Sep. 2024 (tabular data)', EEA Geospatial Data Catalogue, 13 September 2024, <https://doi.org/10.2909/cf5e54c1-be99-4426-bcad-baa26c4f27a0>.

IED provisions on public information and participation require Member States to adopt transposition legislation enabling members of the public to have access to relevant information and participate in the approval process for potentially polluting installations. Thus, the public and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), alongside competent authorities, play a role in ensuring compliance of these permits with EU legislation. The IED contains mandatory requirements on environmental inspections, requiring a site visit to take place at least every 1–3 years, using risk-based criteria. In addition, IED enforcement provisions require Member States to determine effective, proportionate, and dissuasive penalties applicable to infringements of IED-based national provisions. In the revised directive, the provisions set that worst infringements can be sanctioned by fines of at least 3% of the annual EU turnover of the legal person. The revised IED also introduces a right to compensation for people whose health has been harmed by such infringements.

The development of best available techniques (BATs), BAT reference documents and BAT conclusions ensures effective collaboration between stakeholders and enables better implementation of the IED.

Since the 2022 EIR, the Commission has adopted BAT conclusions on (i) ferrous metal processing, (ii) the textiles industry, (iii) common waste gas management and treatment systems in the chemical sector and (iv) smitheries and foundries.

The Commission relies on the efforts of national competent authorities to implement the legally binding BAT conclusions and associated BAT emission levels in environmental permits. This should result in considerable and continuous reductions in pollution.

<sup>(94)</sup> Directive 2012/18/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 July 2012 on the control of major-accident hazards involving dangerous substances, amending and subsequently repealing Council Directive 96/82/EC (OJ L 197, 24.7.2012, p. 1),

## 2025 priority actions

- Reduce industrial air pollution damage and intensity.
- Engage with industry and environmental NGOs to ensure proper contribution to and implementation of BAT conclusions and ensure timely updates to permits following the publication of BAT conclusions.
- Ensure effective public participation and access to justice in relation to the IED.

## Major industrial accidents prevention – Seveso

The main objectives of EU policy on the prevention of major industrial accidents are to:

- control major-accident hazards involving dangerous substances, especially chemicals;
- limit the consequences of such accidents for human health and the environment;
- continuously improve the prevention of, preparedness for and response to major accidents.

The cornerstone of the policy is Directive 2012/18/EU (the Seveso III Directive) <sup>(94)</sup>.

The overview below of industrial plants regulated by the Seveso III Directive ('Seveso establishments') is based on data reported on eSPIRS (e-Seveso Plants Information Retrieval System) for 2022–2024 <sup>(95)</sup> and the report by Latvia on the implementation of the Seveso III Directive for 2019–2022 <sup>(96)</sup>.

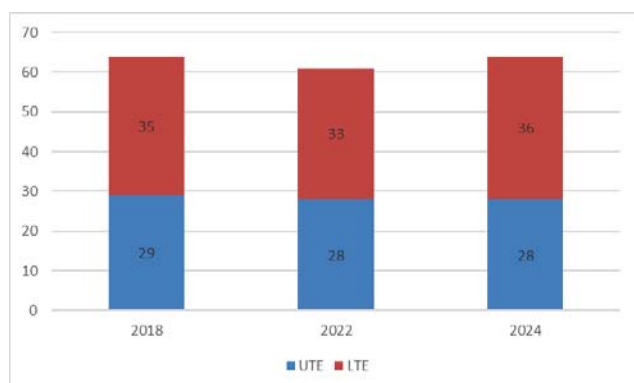
In 2024, of the 64 Seveso establishments in Latvia, 36 were categorised as lower-tier establishments and 28 as upper-tier establishments (UTEs), based on the quantity of hazardous substances likely to be present. UTEs are subject to more stringent requirements. The change in the number of Seveso establishments is presented in Figure 22.

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2012/18/oj>.

<sup>(95)</sup> <https://espirs.jrc.ec.europa.eu/en/espirs/content>; data extracted in September 2024.

<sup>(96)</sup> As provided for by Article 21(2) of the Seveso III Directive.

**Figure 22: Number of Seveso establishments in Latvia, 2018, 2022 and 2024**



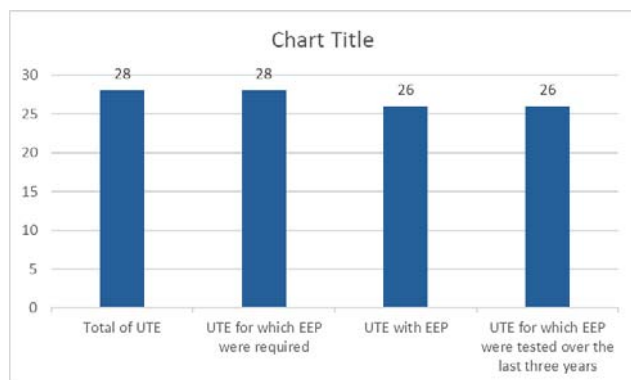
NB: LTE, lower-tier establishment.

Sources: European Commission: Directorate-General for Environment, *Assessment and summary of Member States' implementation reports for Implementing Decision 2014/896/EU (implementing Directive 2012/18/EU on the control of major accident hazards involving dangerous substances)*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2022, <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/94d57d74-735b-11ec-9136-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-search>; eSPIRS data, extractions from 2022 and 2024; Analysis and summary of Member States' reports on implementation of Directive 2012/18/EU on the control of major accident hazards involving dangerous substances according to the format established by Commission Implementing Decision 2014/896/EU - Publications Office of the EU, <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/9bd73087-e9b8-11ef-b5e9-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>.

Member States are required to draw up external emergency plans (EEPs). These EEPs are essential to allow proper preparation and effective implementation of the necessary actions to protect the environment and the population should a major industrial accident occur.

According to Latvia, in 2022, an EEP was required for all 28 UTEs, and 26 of them had an EEP. All EEPs had been tested over the last three years. The summary is shown in Figure 23.

**Figure 23: Situation regarding EEPs in Latvia, 2022**



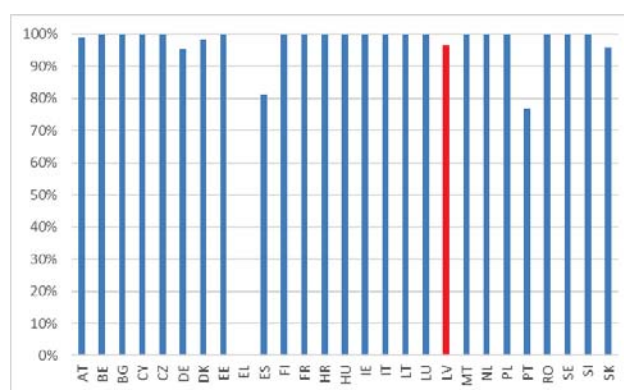
Sources: European Commission: Directorate-General for Environment, *Assessment and summary of Member States' implementation reports for Implementing Decision 2014/896/EU (implementing Directive 2012/18/EU on the control of major accident hazards involving dangerous substances)*, Publications Office of the European Union,

Luxembourg, 2022, <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/94d57d74-735b-11ec-9136-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-search>; eSPIRS data, extractions from 2022 and 2024; Analysis and summary of Member States' reports on implementation of Directive 2012/18/EU on the control of major accident hazards involving dangerous substances according to the format established by Commission Implementing Decision 2014/896/EU - Publications Office of the EU, <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/9bd73087-e9b8-11ef-b5e9-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>.

The following types of information are permanently available for all Seveso establishments in Latvia: (i) information for the public referred to in Annex V to the Seveso III Directive, especially about how the public concerned will be warned if there is a major accident; (ii) information about appropriate behaviour in the event of a major accident; and (iii) the date of the last site visit.

The shares of UTEs for which information on safety measures and requisite behaviours was actively made available to the public in 2022 in the EU-27 are presented in Figure 24. This provision on knowledge is an important provision of the Seveso III Directive, as awareness by the public of this information may ameliorate the consequences of a major industrial accident.

**Figure 24: Share of UTEs for which information on safety measures and requisite behaviours was actively made available to the public per Member State (%), 2022**



NB: No data available for Greece.

Sources: European Commission: Directorate-General for Environment, *Assessment and summary of Member States' implementation reports for Implementing Decision 2014/896/EU (implementing Directive 2012/18/EU on the control of major accident hazards involving dangerous substances)*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2022, <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/94d57d74-735b-11ec-9136-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-search>; eSPIRS data, extractions from 2022 and 2024; Analysis and summary of Member States' reports on implementation of Directive 2012/18/EU on the control of major accident hazards involving dangerous substances according to the format established by Commission Implementing Decision 2014/896/EU - Publications Office of the EU, <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/9bd73087-e9b8-11ef-b5e9-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>.

In 2022, Latvia received a priority action to strengthen control and enforcement to ensure compliance with the Seveso III Directive rules, especially those on the provision

of information to the public. Some progress has been made in that regard.

### 2025 priority actions

- Strengthen compliance with requirements on safety measures to prevent major accidents and ensure appropriate preparedness and response in relation to UTEs, in particular as regards reviewing, testing and updating EEPs, at intervals of no more than three years.
- Ensure access to transparent and clear information for citizens on risks and behaviour in the event of an accident.

## Mercury Regulation

The Mercury Regulation establishes measures and conditions concerning the use and storage of and trade in mercury, mercury compounds and mixtures of mercury, the manufacture and use of and trade in mercury-added products and the management of mercury waste, in order to ensure a high level of protection of human health and the environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds. The revision of the Mercury Regulation adopted in 2024 sets out rules to address the last intentional uses of mercury in the EU by phasing out the use of dental amalgam by 1 January 2025 except when deemed strictly necessary by the dental practitioner based on the specific medical needs of the patient, and prohibiting the manufacture and export of additional mercury-containing lamps from 1 January 2026 or 1 January 2027 (depending on the lamp category).

In 2019, 21 % of dental treatments were still using dental amalgam, which represented a challenge for Latvia to phase out its use by 1 January 2025. However, measures should have been put in place to ensure a socially and economically sound phase-out, including an adequate reimbursement of the alternatives to dental amalgam through the health insurance scheme and the training of dental practitioners. The Commission is monitoring whether the phase-out has taken place under the terms and conditions of the regulation. Latvia will also need to

ensure that the manufacture and export of mercury-containing lamps are prohibited by the deadlines set out in the Mercury Regulation.

## Noise

The Environmental Noise Directive<sup>(97)</sup> requires a common approach to avoid, prevent and reduce the harmful effects of noise. The designated authorities are responsible for making and approving noise maps and action plans for agglomerations, major roads, major railways and major airports. Member States decide on noise limits that are not set at the EU level. Nevertheless, the zero pollution action plan sets as a 2030 target a 30 % reduction compared with 2017 in the share of people chronically disturbed by transport noise.

Excessive noise from aircraft, railways and roads is one of the main causes of environmental health-related issues in the EU. It can cause ischaemic heart disease, stroke, interrupted sleep, cognitive impairment and stress<sup>(98)</sup>.

In Latvia, environmental noise is estimated to cause at least around 140 cases of ischaemic heart disease annually<sup>(99)</sup> and some 13 400 people to suffer from disturbed sleep<sup>(100)</sup>.

Based on the latest set of information analysed, Latvia has completed noise mapping for airports and major railways, whereas noise mapping for major roads and agglomerations is partially complete.

Action plans for noise management for agglomerations, roads, railways and airports must be updated and submitted to the Commission every five years. The deadline for reporting noise action plans under the most recent reporting cycle was 18 January 2025; these plans have not been assessed yet.

Latvia received no priority action in this area in the 2022 EIR.

### 2025 priority actions

- Complete noise mapping.

<sup>(97)</sup> Directive 2002/49/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 June 2002 relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise – Declaration by the Commission in the Conciliation Committee on the directive relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise (OJ L 189, 18.7.2002, p. 12), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32002L0049>.

<sup>(98)</sup> WHO, *Environmental Noise Guidelines for the European Region*, Copenhagen, 2018, <https://www.who.int/europe/publications/i/item/9789289053563>.

<sup>(99)</sup> These figures are an estimation by the EEA based on (i) the data reported by Member States on noise exposure covered by Directive 2002/49/EC for the round of noise mapping of 2022; (ii)

European Topic Centre on Air Pollution, Transport, Noise and Industrial Pollution (ETC/ATNI), *Noise Indicators under the Environmental Noise Directive 2021: Methodology for estimating missing data*, Eionet report ETC/ATNI No 2021/06, Kjeller, 2021; and (iii) the methodology for health impact calculations in European Topic Centre on Air Pollution and Climate Change Mitigation (ETC/ACM), *Implications of environmental noise on health and wellbeing in Europe*, Eionet report ETC/ACM No 2018/10, Bilthoven, 2018, [https://www.eionet.europa.eu/etcs/etc-atni/products/etc-atni-reports/eionet\\_rep\\_etcacm\\_2018\\_10\\_healthimplicationsnoise](https://www.eionet.europa.eu/etcs/etc-atni/products/etc-atni-reports/eionet_rep_etcacm_2018_10_healthimplicationsnoise).

<sup>(100)</sup> More information on the adverse health effects of noise pollution is available at: <https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/human/noise/noise-2>

- Complete and/or implement action plans on noise management.

## Water quality and management

EU legislation and policy requires that the impact of pressures on transitional waters, coastal waters and fresh waters (including surface waters and groundwater) be significantly reduced. Achieving, maintaining or enhancing a good status of waterbodies as defined by the Water Framework Directive will ensure that EU citizens benefit from good-quality and safe drinking and bathing water. It will further ensure that the nutrient cycle (nitrogen and phosphorus) is managed in a more sustainable and resource-efficient way.

### Water Framework Directive

The Water Framework Directive <sup>(101)</sup> is the cornerstone of EU water policy in the 21st century <sup>(102)</sup>. The Water Framework Directive and other water-related directives <sup>(103)</sup> form the basis of sustainable and integrated water management in the EU. They aim to achieve a high level of protection of water resources, prevention of further deterioration and restoration to good status. These objectives are very important for the EU's competitiveness, strategic autonomy and security, yet have become even more challenging in the face of climate change affecting our precious water resources.

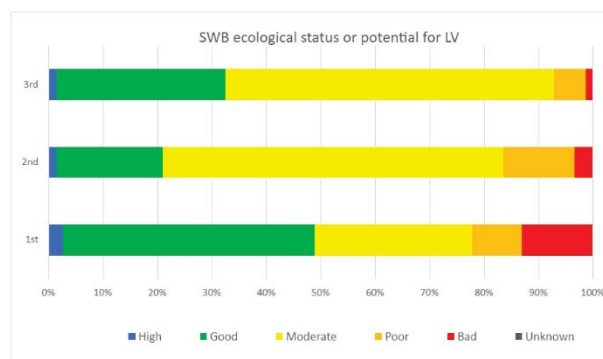
The Water Framework Directive establishes a procedural framework for reaching good surface water ecological and chemical status and good groundwater quantitative and chemical status. This implies monitoring and classification of all waterbodies, assessment of pressures and impacts and identification of the most cost-effective measures to achieve the objectives of the directive. The directive dates from 2000 and set an initial deadline of 2015 for achieving its objectives, with the option to extend the deadline to the end of 2027. Every six years, Member States must report their river basin management plans (RBMPs) to the Commission. They should cover river basin districts in their countries, some of which may be shared with other countries. The Commission has assessed the third cycle of RBMPs, which were to be submitted by March 2022, and

will report its findings to the European Parliament and to the Council before the end of 2024.

Latvia has 780 surface waterbodies and 25 groundwater bodies, divided over four river basin districts (Daugavas, Gauja, Lielupes and Ventas). Approximately 6 % of surface waters are designated as 'heavily modified' and about 1 % are designated as 'artificial'. Heavily modified and artificial waterbodies must reach good ecological potential rather than good ecological status, which means that all measures must be taken to mitigate the adverse impact of the sustainable human development activities causing the waterbody to be heavily modified / artificial, while not significantly affecting these activities.

Figures 25–28 show the evolution of ecological status/potential and of chemical status of surface waters, and of quantitative and chemical status of groundwaters in 2010, 2015 and 2021. It follows from the assessment of the third RBMPs that there has been an improvement in the ecological status/potential of surface waterbodies, but a deterioration in their chemical status, compared with the status reported in the second RBMPs (covering 2015–2021). There has been no deterioration in the quantitative status of groundwater bodies, which are all reported to have good status, but there has been a deterioration in their chemical status as well.

**Figure 25: Ecological status/potential of surface waterbodies in each RBMP cycle (%)**



32.5 % of surface waterbodies have good or better ecological status/potential, representing an improvement from the second RBMPs.

Latvia has significantly re-delineated its surface waterbodies, increasing the number of river bodies by

<sup>(101)</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32000L0060>.

<sup>(102)</sup> [https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/water\\_en](https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/water_en).

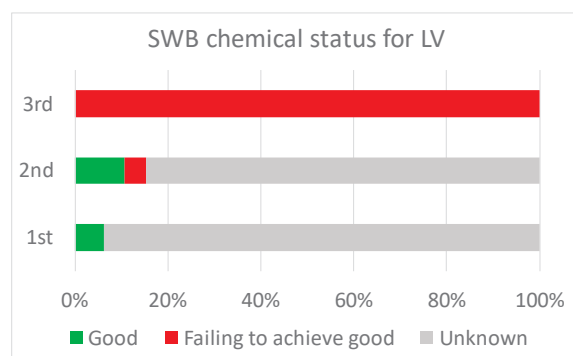
<sup>(103)</sup> These include the Groundwater Directive (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32006L0118>), the Environmental Quality Standards Directive (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2008/105/oj>), the Floods Directive (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32007L0060>), the Bathing Water Directive (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32006L0007>), the Urban

Wastewater Treatment Directive (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A31991L0271>), the new Drinking Water Directive (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32020L2184>), the Nitrates Directive (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=celex%3A31991L0676>), the MSFD (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32008L0056>) and the IED (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32010L0075>).



142 %. Significant progress has been achieved in the development of assessment methods and monitoring for all biological quality elements, although challenges and gaps remain. The implementation of the monitoring of coastal and transitional waters was still pending when the third RBMPs were developed.

**Figure 26: Chemical status of surface waterbodies in each RBMP cycle (%)**

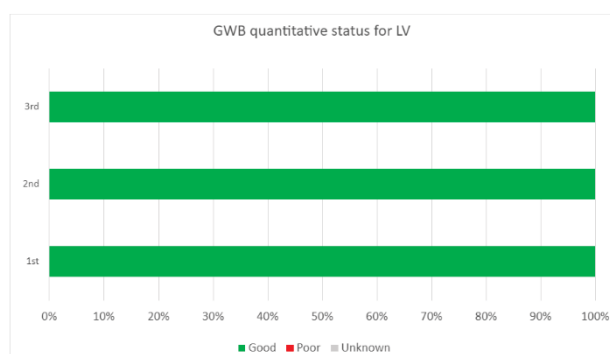


The percentage of surface waterbodies with good chemical status decreased from 10.6 % to 0.0 % between the third and second RBMPs. The status characterisation in the 3<sup>rd</sup> RBMPs was based on grouping for the first time, which explains the apparent deterioration. Furthermore, Latvia has significantly re-delineated its surface water bodies, hindering direct comparison.

Regrettably, Latvia monitors only a small percentage (12 %) of its surface waterbodies to assess their chemical status due to limited monitoring capacities. More positively, Latvia has expanded its monitoring to cover the additional 2 new substances included under the Environmental Quality Standards Directive in 2013. .

Failure to achieve good chemical status is mostly due to ubiquitous and persistent bioaccumulative and toxic substances, which are difficult to address and often have transboundary sources. In Latvia, these are mainly polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, mercury and heptachlor. Without including uPBT substances in the assessment of chemical status, 99% of the surface water bodies would be in good status.

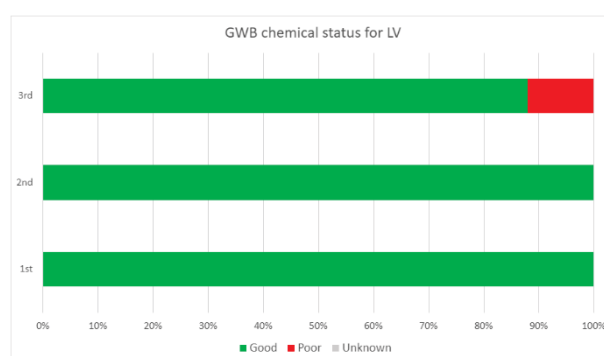
**Figure 27: Quantitative status of groundwater bodies in each RBMP cycle (%)**



All groundwater bodies have good quantitative status. There has been a re-delineation of groundwater bodies, which increased from 16 to 25, compared with the second RBMPs. 32 % of groundwater bodies are reported to be at risk of failing to achieve good quantitative status by 2027.

It is noted positively that 95.2% of the total groundwater body area is subject to quantitative monitoring. The confidence in the assessment is prevalently at medium level. However, saline or other intrusions, and GWAAEs and GWDETs were not included in the quantitative assessment; a list of these ecosystems was only finalised after the adoption of the 3<sup>rd</sup> RBMPs.

**Figure 28: Chemical status of groundwater bodies in each RBMP cycle (%)**



The number of groundwater bodies with good chemical status decreased from the second RBMPs to 88 % in the third RBMPs. It is concerning that 44 % of groundwater bodies are reported to be at risk of failing to achieve good chemical status by 2027.

The majority of groundwater bodies fail to achieve good chemical status due to the exceedance of thresholds for substances, as well as saline or other intrusions.

Until the end of 2027, Member States can still apply time-related exemptions, subject to providing evidence of compliance with the strict criteria set out in the Water Framework Directive. After 2027, the possibilities for applying exemptions will be much more limited.

The 2022 EIR identified the following priority actions.

- Assess new physical modifications of waterbodies in line with Article 4(7) of the Water Framework Directive. Consider alternative options and adequate mitigation measures in these assessments.
- Facilitate the implementation of measures to contribute to achieving the Water Framework Directive objectives and step up efforts to improve monitoring, in particular monitoring of groundwater.

Some progress has been made regarding these priority actions, but much remains to be done.

A point of good practice is that most of Latvia's significant pressures are covered by the key types of measures in the

programme of measures. Almost a quarter of the measures (23 %) have been assigned to KTM14 – research: improvement of knowledge base reducing uncertainty. Monitoring for assessing the status of surface waterbodies and groundwater bodies improved between the second and third RBMPs, although significant challenges and gaps remain. Latvia conducted a cost-effectiveness analysis for some measures at a basin/sub-basin/waterbody scale. An economic analysis was conducted for hydromorphological pressures, diffuse pollution loads and point source pollution loads in all river basin districts.

### 2025 priority actions

Without prejudice to the list of recommended actions in the Commission report to the European Parliament and to the Council on the assessment of the third RBMPs, the following priority actions can be highlighted.

- Improve river continuity and ecological flows, boosting efforts on nature-based solutions to reduce hydromorphological pressures.
- Ensure periodic reviews of permits for discharges, abstractions and other water uses, including hydropower pressures.
- Reduce pollution from nutrients, chemicals, metals and saline discharges.
- Better justify exemptions to the achievement of good status.
- Improve the classification of water bodies and strengthen monitoring systems.
- Develop more robust programmes of measures, tackle obstacles identified in the implementation of measures and ensure adequate financing for implementation, including through better use of the cost recovery and polluter pays principle.

### Floods Directive

Every six years, following the same reporting cycle as the RBMPs, all Member States report their flood risk management plans (FRMPs), based on the flood hazard and risk maps (FHRMs) and the preliminary flood risk assessments drawn up during the second cycle (2016–2021).

The Commission also assessed the FRMPs, and in 2024 reported on both the third RBMPs and second FRMPs (first

FRMP reporting was in March 2016) to the European Parliament and to the Council.

The main progress identified in the assessment of the second FRMPs is that the plans provide total budgets per unit of management, as well as indicative for all measures; sources of funding are specified for all measures; objectives are measurable and, in particular, provide indicators and targets. A cost-effectiveness analysis was used to prioritise structural measures and the results are presented in the second FRMPs. The impact of climate change on the occurrence of floods has been taken into consideration in the second FRMPs, which also refer to projected climate impacts and provide references to research studies. Furthermore, measures were assessed for their relevance to and consistency with the national climate change adaptation strategy.

### 2025 priority actions

- FRMPs should provide details on how the FHRMs were used in the choice of measures and how to consider pluvial flooding.
- Better explain the choice and implementation of flood prevention and protection measures (prioritisation, monitoring, costs of measures).

### Drinking Water Directive

The recast Drinking Water Directive is now applicable, and Member States were required to transpose its provisions into their national legal systems by 12 January 2023. Since the entry into force of the recast directive, the Commission has adopted several delegated and implementing acts establishing (i) a watch list of substances and compounds of concern for drinking water<sup>(104)</sup>, (ii) a methodology for measuring microplastics in drinking water<sup>(105)</sup> and (iii) an EU system for testing and approving materials that will be allowed to be in contact with drinking water<sup>(106)</sup>. Member States will have to take these various Commission acts into account when implementing the recast directive.

Finally, the Commission has now received data from Member States on the quality of drinking water in 2017–2019.

<sup>(104)</sup> [https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/implementing-decision-drinking-water-directive-watch-list\\_en](https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/implementing-decision-drinking-water-directive-watch-list_en).

<sup>(105)</sup> Commission Delegated Decision (EU) 2024/1441 of 11 March 2024 supplementing Directive (EU) 2020/2184 of the European Parliament and of the Council by laying down a methodology to measure microplastics in water intended for human consumption (notified under document C(2024) 1459) (OJ L, 2024/1441, 21.5.2024), [http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec\\_del/2024/1441/oj](http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec_del/2024/1441/oj).

<sup>(106)</sup> OJ L, 2024/365, 23.4.2024, [http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec\\_impl/2024/365/oj](http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec_impl/2024/365/oj); OJ L, 2024/367, 23.4.2024, [http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec\\_impl/2024/367/oj](http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec_impl/2024/367/oj);

OJ L, 2024/369, 23.4.2024, [http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg\\_del/2024/369/oj](http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2024/369/oj); OJ L, 2024/368, 23.4.2024, [http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec\\_impl/2024/368/oj](http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec_impl/2024/368/oj); OJ L, 2024/370, 23.4.2024, [http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg\\_del/2024/370/oj](http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2024/370/oj); OJ L, 2024/371, 23.4.2024, [http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg\\_del/2024/371/oj](http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2024/371/oj); see the Commission web page on all six delegated acts for more information ([https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/delegated-acts-drinking-water-directive\\_en](https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/delegated-acts-drinking-water-directive_en)).

The quality of drinking water (supplied by large water suppliers) in Latvia does not give rise to concern <sup>(107)</sup>. From January 2026, the European quality standards for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances in drinking water will apply, ensuring harmonised Member States' reporting of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substance monitoring data in the future.

### Bathing Water Directive

The Bathing Water Directive requires Member States to monitor and assess bathing water. It requires that, during the bathing season, Member States disseminate to the public information on bathing water quality actively and promptly. In particular, notices banning or advising against bathing should be rapidly and easily identifiable.

Figure 29 shows that in 2023, out of the 59 Latvian bathing waters, 44 (74.6 %) were of excellent quality, 9 (15.3 %) were of good quality and 2 (3.4 %) were of sufficient quality. Only one (1.7 %) bathing water was of poor quality and three (5.1 %) were not classified. Detailed information on Latvian bathing waters is available from a national portal <sup>(108)</sup> and through an interactive map viewer of the EEA <sup>(109)</sup>.

**Figure 29: Bathing water quality per Member State (%), 2023**



Source: EEA, *European Bathing Water Quality in 2023*, briefing No 04/2024, Copenhagen, 2024, <https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/european-bathing-water-quality-in-2023/>.

### Nitrates Directive

The Nitrates Directive <sup>(110)</sup> aims to protect water quality across Europe by preventing nitrates from agricultural sources that pollute groundwater and surface waters and by promoting the use of good farming practices.

The latest Commission report on the implementation of the Nitrates Directive <sup>(111)</sup>, dating back to 2021, warns that nitrates are still causing harmful pollution to water in the EU. Excessive nitrates in water are harmful to both human health and ecosystems, causing oxygen depletion and eutrophication. Cleaning of waters by national authorities or farmers, where it has been undertaken, has had a positive impact on the drinking water supply and on biodiversity. It has also benefited the sectors – such as fisheries and tourism – that depend on biodiversity and on a good supply of drinking water. Nevertheless, excessive fertilisation remains a problem in many parts of the EU. The report on the implementation of the Nitrates Directive covering 2020–2023 will be available in 2025.

The analysis of Latvia's RBMPs has identified nutrients from agriculture as an important pressure for surface waters that is affecting these waters' good status and as one of the main factors in not meeting the WFD objectives.

#### 2025 priority action

- Tackle nutrient pollution, especially nitrates from agriculture, through the implementation of the Nitrates Directive.

### Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive

The Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (UWWTD) aims to protect human health and the environment from the effects of untreated urban waste water. It therefore requires Member States to collect and treat (secondary or biological treatment) waste water in all urban areas of more than 2 000 people, and to apply a more stringent treatment than secondary, with nitrogen and/or phosphorus removal, to the waste water generated in urban areas, also known as agglomerations, of more than 10 000 people, before they are discharged into waters and their catchments, when they are sensitive to nitrogen and/or phosphorus (i.e. eutrophic or tending to become eutrophic).

Overall, in Latvia, the compliance rate was 98 % in 2020.

<sup>(107)</sup> In summary, the compliance for all parameter groups in Latvia was at least 98.90 % in 2017, 99.32 % in 2018 and 99.12 % in 2019.

<sup>(108)</sup> <https://www.vi.gov.lv/lv/peldudens>.

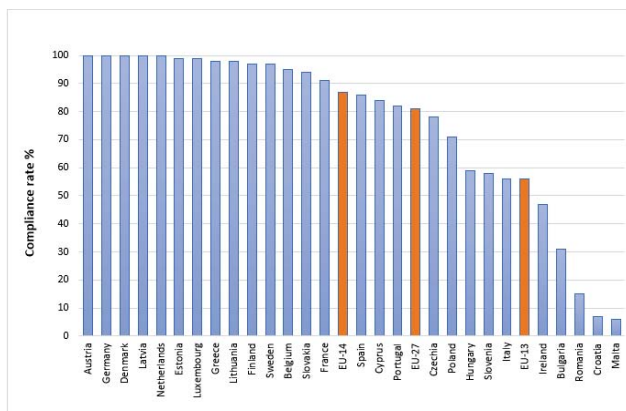
<sup>(109)</sup> EEA, 'State of bathing water', EEA website, 2024, <https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/topics/in-depth/bathing->

[water/state-of-bathing-water](https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/topics/in-depth/bathing-water/state-of-bathing-water).

<sup>(110)</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1561542776070&uri=CELEX:01991L0676-20081211>.

<sup>(111)</sup> [https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/water/nitrates\\_en](https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/water/nitrates_en).

**Figure 30: Proportion of urban waste water that fully complies with the UWWTD (%), 2020**



Source: European Commission, *12th UWWTD Implementation Report*, 2024.

The directive has been revised in order to, among other things, strengthen existing treatment standards and establish an additional treatment of micropollutants in urban waste water. Other new requirements relate to moving towards energy neutrality of the sector, establishing an EPR system to ensure sustainable financing of micropollutant treatment by the most polluting industries and ensuring access to sanitation, especially for vulnerable and marginalised groups. Latvia has until 31 July 2027 to transpose the new directive into its national legal system.

## Chemicals

The EU seeks to ensure that chemicals are produced and used in a way that minimises any significant adverse effects on human health and the environment. In October 2020, the Commission published its chemicals strategy for sustainability towards a toxic-free environment<sup>(112)</sup>, which led to some systemic changes in EU chemicals legislation. The strategy is part of the EU's zero pollution ambition – a key commitment of the European Green Deal.

The EU's chemicals legislation<sup>(113)</sup> provides a baseline protection for human health and the environment. It also ensures stability and predictability for businesses operating in the internal market.

Since 2007, the Commission has gathered information on the enforcement of the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) Regulation and the Classification, Labelling and Packaging (CLP) Regulation. In December 2020, the Commission assessed the Member States' reports<sup>(114)</sup> on the implementation and enforcement of these regulations<sup>(115)</sup>. It is apparent from the Commission's report that there are still many disparities in the implementation of the REACH and CLP Regulations, notably in the area of law enforcement. Recorded compliance levels in Member States, generally quite stable over time, appear to be getting slightly worse. This may be because (i) enforcement authorities are becoming more

effective in detecting non-compliant products/companies and (ii) more non-compliant products are being placed on the EU market.

In August 2021, the Commission published a measurable assessment of the enforcement<sup>(116)</sup> of the two main EU regulations on chemicals using a set of indicators on different aspects of enforcement. Since 2021, the list of chemicals subject to restrictions has been expanded as new entries have been added to Annex XVII to the REACH Regulation<sup>(117)</sup>.

In 2023, new hazard classes were added to the CLP Regulation, and the revision of the regulation was tabled (published on 20 November 2024)<sup>(118)</sup>. The new hazard classes cover endocrine disruptors and persistence-related hazards while the revision of the regulation encompasses new rules on online sales to better tackle non-compliances observed over the years. Also in 2023, the Conference of the Parties of the Stockholm Convention (COP) decided to include, in its Annex A (which lists banned substances), three new chemicals<sup>(119)</sup>. The Commission is working on the delegated acts to include these substances in Annex I to the Persistent Organic Pollutants Regulation by 2025 at the latest.

The Member States' reporting exercise set out in Article 117 of the REACH Regulation and Article 46 of the CLP Regulation is conducted every five years. The results of the coming one are expected in 2025, hence the absence of new country-specific data on enforcement since 2022.

<sup>(112)</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – Chemicals strategy for sustainability: Towards a toxic-free environment, COM(2020) 667 final of 14 October 2020, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2020%3A667%3AFIN>; Regulation (EC) No 1272/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures, amending and repealing Directives 67/548/EEC and 1999/45/EC, and amending Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 (OJ L 353, 31.12.2008, p. 1), [https://publications.europa.eu/resource/cellar/c6b6a31d-8359-11ee-99ba-01aa75ed71a1.0004.02/DOC\\_2](https://publications.europa.eu/resource/cellar/c6b6a31d-8359-11ee-99ba-01aa75ed71a1.0004.02/DOC_2).

<sup>(113)</sup> Namely, Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 concerning the registration, evaluation, authorisation and restriction of chemicals (REACH), establishing a European Chemicals Agency, amending Directive 1999/45/EC and repealing Council Regulation (EEC) No 793/93 and Commission Regulation (EC) No 1488/94 as well as Council Directive 76/769/EEC and Commission Directives 91/155/EEC, 93/67/EEC, 93/105/EC and 2000/21/EC (OJ L 396, 30/12/2006, p. 1), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32006R1907>; and Regulation (EC) No 1272/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures, amending and repealing Directives 67/548/EEC and 1999/45/EC, and amending Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 (OJ L 353, 31.12.2008, p. 1), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02008R1272-20221217>.

<sup>(114)</sup> European Commission, *Technical assistance to review the existing Member States reporting questionnaire under Articles 117(1) of REACH and 46(2) of CLP – Final report*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2020, <https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/8ee3c69a-bccb-4f22-89ca-277e35de7c63/library/a4abce8c-8425-455f-b7e6-0ead917bde6b/details>.

<sup>(115)</sup> In line with Article 117(1) of the REACH Regulation and Article 46(2) of the CLP Regulation.

<sup>(116)</sup> European Commission: Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, *REACH and CLP Enforcement: EU-level enforcement indicators*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2021, <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/e5c3e461-0f85-11ec-9151-01aa75ed71a1>.

<sup>(117)</sup> These are substances in tattoo inks and permanent make-up, *N,N*-dimethylformamide, formaldehyde (and formaldehyde releasers), lead in PVC (polyvinyl chloride), siloxanes (D4, D5, D6) and, finally, microplastics.

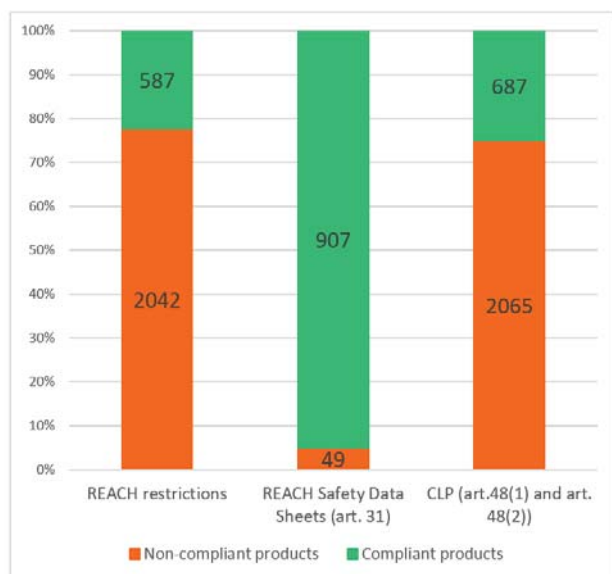
<sup>(118)</sup> Regulation (EU) 2024/2865 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2024 amending Regulation (EC) No 1272/2008 on classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures, OJ L, 2024/2865, 20.11.2024, p.1 ([Regulation - EU - 2024/2865 - EN - EUR-Lex](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/2865/oj)).

<sup>(119)</sup> These are methoxychlor, dechlorane plus and UV-328. In the case of the pesticide methoxychlor, there are no exemptions from the ban. However, for the two plastic additives, dechlorane plus and UV-328, the COP decision lists some time-limited specific exemptions.

In 2022, the EIR reported that 18 inspectors were allocated to enforcement of the REACH and CLP Regulations in Latvia <sup>(120)</sup>.

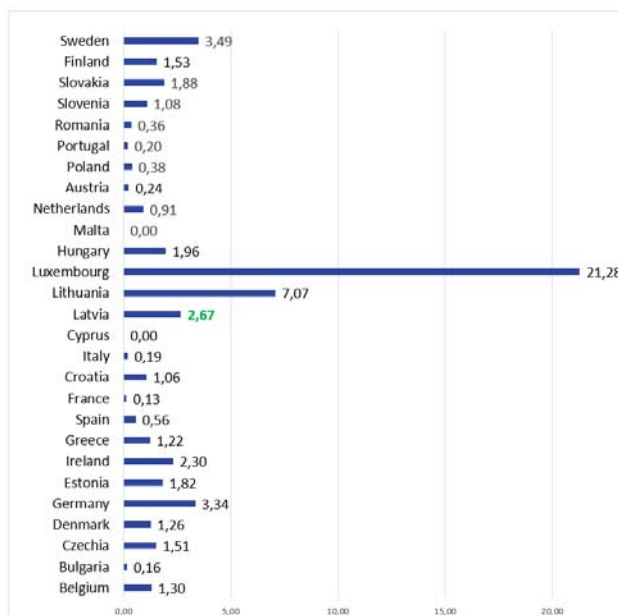
In 2020, Latvia participated in an EU coordinated enforcement project on products sold online, called the REACH-EN-FORCE (REF)-8 project <sup>(121)</sup>. The report was adopted in November 2021, so it could not be taken into account in the previous EIR.

**Figure 31: Compliance of imported products – results of the REF-8 project (%)**



A risk approach was used for the targeting of control measures in order to maximise the chances of identifying non-compliances. Therefore, the non-compliance rates presented above cannot be considered the average non-compliance rates of products in the EU. However, the proportion of non-compliance cases found in the REF-8 project are of concern.

**Figure 32: Number of REF-8 checks performed per 100 000 inhabitants (EU average = 1.24)**



Latvia's participation in the REF-8 coordinated enforcement project was above the EU average, which is rather low because of the lack of involvement of certain large Member States.

In this project and others conducted with the help of the European Chemicals Agency in the past few years, online sales have been proved to correspond consistently to higher non-compliance rates in checks performed across the EU, in particular when related to imported products.

In 2022, Latvia received two priority actions.

- Upgrade the administrative capacities in implementation and enforcement to move towards a policy of zero tolerance of non-compliance.
- Devise and implement the REACH and CLP Regulation enforcement strategies.

In the absence of reporting since 2022, no progress has been shown and these priority actions remain valid in 2025.

#### 2025 priority actions

- Upgrade the administrative capacities in implementation and enforcement to move towards a policy of zero tolerance of non-compliance.

<sup>(120)</sup> European Commission, *Technical assistance to review the existing Member States reporting questionnaire under Articles 117(1) of REACH and 46(2) of CLP – Final report*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2020, p. 75, <https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/8ee3c69a-bccb-4f22-89ca-277e35de7c63/library/a4abce8c-8425-455f-b7e6-0ead917bde6b/details>.

<sup>(121)</sup> European Chemicals Agency, *REF-8 project report on enforcement of the CLP, REACH and BPR duties related to substances, mixtures and articles sold online*, Helsinki, 2021, p. 20, [https://echa.europa.eu/documents/10162/17088/project\\_report\\_ref-8\\_en.pdf/ccf2c453-da0e-c185-908e-3a0343b25802?t=1638885422475](https://echa.europa.eu/documents/10162/17088/project_report_ref-8_en.pdf/ccf2c453-da0e-c185-908e-3a0343b25802?t=1638885422475).

- Increase customs checks and checks of products sold online with regard to compliance with chemicals legislation.

## 4. Climate action

The impacts of climate change have continued to increase in recent years, inflicting damage and suffering in the EU and around the world. Globally, 2023 was the hottest year on record, while Europe has been warming twice as quickly as the global average, and is now the fastest-warming continent. The frequency and severity of extreme climate events are also increasing. Against this backdrop, the EU has demonstrated its determination to implement the European Green Deal and to become climate neutral and resilient by 2050, ensuring sustainable competitiveness and supporting EU industry in the net-zero transition. The European Climate Law is the EU's response to the need for action. It sets the objective of achieving climate neutrality by 2050 and a midterm target of a reduction in GHG emissions of at least 55 % by 2030, and outlines the adaptation efforts necessary to adjust to climate change's present and future impacts. Almost all the 'Fit for 55' proposals set out in the European Green Deal have been agreed in law, and the European Commission recommended a new intermediate climate target of a 90 % reduction in emissions by 2040. In 2024, the Member States submitted updated national energy and climate plans for 2021–2030, reflecting the increased ambition of the revised EU legislation. In 2024, the European Commission also released, jointly with the EEA, the first-ever European climate risk assessment.

Over the last three decades, since 1990, the EU has achieved steady decreases in its emissions, reaching a running total in 2022 of – 32.5 % <sup>(122)</sup>. However, the EU and its Member States need to step up their implementation efforts and accelerate emissions reduction to stay on track to reach their targets of a 55 % reduction in net GHG emissions by 2030 and climate neutrality by 2050. Between 1990 and 2022, net GHG emissions of Latvia increased by 10%, making it one of the countries with a net increase.

The 'Fit for 55' legislative package reflects the need to speed up the green transition. It includes (i) strengthening and expanding the EU emissions trading system (ETS), with the creation of a new, second, ETS for transport and buildings together with a dedicated Social Climate Fund to help citizens during the transition; (ii) increasing targets under the effort sharing regulation; and (iii) a revised regulation for Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry <sup>(123)</sup>. The package has been fully

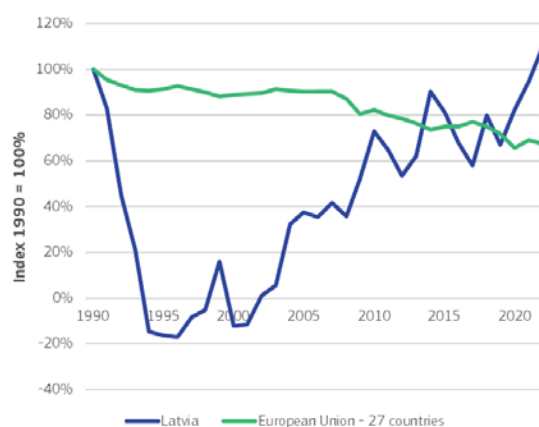
adopted, and the Member States have been implementing the legislation.

The key strategic document at country level is the National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) <sup>(124)</sup>. Latvia submitted its updated plan in July 2024 after the deadline set by the regulation. The European Commission assessed the plan and the extent to which Latvia has followed the recommendations for the draft version. The findings from the assessment are:

- Emissions under the Effort Sharing Regulation will decrease by 21% in 2030 compared to 2005, and Latvia will meet its target of 17%.
- The latest projections show a gap to the LULUCF target, meaning that current levels of removals have been insufficient.
- Latvia is in line with its target for the share of renewable energy.
- There are still gaps in energy efficiency targets that must be closed.

To minimise the impacts of climate policies on vulnerable people and sectors, Latvia is using the Just Transition Fund, Modernisation Fund and will use Social Climate Fund from 2026 (for more information, see Chapter 5 Finance).

**Figure 33: Total GHG emissions (excluding international aviation) (%), 1990–2022**



### The EU emissions trading system

The EU ETS is the key tool for reducing GHG emissions cost-effectively across all Member States. It is the world's

<sup>(122)</sup> EU net domestic emissions, including the LULUCF sector and excluding international aviation.

<sup>(123)</sup> A full overview of the Fit for 55 package is available at <https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/delivering-european-green->

[deal/fit-55-delivering-proposals\\_en.](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/delivering-european-green-)

<sup>(124)</sup> More information about NECP is on the dedicated website [https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/energy-strategy/national-energy-and-climate-plans-necps\\_en.](https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/energy-strategy/national-energy-and-climate-plans-necps_en)



biggest carbon market, covering around 40% of the EU's total GHG emissions from electricity and heat generation, the manufacturing industry, aviation within Europe<sup>(125)</sup> and, from 2024, maritime transport also.

The system sets a limit or cap on the total amount of GHGs that can be emitted at the EU level. Within this limit, companies buy emissions allowances (one allowance gives the right to emit 1 t of CO<sub>2</sub> eq (carbon dioxide equivalent)), in auctions or through trading allowances with others. The cap is reduced annually to ensure that overall emissions in the sectors covered decrease over time.

The emissions under the ETS decreased by 23% from 2005 to 2023.

In 2023, about half (47 %) of the GHG from Latvia's ETS installations came from power generation, slightly lower than the EU average (57 %). Of the total emissions from all industry sectors, cement and lime production accounted for 85 %, with 15 % coming from other industries. Since 2019, the power sector has registered higher reductions (49 %) than the industry sectors (11 %). Between 2013 and 2019, GHG emissions fluctuated in both the power sector and the industry sector, with 2019 levels being 6 % below 2013 levels.

From 2027, a new emissions trading system, called ETS2, for buildings, road transport and additional sectors (mainly industry not covered by the current ETS) will become fully operational<sup>(126)</sup>. Member States should have notified full transposition the provisions of the revised EU ETS directive related to the new ETS2 into national law by 30 June 2024.

Latvia did not communicate full transposition into national law by this deadline. The Commission therefore opened an infringement procedure against Latvia on 25 July 2024, by sending a letter of formal notice for failing to fully transpose the provisions into national law.

Latvia had two months to respond and address the shortcomings raised by the Commission. In the absence of a satisfactory response, the Commission may decide to issue a reasoned opinion.

The Commission also opened infringement procedures against Latvia on 25 January 2024, by sending a letter of formal notice for failing to fully transpose previous revisions of ETS directive<sup>(127)</sup> into national law. Latvia has since notified partial transposition of either one or both revisions to the Commission. In the absence of a complete transposition, the Commission may decide to issue a reasoned opinion.

## Effort sharing

The Effort Sharing Regulation (ESR)<sup>(128)</sup> covers GHG emissions from domestic transport (excluding CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from aviation), buildings, agriculture, small industry and waste. Emissions from these sectors account for around 60 % of the EU's domestic emissions. The regulation sets the EU-wide target to reduce emissions from the effort sharing sectors by 40 % by 2030 compared to 2005 levels. This overall target for the EU translates to binding national emission reduction targets for each Member State. Latvia's target is – 17%.

In addition to the 2030 targets, Member States have annual GHG emissions limits (annual emission allocations), reducing every year until 2030.

There is some flexibility to take account of annual fluctuations in emissions, by trading emissions and transfers from the ETS and LULUCF.

Based on historical emissions and the most updated projections Latvia is on track to achieve its 2030 ESR target. Projected emission reduction is 3.5 percentage points above the 2030 target.

The largest contributor is the domestic transport sector, which accounted for 37 % of all effort sharing emissions in 2022.

Sustainable transport has yet to take off in Latvia, which has high potential in electrified rail transport. At 0.4 % in 2022, the share of battery electric vehicles in its passenger car fleet is comparatively low (EU average: 1.2 %). Latvia has 450 publicly accessible charging points in 2023, one for every 8 e-vehicles (EU average of 1:10). 89 % of passenger transport is by car, but only 46 % of freight is transported by road. At 53 % – almost all being international transit – the share of rail in freight transport is far above the EU average (16 %). However, only 14 % of Latvia's rail network is electrified (EU average: 56 %).

Agriculture accounted for 27 % of effort sharing emissions and remains an issue for Latvia. Emissions increased by 26 % compared to 2005.

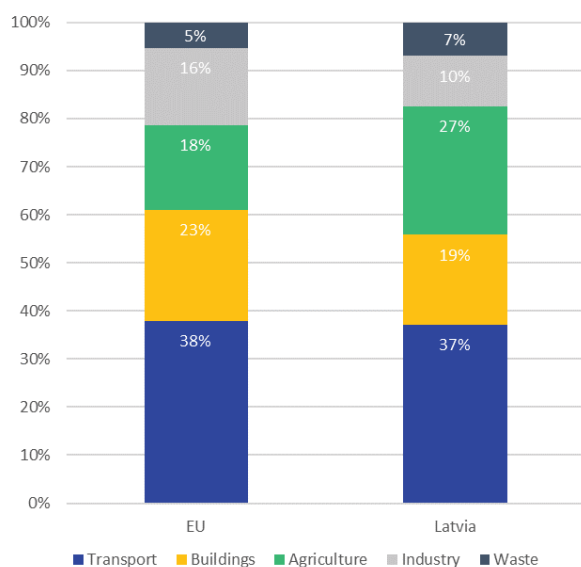
Buildings accounted for 19 % of effort sharing emissions but remain a concern for Latvia. Total emissions of buildings have decreased by just 6 % since 2005. Energy efficiency gains slowed down in Latvia, although significant untapped potential exists.

<sup>(125)</sup> Flights between the EU Member States including departing flights to Norway, Iceland, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

<sup>(126)</sup> Directive (EU) 2023/959 ([https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L\\_.2023.130.01.0134.01.ENG](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2023.130.01.0134.01.ENG)).

<sup>(127)</sup> [Directive - 2023/959 - EN - EUR-Lex](#) and [Directive - 2023/958 - EN - EUR-Lex](#).

<sup>(128)</sup> Regulation (EU) 2018/842 (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2018/842>).

**Figure 34: Effort-sharing emissions by sector (%), 2022**

## Land use, land-use change and forestry

The Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) sector plays a significant role in achieving the EU's climate neutrality goal. In the EU, this sector absorbs more GHGs than it emits, removing significant volumes of carbon from the atmosphere. Thus, it is the only sector with negative emissions.

Latvia's LULUCF sector has become a net GHG emitter in recent years. Latvia's net carbon removals through land use have fluctuated widely each year since 2017 with emissions from the sector doubling in the most recent GHG inventories. GHG emissions from cropland and grassland are comparatively high, indicating high volumes of emissions from soils with high organic content and diminishing forest stocks. Diminishing forests and drained peatlands are the main driving force behind the LULUCF emissions in the country.

Latvia's target in 2030 is to enhance land removals by additional – 0.6 Mt of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent compared to yearly average of the period 2016–2018. The latest available projections show a gap to target of 5.5 Mt of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent in 2030. Therefore, Latvia needs to apply additional measures to reach its 2030 target.

## Adaptation to climate change

Halting all GHG emissions would still not prevent climate impacts that are already occurring. Therefore, adaptation to climate change is also a key component of climate policy.

Latvia has one out of three regions identified as a hotspots of climate risks most affected by climate change – low-lying coastal regions <sup>(129)</sup>.

These coastal regions face the most serious climate adaptation challenges. Climate change is affecting many sectors, with agriculture and forestry most affected. Rising rainfall levels increase flood hazards, and extreme weather events such as heatwaves are projected to occur more often. The most climate-sensitive sectors are agriculture, infrastructure, energy and transport. The decline of biodiversity and ecosystem services due to climate change poses a risk to the preservation and sustainable development of Latvia's natural capital. It is key to shift away from forestry and agriculture monocultures and to monitor invasive species and pests in order to protect Latvia's ecosystems.

Latvia adopted its national adaptation plan in 2018 but has never updated it. There is no national adaptation strategy and no regional adaptation plans.

Latvia received eight priority actions regarding climate action in the 2022 EIR. There is some progress in reducing energy consumption of residential buildings, but it is crucial for Latvia to ensure sufficiently ambitious energy saving measures for the whole period if it is to achieve the required amount of cumulative end-use savings by 2030.

There is still no little progress in renewable energy in transport sector. Share of renewables has decreased by 0.5 percentage points since 2015.

Latvia still reported EUR 0.15 billion of fossil fuel subsidies (FFS) in 2023.

There is some progress in deployment of solar power, but Latvia needs to undertake more swift action to accelerate renewables deployment, notably for wind power.

EUR 192 million under the Just Transition Fund will be invested in the country to support a fair transition to a climate-neutral economy. These investments will support the phasing-out of peat for energy generation by 2030 and peatland restoration. However, there has been no decrease in horticultural peat extraction, which accounts for 95% of all peat extracted. The shift towards sustainable practices in peat industry is very slow.

Emissions from agriculture have increased by 26 % since 2005 and are still growing. There is no progress.

There is a progress in research and innovation activities. Latvia is an emerging innovator. In 2023, compared to 2021, Latvia was characterised by exceptionally high

<sup>(129)</sup> European Climate Risk Assessment (EUCRA). 2024. Available at

[European Climate Risk Assessment \(europa.eu\)](https://eucra.europa.eu/).

venture capital investment worth EUR 59.3 million in clean energy technology start-ups and scale-ups.

#### 2025 priority action

- Implement all policies and measures that are needed to achieve targets laid down in the Effort Sharing

Regulation (ESR) and the Land Use and Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) Regulation. More detailed priority actions are set out in the assessment of the final National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP)<sup>(130)</sup>.

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<sup>130</sup> [National energy and climate plans](#)

## Part II: Enabling framework – implementation tools

### 5. Financing

The EU budget supports climate investment in Latvia with significant amounts in 2021–2027, with revenues from the ETS also feeding into the national budget. During 2020–2022, Latvia's revenues from auctioning reached EUR 189 million in total, with all of it spent on climate and energy.

In addition, the annual investment needed to meet its environmental objectives in the areas of pollution prevention and control, the circular economy and waste, water protection and management, and biodiversity and ecosystems is estimated to be EUR 2 billion per year in Latvia.

These four environmental areas currently receive total funding of around EUR 830 million per year; thus, there is a gap of EUR 1.2 billion per year.

Of the environmental investment gap, EUR 0.9 billion concerns biodiversity and ecosystems, EUR 170 million the water objective, EUR 67 million circular economy and EUR 21 million pollution prevention and control.

#### Climate finance landmarks

##### EU funding for climate action

The EU budget supports climate action in the EU-27 with EUR 657.8 billion in the 2021–2027 budgetary period across the various programmes and funds, representing an overall 34.3 % contribution level. Of this, cohesion policy provides EUR 120 billion (over half of it through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)), the recovery and resilience facility (RRF) EUR 275.7 billion and CAP EUR 145.9 billion <sup>(131)</sup>.

In Latvia, the EU cohesion policy (considering EU contribution amounts) provides EUR 1.4 billion for climate action in 2021–2027 (with around half of this via the ERDF), with a further EUR 67.4 million from the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) <sup>(132)</sup>.

The RRF contributes to climate finance in Latvia with EUR 0.82 billion up to 2026, representing 41.5 % of the recovery and resilience plan (RRP) <sup>(133)</sup>.

The European Investment Bank (EIB) provided EUR 109.9 billion financing across the EU-27 between 2021 and mid 2024 to support energy, transport and industry projects that are aligned with the EU's climate objectives. Of this amount, EUR 100.1 million was assigned to Latvia in the reference period <sup>(134)</sup>.

##### National financing, including EU emissions trading system revenues

Revenues from the auctioning of emission allowances under the EU ETS, which feed directly into national budgets, amounted to EUR 42 million in 2020, EUR 62 million in 2021 and EUR 84 million in 2022 in Latvia, totalling EUR 189 million in the three-year period. In Latvia, 100 % of these revenues go to the emission allowance auction instrument, a national green investment scheme that aims to tackle global climate change. Reported spending shows the actually disbursed amounts per year, with all leftovers carried over to future years.

From the remaining part of the EU ETS revenues that feed into the Innovation Fund and the Modernisation Fund, further support is available to climate action at the EU level <sup>(135)</sup>.

It should be noted that investment in climate action also supports the environment and, therefore, the environmental investments described in the following sections cannot be regarded as entirely additional to climate investment <sup>(136)</sup>.

##### Environmental financing and investments

This section describes Latvia's investment needs, current financing and gaps as they relate to the four environmental objectives beyond climate objectives, namely tackling pollution, the circular economy and waste, water

<sup>(131)</sup> European Commission, *Statement of Estimates of the European Commission – For the financial year 2025*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2024, pp. 94–96, [https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/7a0420e1-599e-4246-9131-ccb7d505d6d9\\_en?filename=DB2025-Statement-of-Estimates\\_1.pdf](https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/7a0420e1-599e-4246-9131-ccb7d505d6d9_en?filename=DB2025-Statement-of-Estimates_1.pdf).

<sup>(132)</sup> See the Cohesion Open Data Platform (<https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/>).

<sup>(133)</sup> EU Commission datasets and the Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard ([https://ec.europa.eu/economy\\_finance/recovery-](https://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/recovery-and-resilience-scoreboard/index.html)

[and-resilience-scoreboard/index.html](https://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/recovery-and-resilience-scoreboard/index.html)).

<sup>(134)</sup> A list of financed projects is provided by the EIB (<https://www.eib.org/en/projects/loans/index.htm>).

<sup>(135)</sup> European Commission: Directorate-General for Climate Action, *Progress Report 2023 – Climate action*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2023, [https://climate.ec.europa.eu/news-your-voice/news/climate-action-progress-report-2023-2023-10-24\\_en](https://climate.ec.europa.eu/news-your-voice/news/climate-action-progress-report-2023-2023-10-24_en).

<sup>(136)</sup> NB: Indirect investments (from climate and other policies) in support of the environment are accounted for via the tracking.

protection and management, and biodiversity and ecosystems <sup>(137)</sup>.

## The environment overall

### Investment needs

The overall environmental investment needs to be sufficient to enable Latvia to meet its objectives in the areas of pollution prevention and control, the circular economy and waste, water protection and management, and biodiversity and ecosystems. The required investment is estimated to be EUR 2 billion per year (in 2022 prices).

A significant part of the estimated requirement, around EUR 1 billion per year, can be attributed to the need to support biodiversity and ecosystems. EUR 0.4 billion a year is required for circular economy, EUR 0.3 billion per year for water and EUR 0.2 billion per year for pollution prevention and control (in 2022 prices).

### Current investments

To implement the environmental investments needed, the available financing is estimated to currently reach an annual EUR 830 million in Latvia from EU and national sources combined (in 2022 prices).

Total environmental funding from the multiannual financial framework (MFF) is estimated to reach around EUR 1.6 billion for Latvia in total, during 2021–2027 (or EUR 229.5 million per year).

**Table 1: Key environmental allocations from EU funds to Latvia (million EUR), 2021–2027**

Instrument	Allocations
<b>Cohesion policy</b>	<b>877.2</b> <sup>(a)</sup>
ERDF	554.8
Cohesion Fund	239.8
Just Transition Fund	82.5
<b>CAP</b>	<b>558.2</b> <sup>(b)</sup>
European Agricultural Guarantee Fund	326.1
European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development	232.1
<b>EMFAF</b>	<b>46.4</b>
Other MFF sources	124.3 <sup>(c)</sup>
<b>RRF</b> <sup>(d)</sup> (2021–2026)	<b>379</b>

<sup>(a)</sup>

<sup>(137)</sup> Research, development and innovation is accounted under each environmental objective. The financing needs, baselines and gaps estimates are based on the Directorate-General for Environment's internal analysis (of 2024). Throughout this chapter, specific references are provided to the most important data sources used.

<sup>(138)</sup> [https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/programmes/life\\_en](https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/programmes/life_en).

<sup>(139)</sup> European Commission, Horizon Europe, [https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe\\_en](https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en).

European Commission, 2021-2027 cohesion policy (planned) allocations in *EU amount* excluding national co-financing, based on the tracking in the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR, 2021) Annex I. Please note potential data changes that may have arisen between the EIR preparation cut-off date (31 October 2024) and its publication date. Source and further information: [https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/2021-2027-Categorisation/2021-2027-Planned-finances-detailed-categorisation/hgvi-gyin/about\\_data](https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/2021-2027-Categorisation/2021-2027-Planned-finances-detailed-categorisation/hgvi-gyin/about_data).

<sup>(b)</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 establishing rules on support for strategic plans to be drawn up by Member States under the common agricultural policy (CAP strategic plans) and financed by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1305/2013 and (EU) No 1307/2013 (OJ L 435 6.12.2021, p. 1), Annex XI, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/2115>.

Note that 2021-2027 combines factual data for 2021 and 2022 and expenditure under the relevant specific objectives (SOs) of the CAP strategic plans from 2023, using the EU biodiversity tracking methodology (<https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2023-06/Biodiversity%20tracking%20methodology%20for%20each%20programme%202023.pdf>). Source: European Commission.

<sup>(c)</sup> Space Fund, Horizon Europe, LIFE and the Connecting Europe Facility.

<sup>(d)</sup> Outside the MFF. Note that the RRF applies a similar environmental tracking scheme (set in the RRF Regulation, Annex VI) as the EU's cohesion policy. RRF dataset version used: July 2024, prior to 2025 revisions. Data source: European Commission.

Latvia, in addition to receiving EU funds earmarked specifically for it in 2021–2027, can also benefit from funding programmes that can be accessed at the EU level and which are open to all Member States. These include the LIFE programme (EUR 5.4 billion) <sup>(138)</sup>, Horizon Europe (EUR 95.5 billion) <sup>(139)</sup>, the Connecting Europe Facility (EUR 33.7 billion) <sup>(140)</sup> and funds that can be mobilised through the InvestEU programme <sup>(141)</sup>.

Latvia's RRP supports climate objectives through funding of EUR 0.82 billion (41.5 % of total), with no additional amount for the environment.

The EIB provided around EUR 84.5 million in environment-related financial contributions to Latvia from 2021 to mid 2024, most of which, EUR 60 million (71 %), concerned water investment.

The EU's total national expenditure on environmental protection (operating plus capital expenditure) was EUR 298 billion in 2020 and EUR 321 billion in 2021, representing around 2.2 % of EU-27 GDP. In Latvia, the total national environmental protection expenditure was

<sup>(140)</sup> The Connecting Europe Facility Transport part also includes EUR 11.3 billion transferred from the Cohesion Fund, of which 30 % will be made available, on a competitive basis, to all Member States eligible for the Cohesion Fund. The remaining 70 % will respect the national envelopes until 31 December 2023.

<sup>(141)</sup> The InvestEU Fund is set to mobilise over EUR 372 billion of investment through an EU budget guarantee of EUR 26.2 billion to back the investment of financial partners such as the EIB group and others.

EUR 357 million in 2020 and EUR 412 million in 2021, representing 1.2 % of GDP.

Of the total environmental expenditure, the national capital expenditure (investment) on environmental protection amounted to EUR 54.5 billion in 2020 and EUR 59.9 billion in 2021 in the EU-27, representing around 0.4 % of the EU's GDP. In Latvia, the national environmental protection investment reached EUR 115 million in 2020, rising to EUR 150 million in 2021, representing around 0.4–0.5 % of GDP.

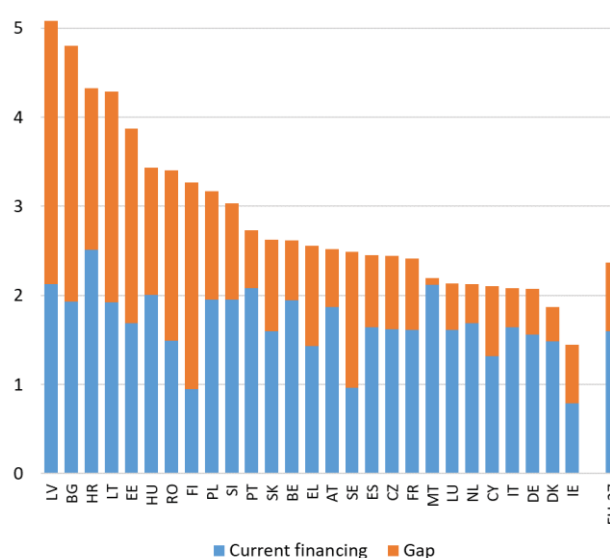
Splitting by institutional sector, 23 % of Latvia's national environmental protection investment (capital expenditure) comes from the general government budget, with 57 % coming from specialist private-sector producers (of environmental protection services, such as waste and water companies) and 20 % from the general business sector, whose environmental activities are usually ancillary to its main activities. At the EU level, 38 % of environmental protection investment comes from governments, 40 % from specialist private-sector producers and 22 % from the general business sector <sup>(142)</sup>.

Latvia's total financing for environmental investment reaches an estimated EUR 830 million per year (in 2022 prices), including EU funding and national public and national private expenditure. Of the total, the share of EU fund (including EIB funds) reaches 33 %, with around 67 % national financing. The total public financing (EU plus national public) represents 49 % of the total.

### The gap

To meet its four environmental objectives beyond climate change, the additional investment need over the current levels (i.e. the gap) reaches an estimated EUR 1.2 billion per year in Latvia, representing around 3 % of the national GDP, being considerably higher than the EU average (0.77 %).

**Figure 35: Environmental financing, needs and gaps per Member State (% of GDP)**



Source: Analysis of Directorate-General for Environment.

The following table provides the distributions of Latvia's environmental investment gap (expressed in various forms) by environmental objective.

**Table 2: Summary of environmental investment gaps in Latvia per year, 2021–2027**

Environmental objective	Investment gap per year		
	Million EUR (2022 prices)	% of total	% of GDP
Pollution prevention and control	21	1.8	0.1
Circular economy and waste	67	5.8	0.2
Water management and water industries	171	14.8	0.4
Biodiversity and ecosystems	894	77.6	2.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 153</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>3.0</b>

Source: Directorate-General for Environment analysis.

### Pollution prevention and control

#### Investment needs

In pollution prevention and control, Latvia's investment needs are estimated to reach EUR 214 million per year (including baseline investments) in 2021–2027. Most of this, EUR 197 billion, relates to air pollution control, to comply with the clean air requirements for the five main air pollutants under the NECD by 2030. The estimated needs

<sup>(142)</sup> Eurostat, 'Environmental protection expenditure accounts', env\_ac\_epea.

to reduce environmental noise reach EUR 59 million per year, most of which is delivered by the (same) sustainable energy and transport investments that also benefit clean air<sup>(143)</sup>. Industrial site remediation requires an estimated EUR 7 million per year. Microplastics pollution and the chemicals strategy require around EUR 4–6 million per year (each)<sup>(144)</sup>.

### Current investments

The current investment levels supporting pollution prevention and control reach an estimated EUR 193 million per year in Latvia in 2021–2027. Most of the financing concerns clean air (EUR 164 million per year). Protection from environmental noise receives around EUR 54 million per year, with a further EUR 10 million for site remediation.

In Latvia, the EU MFF provides an estimated 38 % of the clean air financing (mostly via cohesion policy), with a further 25 % from the RRF, adding up to 63 % of the total. EIB financing contributes 2 % and national sources reach 36 %<sup>(145)</sup>.

### The gap

To meet its environmental objectives concerning pollution prevention and control (towards zero pollution), Latvia needs to provide an additional EUR 21 million per year (0.05 % of GDP), mostly related to clean air and noise. The adequate implementation of the NECP with the investments included for sustainable energy and transport would largely deliver this, while in many Member States additional measures and investments may be required to comply with the ammonia reduction requirements.

According to the latest (2023) NAPCP review report<sup>(146)</sup>, Latvia did not comply with ammonia reduction requirements in 2020 and 2021, while it is not at risk of non-compliance with ammonia concerning the NECD's 2030 emission reduction commitments, based on the policies and measures in its NAPCP that take into account climate, energy and CAP plans and financing baselines.

## Circular economy and waste

### Investment needs

Latvia's investment needs in circular economy and waste reach EUR 416 million per year (including baseline investments). Most of this, around EUR 353 million per year, relates to circular economy measures in the mobility, food and built environment systems, with a further EUR 62 million necessary for waste management (municipal and packaging waste), covering waste collection, biowaste treatment, recycling reprocessors, waste-sorting facilities, and digitalisation of the waste registry. The amount for waste excludes the investments needed for the uptake of circularity and waste prevention across the economy<sup>(147)</sup>.

### Current investments

Circular economy investments across the economy reach around EUR 295 million per year in Latvia in 2021–2027, with a further EUR 54 million provided for waste management that does not constitute circular economy.

Around 4.8 % of this combined financing for circularity and waste comes from the EU MFF, with no further contribution from the RRF. The share of national sources is absolutely overwhelming, reaching 95.2 % of the total financing<sup>(148)</sup>.

### The gap

To meet its environmental objectives concerning the circular economy and waste, Latvia needs to increase circular economy investments by an estimated EUR 58 million per year, with an additional EUR 8 million concerning waste management action, not belonging to circular economy. Combined, this amounts to EUR 67 million per year, representing 0.17 % of Latvia's GDP.

Of the circular economy gap, EUR 15 million relates to recent initiatives, such as the eco-design for sustainable

<sup>(143)</sup> 2021 Phenomena project assessment (<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/f4cd7465-a95d-11eb-9585-01aa75ed71a1>) and the Commission's 2023 Environmental Noise Directive implementation report ([https://environment.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-03/COM\\_2023\\_139\\_1\\_EN\\_ACT\\_part1\\_v3.pdf](https://environment.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-03/COM_2023_139_1_EN_ACT_part1_v3.pdf)).

<sup>(144)</sup> European Commission, *Third Clean Air Outlook*, Brussels, 2022, [https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/air/clean-air-outlook\\_en](https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/air/clean-air-outlook_en). See also the impact assessment for the revision of the AAQD, available from the Commission web page on the proposed revision ([https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/revision-eu-ambient-air-quality-legislation\\_en](https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/revision-eu-ambient-air-quality-legislation_en)).

<sup>(145)</sup> Through the tracking of EU funds, EIB projects and national expenditure (EPEA accounts, Eurostat). Note that the bulk of clean air financing is provided as a contribution from climate (energy and transport) measures, as per the tracking schemes in the Common Provisions Regulation Annex I and the RRF Regulation Annex VI. Further information on clean air tracking: [https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/0a80484e-](https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/0a80484e-2409-4749-94c6-3b23bc6bae8f_en?filename=Clean%20air%20methodology_0.pdf)

[2409-4749-94c6-3b23bc6bae8f\\_en?filename=Clean%20air%20methodology\\_0.pdf](https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/0a80484e-2409-4749-94c6-3b23bc6bae8f_en?filename=Clean%20air%20methodology_0.pdf)

<sup>(146)</sup> European Commission, 'National air pollution control programmes and projections', European Commission website, [https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/air/reducing-emissions-air-pollutants/national-air-pollution-control-programmes-and-projections\\_en](https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/air/reducing-emissions-air-pollutants/national-air-pollution-control-programmes-and-projections_en).

<sup>(147)</sup> See Systemiq and Ellen MacArthur Foundation, *Achieving 'Growth Within'*, 2017; and European Commission: Directorate-General for Environment, *Study on investment needs in the waste sector and on the financing of municipal waste management in Member States*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2019, <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/4d5f8355-bcad-11e9-9d01-01aa75ed71a1>.

<sup>(148)</sup> Waste management and circular economy expenditure tracking in the EU funds, EIB projects and in the national expenditure (Eurostat). Datasets: EPEA accounts (env\_epi) and circular economy private investments (cei\_cie012).

products, packaging and packaging waste, labelling and digital tools, CRM recycling, and measures proposed under the amendment of the Waste Framework Directive, and EUR 43 million constitutes further investment need to unlock Latvia's circular economy potential.

## Water protection and management

### Investment needs

The annual water investment needs reach an estimated EUR 342 million (in 2022 prices) in Latvia. This comprises investment needs both for the water industry and for the protection and the management of water. Of the total annual need, EUR 104 million relates to the management of waste water (also including additional costs associated with the revised UWWTD). A further EUR 91 million is necessary for drinking-water-related investments and around EUR 144 million for the protection and management of water <sup>(149)</sup>.

### Current investments

Water investments in Latvia are estimated to be around EUR 171 million per year (in 2022 prices) in 2021–2027. Of this, EUR 84 million supports wastewater management, EUR 67 million drinking water and around EUR 19 million the other aspects of the Water Framework Directive (water management and protection).

Of the total financing, 10.5 % is provided by the EU MFF (mostly through cohesion policy), with further 1% support from the RRF. EIB financing is around 4.7 % of the total, while the bulk of financing comes from national sources (83.8 %) <sup>(150)</sup>.

### The gap

To meet the various environmental targets under the Water Framework Directive and the Floods Directive, Latvia's water investment gap reaches EUR 171 million per year (0.44 % of GDP), with EUR 20 million linked to waste water. Drinking water measures require an additional EUR 24 million per year and the other aspects of the Water

Framework Directive around EUR 125 million per year over the existing levels of financing.

## Biodiversity and ecosystems

### Investment needs

The investment needs for biodiversity and ecosystems are estimated to be EUR 1 billion per year (in 2022 prices) in Latvia in 2021–2027. This includes the following financing needs:

- (i) Latvia's prioritised action framework <sup>(151)</sup> concerning the Natura 2000 areas: EUR 115 million per year, mostly running costs;
- (ii) additional BDS costs <sup>(152)</sup>: EUR 632 million per year on top of the framework;
- (iii) sustainable soil management costs <sup>(153)</sup>: EUR 266 million per year.

### Current investments

The current level of biodiversity financing is estimated to be EUR 119 million per year (in 2022 prices) in 2021–2027. 53 % of this is considered direct financing to biodiversity and ecosystems, with a 100 % coefficient in the tracking schemes.

11.8 % of the total financing is estimated to come from EU cohesion policy, 62.6 % from CAP, 7.6 % from Horizon Europe, around 2.9 % from LIFE and 3.8 % from EMFAF. The EU MFF altogether accounts for 89.7 % of the financing and the RRF for 1.5 %, adding up to a total of 91.2 % from the EU budget. The rest, 8.8 %, comes from national sources <sup>(154)</sup>.

Latvia has programmed 17.9 % of its CAP budget in measures dedicated to support biodiversity over 2021–2027, as well as 3.5 % of its cohesion policy EU contribution amount (disregarding ESF+). These figures are below the EU average share of biodiversity financing (Figure 36). Latvia was one of the very few Member States that did not make use of RRF funding for biodiversity or any other direct environmental investment or reform.

<sup>(149)</sup> See European Commission, 'Estimating investment needs and financing capacities for water-related investment in EU Member States', 28 May 2020, [https://commission.europa.eu/news/estimating-investment-needs-and-financing-capacities-water-related-investment-eu-member-states-2020-05-28\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/news/estimating-investment-needs-and-financing-capacities-water-related-investment-eu-member-states-2020-05-28_en); and OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), *Financing Water Supply, Sanitation and flood Protection: Challenges in EU Member States and policy options*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2020, [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/environment/financing-water-supply-sanitation-and-flood-protection\\_6893cdac-en](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/environment/financing-water-supply-sanitation-and-flood-protection_6893cdac-en).

<sup>(150)</sup> Water investment levels are estimated through tracking EU funds, EIB projects and national expenditure (EPEA accounts, Eurostat).

<sup>(151)</sup> European Commission, 'Financing Natura 2000 – Prioritised action frameworks', European Commission website, [https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/natura-2000/financing-natura-2000\\_en](https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/natura-2000/financing-natura-2000_en).

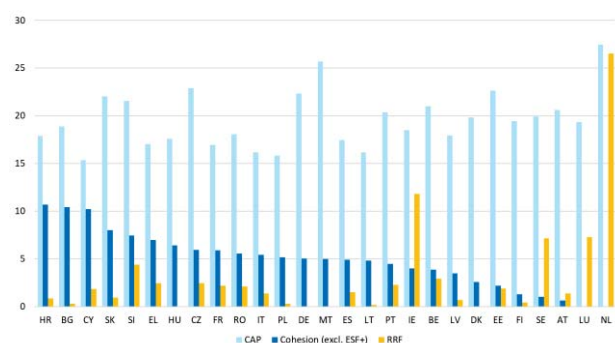
<sup>(152)</sup> See European Commission: Directorate-General for Environment, *Biodiversity Financing and Tracking – Final report*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2022, <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/793eb6ec-dbd6-11ec-a534-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>.

<sup>(153)</sup> See Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on soil monitoring and resilience (Soil Monitoring Law) COM(2023) 416 final of 5 July 2023, [https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/proposal-directive-soil-monitoring-and-resilience\\_en](https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/proposal-directive-soil-monitoring-and-resilience_en).

<sup>(154)</sup> Based on biodiversity tracking in the EU budget (<https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/3f466d71-92a7-49eb-9c63-6cb0fadf29dc/library/8e44293a-d97f-496d-8769-50365780acde>), and national expenditure into biodiversity from the Classification of the Functions of Government accounts.



**Figure 36: 2021–2027 contributions to biodiversity from the main EU instruments per Member State (% of policy total)**



NB: ESF+, European Social Fund Plus.

### The gap

To meet the environmental objectives concerning the protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems and other relevant cross-cutting measures, Latvia's investment gap is estimated to be around EUR 0.9 billion per year, corresponding to 2.3 % of its GDP.

## Public financial management

### Green budgeting practices

Green budgeting refers to the use of budgetary tools to achieve climate and environmental goals. Some Member States already use green budgeting tools for identifying and tracking green expenditures and/or revenues <sup>(155)</sup>. Green budgeting practices provide increased transparency on the environmental implications of budgetary policies.

The Commission has developed a non-mandatory green budgeting reference framework that brings together methodologies for assessing the impacts of budgets on climate and environmental goals <sup>(156)</sup>.

To help Member States develop national green budgeting and thereby improve policy coherence and support the green transition, the Commission facilitated a technical support instrument (TSI) project on green budgeting from 2021 to 2024 <sup>(157)</sup>. Latvia participated, taking steps towards

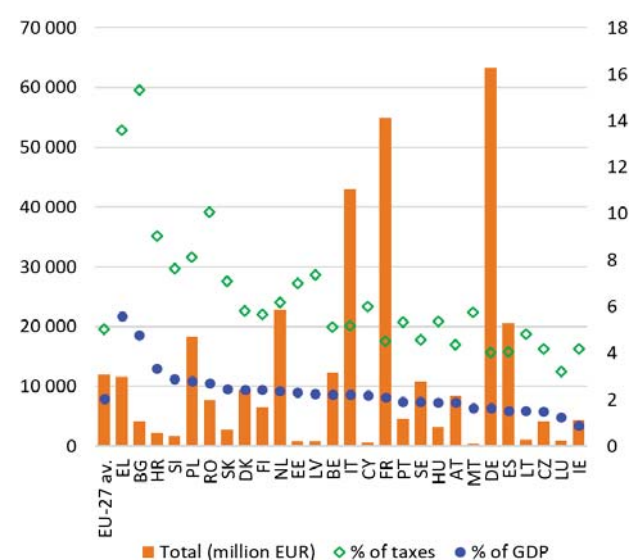
its own green budgeting framework, with a pilot on green tagging planned to be completed in 2025.

Beyond green budgeting, to improve policy outcomes, the Commission has also drawn up climate-proofing and sustainability-proofing guidance <sup>(158)</sup> as tools to assess project eligibility and compliance with environmental legislation and criteria.

### Green taxation and tax reform

Total environmental taxes amounted to EUR 867 million in Latvia in 2022, representing 2.2 % of its GDP (EU average: 2.0 %). Energy taxes formed the largest component of environmental taxes, accounting for 1.8 % of GDP, which is higher than the EU average of 1.6 %. Transport taxes, at 0.3 % of GDP, were under the EU average (0.4 %), while taxes on pollution and resources, at 0.14 %, were above average (EU average: 0.08 %).

**Figure 37: Environmental taxes per Member State, 2022**



The EU Green Deal emphasises the role of well-designed tax reforms (e.g. shifts from taxing labour to taxing pollution) to boost economic growth and resilience, and to foster a fairer society and a just transition through the right price signals. The Green Deal promotes the 'polluter-pays

<sup>(155)</sup> European Commission, *Green Budgeting in the EU. Key Insights from the 2023 European Commission Survey of Green Budgeting Practices*, 2023, [https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/economic-and-fiscal-governance/national-fiscal-frameworks-eu-member-states/green-budgeting-eu\\_en#:~:text=European%20Commission%20Green%20Budgeting%20Survey%2%A0.](https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/economic-and-fiscal-governance/national-fiscal-frameworks-eu-member-states/green-budgeting-eu_en#:~:text=European%20Commission%20Green%20Budgeting%20Survey%2%A0.)

<sup>(156)</sup> European Commission, 'European Union green budgeting reference framework', 2022, [https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/economic-and-fiscal-governance/green-](https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/economic-and-fiscal-governance/green-budgeting-eu_en)

[budgeting-eu\\_en.](https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/economic-and-fiscal-governance/green-budgeting-eu_en)

<sup>(157)</sup> [https://reform-support.ec.europa.eu/what-we-do/revenue-administration-and-public-financial-management/supporting-implementation-green-budgeting-practices-eu\\_en.](https://reform-support.ec.europa.eu/what-we-do/revenue-administration-and-public-financial-management/supporting-implementation-green-budgeting-practices-eu_en)

<sup>(158)</sup> Commission notice – Technical guidance on the climate proofing of infrastructure in the period 2021–2027 (OJ C 373, 16.09.2021, p. 1), [https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/23a24b21-16d0-11ec-b4fe-01aa75ed71a1/language-en.](https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/23a24b21-16d0-11ec-b4fe-01aa75ed71a1/language-en)

principle', which makes polluters bear the costs to prevent, control and remedy pollution.

According to a 2024 study<sup>(159)</sup>, Latvia applies environmental taxes on various emissions to air, water and soil, as well as product charges on plastic packaging and bags, on hazardous waste, on water extractions and on pollutants in water, and on natural resource (mineral) extraction.

### Green bonds and sustainable bonds

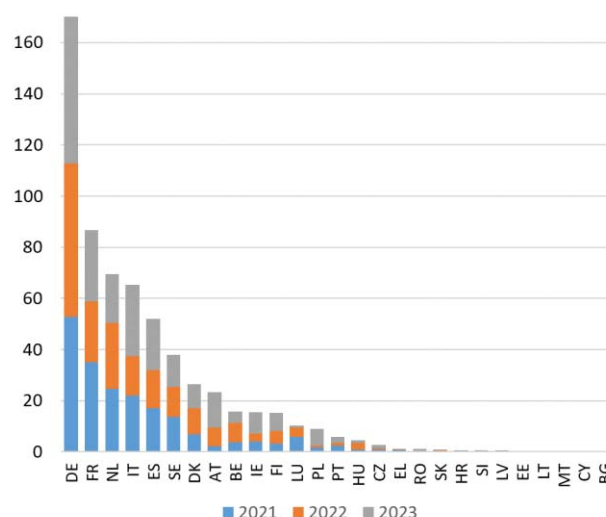
In 2023, the total value of the green bonds issued by Member States was USD 245 billion (EUR 227 billion), up from USD 234 billion (EUR 198 billion) in 2021<sup>(160)</sup>.

During 2021–2023 combined, Latvia issued green bonds worth USD 336 million (EUR 0.3 billion). Of this, the issuance in 2023 amounted to USD 53 million (EUR 49 million).

During 2014–2023, 83 % of the green bonds issued by European countries (excluding supranational entities) served objectives in energy, buildings or transport, while 5 % supported objectives in water, 5.1 % related to land use (with links to nature and ecosystems) and 3.8 % applied to waste management. By 2023, the combined share of energy, buildings and transport had decreased to 73 %, the shares of waste management and land use had increased (to 5.9 % and 8.4 %, respectively) and the share of water had remained around 5 %.

In 2021–2023, 31.7 % of the European green bonds (excluding supranational issuances) was issued by financial corporates, 29.1 % by sovereign governments and 23.1 % by non-financial corporates. 8.3 % of the issuances was linked to government-backed entities, 6.4 % to developments banks and 1.4 % to local governments.

### Figure 38: Value of green bonds issued per Member State (EUR billion), 2021, 2022 and 2023



Data source: Climatebonds.net, with some additional data from national sources (e.g. Croatia, Slovenia).

### Environmentally harmful subsidies

Addressing and phasing out environmentally harmful subsidies, in particular FFS, is a further step towards achieving the eighth environment action programme objectives and the enabling conditions<sup>(161)</sup>. FFS are costly for public budgets and make it difficult to achieve European Green Deal objectives.

The overall downward trend of FFS mentioned in past EIRs was disrupted from 2022 due to the European response to the 2021 energy crisis and subsequent increase in energy prices.

As a direct consequence, annual FFS in the EU have increased to EUR 109 billion in 2023 from EUR 57 billion in 2020. From 2021 to 2023, there was a marked increase in annual FFS of 72 % in the EU<sup>(162)</sup>.

For the majority of the Member States (16), the year 2022 saw a peak in the amount of overall FFS. A decline was then observed in 2023<sup>(163)</sup>. In particular, FFS for coal and lignite, natural gas and oil increased in 2022 and a strong increase was observed for natural gas subsidies.

In Latvia, the energy subsidies increased significantly between 2015 and 2017, and stayed in the range of EUR 1.0–1.2 billion per year between 2018 and 2023, except for 2021 (when a drop was observed). In 2015–

<sup>(159)</sup> European Commission: Directorate-General for Environment, *Candidates for Taxing Environmental Bads at National Level*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2024, Annexes 1–2, <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/35c1bbdf-2931-11ef-9290-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>.

<sup>(160)</sup> Climate bonds initiative (<https://www.climatebonds.net/>). NB. Additionally (and not included in this), national sources indicated EUR 544.8 million issuance for Croatia, in 2022–2023, and a slightly

higher amount for Slovenia (+0.27 billion) during 2021–2023 in total.

<sup>(161)</sup> Article 3(h) and 3(v) of the eighth environment action programme.

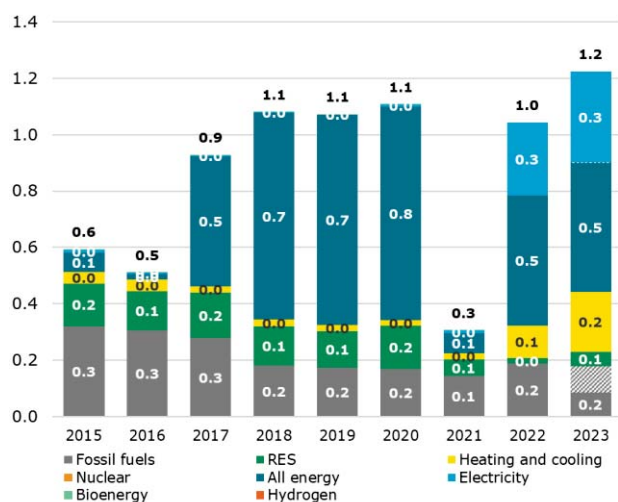
<sup>(162)</sup> European Commission, 2024 Report on Energy Subsidies in the European Union, COM(2025). [https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=COM\(2025\)17&lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=COM(2025)17&lang=en)

<sup>(163)</sup> 16 Member States: BE, EE, IE, EL, ES, FR, HR, IT, CY, LT, HU, NL, AT, PT, RO and SE.

2017, FFS amounted to EUR 0.3 billion per year, before decreasing to and mostly staying at around EUR 0.2 billion per year.

As a share of GDP, FFS in 2022 ranged from 1.8 % in Croatia to less than 0.1 % in Denmark and Sweden. Latvia's value reached 0.6 %, under the EU average (0.8 %) <sup>(164)</sup>.

**Figure 39: Energy subsidies by energy carrier (EUR billion), 2015–2023**



NB: RES, renewable energy source.

Source: analysis of Directorate-General Energy

## Priority actions

The 2022 EIR included the following recommendations for Latvia.

- Devise an environmental financing strategy to maximise opportunities for closing environmental implementation gaps, bringing together all relevant administrative levels.
- Ensure an increased level of financing, including by further exploiting opportunities in private financing, for the environment to cover the investment needs identified across the environmental objectives and prevent significant investment gaps.

Latvia currently has a similar overall environmental investment gap as at the time of the 2022 EIR: around 2.9 % of GDP, above the EU average. This is predominantly related to biodiversity and ecosystems.

## 2025 priority action

With regard to the similar overall investment gap as before, a general recommendation is maintained for Latvia.

- Use more national funding (for instance by increasing taxes in favour of the environment and reducing environmentally harmful subsidies), EU funding and private funding to help close the investment gap.

<sup>(164)</sup> European Commission, 2024 Report on Energy Subsidies in the European Union, COM(2025).

[https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=COM\(2025\)17&lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=COM(2025)17&lang=en).

## 6. Environmental governance

### Information, public participation and access to justice

Citizens can more effectively protect the environment if they rely on the three ‘pillars’ of the Aarhus Convention: (i) access to information, (ii) public participation in decision-making and (iii) access to justice in environmental matters. It is of crucial importance to public authorities, the public and businesses that environmental information is shared efficiently and effectively<sup>(165)</sup>. Public participation allows authorities to make decisions that take public concerns into account. Access to justice is a set of guarantees that allows citizens and NGOs to use national courts to protect the environment, safeguard the rights of citizens and ensure accountability of authorities<sup>(166)</sup>. It includes the right to bring legal challenges (‘legal standing’) <sup>(167)</sup>.

#### Environmental information

This section focuses on the implementation of the Infrastructure for Spatial information in the European Community (Inspire) Directive. The Inspire Directive aims to set up a European spatial-data infrastructure for sharing environmental spatial information between public authorities across Europe. It is expected that this will help policymaking across boundaries and facilitate public access to this information. Geographic information is needed for good governance at all levels and should be readily and transparently available.

**Table 3: Latvia dashboard on implementation of the Inspire Directive, 2016–2023**

	2016	2023	Legend
Effective coordination and data sharing			<p>■ Implementation of this provision is well advanced or (nearly) completed.</p> <p>■ Outstanding issues are minor and can be addressed easily. Percentage &gt; 89 %</p>
Ensure effective coordination	■	■	
Data sharing without obstacle	■	■	<p>■ Implementation of this provision has started and made some or substantial progress but is still not close to being completed. Percentage = 31–89 %</p> <p>■ Implementation of this provision is falling significantly behind. Serious efforts are necessary to close the implementation gap. Percentage &lt; 31 %</p>
Inspire performance indicators			
(i) Conformity of metadata	■	■	
(ii) Conformity of spatial datasets	■	■	
(iii) Accessibility of spatial datasets through view and download services	■	■	
(iv) Conformity of network services	■	■	

Source: European Commission, ‘Latvia’, Inspire Knowledge Base, [https://knowledge-base.inspire.ec.europa.eu/latvia\\_en](https://knowledge-base.inspire.ec.europa.eu/latvia_en).

Latvia’s performance in implementing the Inspire Directive has been reviewed based on its 2023 country fiche<sup>(168)</sup> (see Table 3).

In 2022, Latvia received a priority action on the need to make spatial data more widely accessible and prioritise the environmental datasets<sup>(169)</sup>. Latvia has made some progress on the accessibility of environmental data, but more efforts are needed. Thus the priority action is repeated.

<sup>(165)</sup> The Aarhus Convention (<https://unece.org/environment-policy/public-participation/aarhus-convention/text>), the Access to Environmental Information Directive (Directive 2003/4/EC) (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32003L0004>) and the Inspire Directive (Directive 2007/2/EC) (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32007L0002>) together create a legal foundation for the sharing of environmental information between public authorities and with the public.

<sup>(166)</sup> These guarantees are explained in the European Commission’s 2017 notice on access to justice in environmental matters ([https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:52017XC0818\(02\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:52017XC0818(02))) and a related

2018 citizen’s guide (<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/2b362f0a-bfe4-11e8-99ee-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF>).

<sup>(167)</sup> This EIR focuses on the means used by Member States to guarantee rights of access to justice and legal standing and to overcome other major barriers to bringing cases on environmental protection.

<sup>(168)</sup> European Commission, ‘Latvia’, Inspire Knowledge Base, [https://knowledge-base.inspire.ec.europa.eu/latvia\\_en](https://knowledge-base.inspire.ec.europa.eu/latvia_en).

<sup>(169)</sup> The European Commission provides a list of high-value spatial datasets ([https://github.com/INSPIRE-MIF/need-driven-data-prioritisation/blob/main/documents/eReporting\\_PriorityDataList\\_V2.1\\_final\\_20201008.xlsx](https://github.com/INSPIRE-MIF/need-driven-data-prioritisation/blob/main/documents/eReporting_PriorityDataList_V2.1_final_20201008.xlsx)).

## Public participation

Public involvement at both the planning and the project phase maximises transparency and social acceptance of programmes and projects. Consultation with the public (including NGOs) and environmental, local and regional authorities is a key feature of an effective impact assessment procedure. Such consultation also provides an opportunity for public authorities and project promoters to engage with the public actively and meaningfully by making information on the likely significant effects widely available. If carried out with due diligence and taking into consideration useful public input, this process leads to better-informed decision-making and can promote public acceptance. Making information available increases stakeholder involvement, thus lessening resistance and preventing (or minimising) litigation. On the other hand, it is paramount that the procedure is effective.

This section examines how public involvement and transparency are ensured under two instruments, namely the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive<sup>(170)</sup> and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive<sup>(171)</sup>.

EU law provides for a flexible framework concerning EIAs. The aim of this framework is to ensure the application of the necessary environmental safeguards, while enabling speedy approval of projects. The Commission has contributed to simplifying and accelerating permitting for renewable energy projects and continues to support the Member States in this regard<sup>(172)</sup>. Latvia has already taken steps aiming to accelerate permit-issuing procedures taking advantages of the broad flexibilities offered by the EU legal framework, such as the establishment of one-stop shops for renewable energy projects.

The average speed in the EU for issuing permits involving an EIA procedure is 20.6 months, with a minimum

duration of 11.4 months and a maximum duration of 75.7 months<sup>(173)</sup>. The duration of each step in an EIA process (screening, scoping, EIA report, public consultation, reasoned conclusion, development consent) varies considerably across Member States and projects. The available data for Latvia show that the speed for an EIA report is 6–18 months, at least 2 months for reasoned conclusions and a maximum of 36 months for development consent. Effective use of EU procedures can positively influence the timely approval of activities underpinning the decarbonisation of the economy on the way to net zero by 2050. Latvia exemplifies a streamlined EIA procedure that reflects well on the country's capacity to organise permitting.

A new report is not yet available on the application and effectiveness of the SEA Directive in the EU. Nevertheless, a support study has been published with information by Member State<sup>(174)</sup>. VARAM<sup>(175)</sup> provides an overview of EIA on its website<sup>(176)</sup>, outlining the procedures and the legal framework and providing a link to the Environmental State Bureau, which is responsible for implementation. The Environmental State Bureau provides further information, including case-specific information on who has submitted a proposal, links to related documentation and information on when and where public consultation hearings will take place<sup>(177)</sup>. Comprehensive information on completed EIAs is also published<sup>(178)</sup>, and the website has an infographic detailing the entire procedure for carrying out an EIA, along with a brief explanation of its purpose<sup>(179)</sup>.

No data could be identified regarding the actual level of public participation in EIA and SEA procedures; however, the Environmental State Bureau's annual report for 2020 expresses concern and states that the public often do not find out about such opportunities in a timely manner<sup>(180)</sup>.

<sup>(170)</sup> Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (OJ L 26, 28.1.2012, p. 1), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32011L0092>.

<sup>(171)</sup> Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (OJ L 197, 21.7.2001, p. 30), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042>.

<sup>(172)</sup> Commission Staff Working Document (SWD/2022/0149 final), 18 May 2022, (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52022SC0149&qid=1653034229> 953).

<sup>(173)</sup> European Commission: Directorate-General for Environment, *Collection of information and data on the implementation of the revised Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive (2011/92/EU) as amended by 2014/52/EU*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2024, Tables 5 and 6, <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/8349a857-2936-11ef-9290-01aa75ed71a1/>.

<sup>(174)</sup> European Commission: Directorate-General for Environment, Lundberg, P., McNeill, A., McGuinn, J., Cantarelli, A. et al., *Study supporting the preparation of the report on the application and effectiveness of the SEA Directive (Directive 2001/42/EC) – Final study*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2025, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2779/1615072>

<sup>(175)</sup> Since 1 July 2024, it has been the responsibility of the Ministry of Climate and Energy.

<sup>(176)</sup> VARAM, 'Environmental impact assessment', 5 April 2020, accessed 9 October 2021, <https://www.varam.gov.lv/en/environmental-impact-assessment>.

<sup>(177)</sup> <https://www.vpvb.gov.lv/lv/jaunumi?title=&category%5B449%5D=449&category%5B461%5D=461&created%5Bmin%5D=---&created%5Bmax%5D=---&created%5Bmin%5D=---&created%5Bmax%5D=---&created%5Bmin%5D=---&created%5Bmax%5D=--->

<sup>(178)</sup> [https://www.vpvb.gov.lv/lv/ietekmes-uz-vidi-novertejumu-projekti?combine=&tcat\\_vid\\_1%5B677%5D=677&created%5Bmin%5D=---&created%5Bmax%5D=---&created%5Bmin%5D=---&created%5Bmax%5D=---](https://www.vpvb.gov.lv/lv/ietekmes-uz-vidi-novertejumu-projekti?combine=&tcat_vid_1%5B677%5D=677&created%5Bmin%5D=---&created%5Bmax%5D=---&created%5Bmin%5D=---&created%5Bmax%5D=---)

<sup>(179)</sup> <https://www.vpvb.gov.lv/lv/ivn-procedura>.

<sup>(180)</sup> State Environmental Bureau, *Public annual report of the Ministry*

In 2022, Latvia received a priority action to address concerns about the levels of public engagement in EIA processes, including through enhanced publicity and accessibility of information, allowing for the timely identification of current applications. The Commission was not provided with updated information regarding progress.

### Access to justice

Access to justice, guaranteed by Article 19(1) of the Treaty on European Union and Article 47 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, is a fundamental right and part of the democratic process. It is vital to ensure the full application of EU law in all Member States and the legal protection of the rights of individuals, including in environmental matters. Access to justice is essential to enable judicial review of the decisions of public authorities and to allow the correction of any wrongdoing committed by these authorities.

This section provides a snapshot of the state of play of access to courts by the public, particularly when it comes to challenging plans, or the non-adoption of plans, under EU law, in the areas of water, waste, air quality and noise, irrespective of the form of the legal act (i.e. regulatory act or administrative decision).

As mentioned in previous EIRs, the *actio popularis* (the right to access to justice in the public interest) in Latvia provides access to justice in environmental matters to both natural and legal persons, and even interest groups (unregistered associations of people). This means that they have access to administrative authorities and courts not only to protect their own individual interests, but also to protect general interests in terms of environmental protection.

A recent example of active public participation and access to justice is the court case against the Latvian government's decision, taken in summer 2022, to allow the felling of younger trees, which the government justified with reference to the energy crisis and increased demand for wood pellets. Environmental NGOs contested the related cabinet regulations<sup>(181)</sup>, arguing that they conflicted with Article 115 of the constitution. This challenge led to the first-ever Constitutional Court review of Latvia's forest management policies. On 8 April 2024,

the court ruled that the new diameter limits were unconstitutional and invalid from their inception<sup>(182)</sup>.

In 2022, Latvia received a priority action on access to justice, namely to better inform the public about their right to access to justice. The Commission was not provided with updated information regarding progress.

### 2025 priority actions

- Make spatial data more widely accessible and prioritise environmental datasets in implementing the Inspire Directive, especially those identified as high-value spatial datasets for implementing environmental legislation<sup>(183)</sup>.
- Ensure that relevant information on EIA and SEA procedures (including on public participation opportunities and on publication of final decisions) is electronically accessible in a timely manner, through at least a central portal or easily accessible points of access, at the appropriate administrative level.

### Compliance assurance

Environmental compliance assurance covers all work undertaken by public authorities to ensure that industries, farmers and others fulfil their obligations to protect water, air and nature, to manage waste<sup>(184)</sup> and to remedy any environmental damage. It includes measures such as (i) compliance promotion, (ii) compliance monitoring (i.e. inspections and other checks), (iii) enforcement, that is, steps taken to stop breaches and impose sanctions, and (iv) ensuring damage prevention and remediation in line with the polluter-pays principle.

*of Environmental Protection and Regional Protection of the State Environmental Supervision Bureau for 2020*, Riga, 2021, <https://www.vpvb.gov.lv/lv/media/3554/download>.

<sup>(181)</sup> Annex 7 to Cabinet Regulation No 935 of 18 December 2012, as amended by Cabinet Regulation No 374 of 21 June 2022, regarding reducing the diameter of main felling based on the prevailing tree species and quality.

<sup>(182)</sup> <https://www.vestnesis.lv/op/2024/69.2>.

<sup>(183)</sup> The European Commission provides a list of high-value spatial datasets (<https://github.com/INSPIRE-MIF/need-driven-data>

[prioritisation/blob/main/documents/eReporting\\_PriorityDataList\\_V2.1\\_final\\_20201008.xlsx](https://ec.europa.eu/e-reporting/prioritisation/blob/main/documents/eReporting_PriorityDataList_V2.1_final_20201008.xlsx)).

<sup>(184)</sup> The concept is explained in detail in the European Commission's 2018 communication on EU actions to improve environmental compliance and governance (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52018DC0010>) and the related Commission staff working document (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018SC0010>).

## Compliance promotion, monitoring and enforcement

Non-compliance with environmental obligations may occur for different reasons, including poor understanding or lack of acceptance of the rules, opportunism or even criminality. Compliance promotion activities help duty-holders to comply by providing information, guidance and other support. This is particularly important in areas where new and complex legislation is put in place.

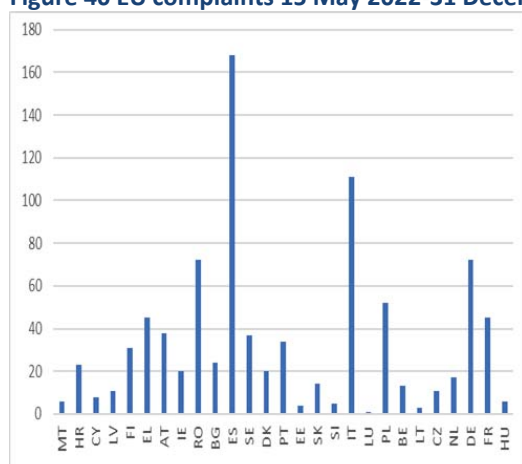
When inspections and other control activities identify problems, a range of responses may be appropriate, including the use of administrative and criminal enforcement tools.

While basic data on environmental violations are available from the State Environmental Service, there has been little progress on making prosecution outcomes more transparent. As mentioned in the 2022 EIR, comprehensive follow-up on enforcement actions and detailed case outcomes remain largely unpublished.

Latvia has strengthened its approach to environmental crime through international partnerships, notably with Norway. Supported by the EEA and Norway Grants <sup>(185)</sup>, Latvia is involved in joint training sessions focused on sharing investigative techniques and regulatory enforcement practices. This partnership aims to improve Latvia's capabilities, especially regarding cross-border issues and complex cases involving pollution and waste management violations.

Between 15 May 2022 and 31 October 2024, the Commission received 10 complaints relating to the environment in Latvia, with 7 being related to nature. In terms of complaints per million inhabitants the amount is 5.87, well above the EU average of 3.2 and the fourth-highest number among all Member States (figures 40 and 41).

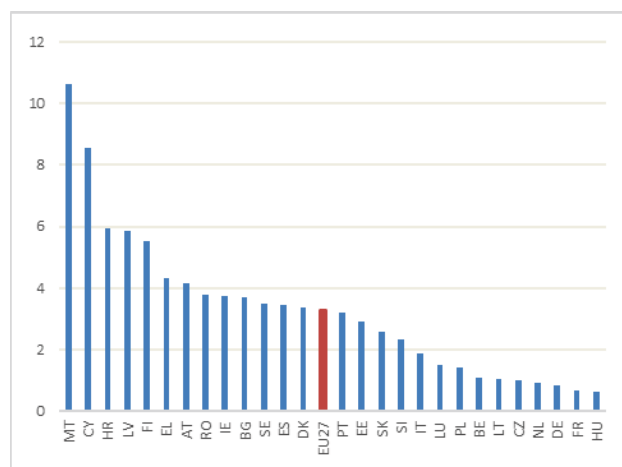
**Figure 40 EU complaints 15 May 2022-31 December 2024**



<sup>(185)</sup> <https://eeagrants.org/news/together-against-environmental->

Source: DG Environment complaints data.

**Figure 41: EU complaints per million inhabitants 15 May 2022-31 December 2024**



Source: Eurostat, 'Population' tps00001, accessed 22 January 2025, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tps00001/default/table?lang=en>, and DG Environment complaints data.

The 2022 EIR recommended that Latvia: (i) improve the availability of public information on the enforcement of environmental crime; (ii) consider publishing reports on environmental inspections or providing more detailed information on their results and follow-up; (iii) publish information on institutional cooperation and its role in enforcement actions; (iv) provide more detailed reports on the types of environmental crime, including specifying how many qualify as serious environmental crime. Concerning compliance promotion, monitoring, and criminal and administrative enforcement, the 2022 priority actions are not assessed here due to a lack of systematic information.

## The new EU Environmental Crime Directive

The EU has recently strengthened its legal framework on tackling the most serious breaches of environmental obligations, notably by the adoption of the new Environmental Crime Directive (ECD) (Directive (EU)

2024/1203)<sup>(186)</sup> and new sectoral legislation with stronger provisions on compliance monitoring, enforcement and penalties. Issues important for the transposition and the implementation of the relevant new instruments are highlighted below; a detailed assessment of these topics will be included in the next EIR once more implementation measures are put in place and more systematic information is available.

The new ECD replaced the 2008 ECD and introduced several new offence categories, such as unlawful ship recycling, unlawful water abstraction, and serious breaches of EU legislation on chemicals, mercury, fluorinated GHG and IAS of EU concern. It also covered the establishment of qualified offences, subject to more severe penalties where one of the offences defined in the directive leads to serious widespread and substantial damage or destruction of the environment. Concrete provisions on the types and levels of penalties for natural and legal persons who commit an offence were also introduced. Other provisions will help considerably to improve the effectiveness in combating environmental crime of all actors along the enforcement chain. These include obligations to ensure adequate resources and investigative tools, specialised regular training and the establishment of cooperation mechanisms within and between Member States as well as national strategies on combating environmental crime.

Member States are required to transpose the new ECD into national law by 21 May 2026 and to take additional measures to more effectively combat environmental crime, in particular through training, coordination, cooperation and strategic approaches. The Commission will provide support, including by facilitating the identification and sharing of good practices. Member States are expected to ensure the necessary resources and specialised skills required and they are invited to encourage their authorities to support and cooperate with the recognised EU-level networks of environmental enforcement practitioners, such as the EU Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law<sup>(187)</sup>, EnviCrimeNet<sup>(188)</sup>, the European Network of Prosecutors for the Environment<sup>(189)</sup> and the EU Forum of Judges for the Environment<sup>(190)</sup>. The European Union

Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation and European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation mechanisms for cooperation on cross-border cases should be used more systematically for environmental offences.

### Environmental Liability Directive

The Environmental Liability Directive (ELD)<sup>(191)</sup> aims to ensure that environmental damage is remediated in kind at the expense of those who have caused it, in line with the polluter-pays principle. It helps to halt the net loss in biodiversity, as well as reducing the number of contaminated sites and protecting the environmental quality of groundwaters and surface waters. The ELD is a cross-cutting tool and a key enabler for better implementation of EU environmental law.

The ELD addresses cases of significant environmental damage to protected species and natural habitats, and, when caused by operators carrying out certain potentially hazardous activities, also damages to water and to soil. The Commission has the legal obligation to periodically evaluate the ELD. The ELD has undergone the second evaluation<sup>(192)</sup>, which will be finalised in 2025, and which was supported by an external study<sup>(193)</sup>, containing, among other things, evidence, views, reports and other relevant information gathered from different stakeholder groups, including Member States.

One of the most relevant indicators in assessing implementation and enforcement of the ELD is the number of environmental damage cases handled under the ELD, especially when this number is compared with the previous reporting period. Fewer ELD cases were reported in the second reporting period (2013–2022) than in the first one (2007–2013). However, the downward tendency in the number of ELD occurrences and their overall low number do not necessarily mean that the ELD has achieved its objectives, as it needs to be compared with the overall number of environmental damage cases, some of which may have been handled under the other liability instruments.

The ELD has not always been effective in ensuring that the polluter pays, because the liable operators often lack financial capacity to carry out remediation measures.

<sup>(186)</sup> Directive 2024/1203/EU on the protection of the environment through criminal law <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2024/1203/oj/eng>

<sup>(187)</sup> <https://www.impel.eu/en>.

<sup>(188)</sup> LIFE+SATEC project (<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/life/publicWebsite/project/LIFE2-0-PRE-ES-000001/fight-against-environmental-crime-at-a-strategic-level-through-the-strengthening-of-envicrimenet-network-of-experts-in-environmental-criminal-investigations>).

<sup>(189)</sup> <https://www.environmentalprosecutors.eu>.

<sup>(190)</sup> <https://www.eufje.org/index.php?lang=en>.

<sup>(191)</sup> Directive 2004/35/EC on environmental liability with regard to the prevention and remedying of environmental damage, [https://eur-](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02004L0035-20190626)

[lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02004L0035-20190626](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02004L0035-20190626).

<sup>(192)</sup> Commission staff working document - Evaluation of the Environmental Liability Directive, forthcoming 2025.

<sup>(193)</sup> European Commission: Directorate-General for Environment and Fogleman, V., *Study in support of the evaluation of the Environmental Liability Directive and its implementation – Final report*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2024, <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/006d90e5-980a-11ef-a130-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>.



While the ELD does not provide for a mandatory financial security system, it explicitly calls for Member States to encourage the development of financial security instruments and markets, with the aim of enabling operators to use financial guarantees to cover their responsibilities under this directive.

From 1 May 2013 to 30 April 2022, Latvia reported 43 occurrences of environmental damage under the ELD (30 occurrences of land damage, 7 occurrences of biodiversity damage, 4 occurrences of water damage and 2 occurrences of land and water damage). In the previous reporting period, there were 16 cases of environmental damage reported under the ELD (5 land/soil damage occurrences, 4 water damage occurrences and 7 biodiversity damage occurrences). The increased number of occurrences in Latvia is partly explained by a series of criminal acts by one person who intentionally polluted 26 roadside locations with a substance containing cyanide ions; these acts were reported as 26 separate ELD occurrences. Latvia is among the Member States with the highest overall numbers of reported ELD occurrences.

Latvia has not introduced mandatory financial security for ELD liabilities. The Environmental Protection Law simply states that operators may use various financial security instruments, and the demand for such instruments is rare. Environmental insurance policies and environmental extensions to property policies are not generally available. Environmental extensions to general liability policies are available, but the coverage provided is limited to measures to remediate off-site pollution from a sudden and accidental incident on an insured site. Cover is not provided for complementary or compensatory remediation under the ELD, the remediation of gradual pollution or (except for an extension offered by one insurer) environmental damage other than pollution.

In relation to the ELD, the 2022 EIR recommended that Latvia improve the guidance materials related to the ELD and publish information on institutional cooperation and its role in enforcement actions. Latvia has made substantial progress in enhancing the information and materials provided on ELD occurrences. The website of the Environment, Geology and Meteorology Centre has a database that lists contaminated and potentially contaminated sites, including addresses, types of pollution and sources. The State Environmental Service publishes an annual statistics report on pollution incidents, including information on the region, type of pollution and its cause.

### 2025 priority action

- Encourage the use of training programmes provided by the Commission (or developed at the national level) covering the ELD and its interactions with the other national liability-related instruments, to ensure more efficient ELD implementation, improve the expertise of the competent authorities and raise awareness among all stakeholder groups.

## EU-supported environmental capacity building

The Commission's 2023 Compact <sup>(194)</sup> initiative to enhance the administrative space identifies the capacity to lead the green transition as one of three key pillars, along with the public administration skills agenda and the capacity for Europe's Digital Decade. Compact also recognises the role of the EIR reporting tool in improving environmental governance. The two main capacity-building opportunities for the environment provided by the European Commission are the TSI <sup>(195)</sup> and the TAIEX-EIR PEER 2 PEER tool <sup>(196)</sup>. The technical assistance available through the cohesion policy is subject to shared management and is not dealt with in this subsection.

### The Commission's technical support instrument

The TSI provides Member States with tailor-made technical expertise on the design and implementation of reforms. The support is demand driven and does not require national co-financing.

The Commission's TSI had annual calls in 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025. The following environment-related projects have been selected for Latvia:

- Compliance with the 'do no significant harm' (DNSH) principle in the road infrastructure design, construction, and maintenance processes, VSIA Latvijas Valsts Ceļi (2023);
- ESG <sup>(197)</sup> risk management framework for the financial sector, Financial and Capital Market Commission (2023);
- GPP monitoring in Lithuania and Latvia, Procurement Monitoring Bureau of Latvia (2024);
- Support for the preparation of Social Climate Plans (2024, multi-country project benefiting nine Member States: Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and

Finland).

### The Commission's TAIEX-EIR PEER 2 PEER tool

The Commission launched the TAIEX-EIR PEER 2 PEER tool in 2017. It aims to facilitate peer-to-peer learning among Member States' environmental authorities through workshops (single or multi-country), expert missions (where a delegation of experts travels to the requesting institution) and study visits (where a delegation from the requesting institution travels to a host country). Flagship multi-country workshops are those requested by the Commission to present new and upcoming environmental legislation and policy in all Member States <sup>(198)</sup>.

Workshops involving Latvia are as follows:

- Future challenges for air protection (24 November 2022) with the Czech EU Presidency;
- Decentralised biowaste recycling in Austria (9–10 October 2023);
- Reducing air pollution from transport and residential energy (11–13 June 2024);
- New aspects in the cross-border cooperation against environmental crime (19–20 November 2024).

Since the last EIR, Latvia has participated in one expert mission and one study visit in 2024. The expert mission on nature-based solutions and climate action initiatives for the Liepaja smart city roadmap in 24–26 July 2024 was a follow-up to the study visit of Liepaja's officials to Cascais in 10–11 January 2024 (on smart solutions for urban sustainability, environmental management, and citizen engagement).

<sup>(194)</sup> See the European Commission web page on Compact ([https://reform-support.ec.europa.eu/public-administration-and-governance-coordination/enhancing-european-administrative-space-compact\\_en](https://reform-support.ec.europa.eu/public-administration-and-governance-coordination/enhancing-european-administrative-space-compact_en)).

<sup>(195)</sup> See the European Commission web page on the TSI ([https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/technical-support-instrument/technical-support-instrument-tsi\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/technical-support-instrument/technical-support-instrument-tsi_en)).

<sup>(196)</sup> See the European Commission web page on the TAIEX-EIR PEER 2 PEER tool ([https://environment.ec.europa.eu/law-and-governance/environmental-implementation-review/peer-2-peer\\_en](https://environment.ec.europa.eu/law-and-governance/environmental-implementation-review/peer-2-peer_en)). TAIEX: Technical Assistance and Information Exchange.

<sup>(197)</sup> 'ESG' here means 'environmental, social and governance'.

<sup>(198)</sup> Flagship multi-country workshops in the reporting period are: Recast Drinking Water Directive (3 April 2025); Environmental compliance and governance (18 March 2025); Planning of Renewable Energy Projects (20 February 2025); Air Quality: Implementation of the revised Air Quality Directive (16 January 2025); Industrial safety: awareness raising of emerging risks linked with climate change and decarbonation (12 December 2024); Air

quality: implementation of the NEC Directive to further mainstream air and broader pollution reduction in agricultural policy (25 September 2024); Industrial emissions transposition and implementation of the revised directive (12 September 2024); Noise: progress towards meeting Member States' noise limit values and EU reduction targets (5 June 2024); Best practice use of environmental footprint methods on the EU market (30 May 2024); Sustainable finance (9 November 2023); Textile waste separate collection, treatment and markets (3 October 2023); EU environmental funding and support (13 June 2023); Advisory service for businesses to go circular (24 April 2023); Digital product passport implementation (6 December 2022); Public involvement in planning and approval of renewable energy projects (17 November 2022); Environmental compliance and governance (14 November 2022); Biowaste management (19–20 September 2022); and Renewable energy projects: permit granting processes (13 June 2022). NB: The first flagship workshop on zero pollution for air, water and soil took place 9 February 2022.

### 2025 priority action

- Improve overall national environmental governance, in particular administrative capacity to support the green transition and coordination at the regional and local levels.

## Annex 2025 priority actions

Circular economy and waste management
<i>Transitioning to a circular economy</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt measures to increase the circular material use rate.</li> <li>• Speed up the transition to a circular economy by implementing an updated national strategy and the EU framework and recommendations, in particular to complement it with upstream circularity measures.</li> </ul>
<i>Waste management</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve separate collection at source e.g. through economic instruments, investing in infrastructure for separate collection, sorting and recycling, and increasing public awareness.</li> <li>• Improve municipal waste preparation for reuse and recycling.</li> <li>• Invest in waste prevention measures to reduce the total amount of waste generated.</li> <li>• Ensure the achievement of the 2025 waste targets, following the recommendations made by the Commission in the Early Warning Reports where applicable.</li> </ul>
Biodiversity and natural capital
<i>Global and EU biodiversity frameworks</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit to the CBD an updated NBSAP or national targets following the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.</li> </ul>
<i>Nature protection and restoration – Natura 2000</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the Natura 2000 site designation process.</li> <li>• Ensure the effective implementation of Natura 2000 management plans and sufficient administrative capacity and financing both for Natura 2000 and the implementation of the Nature Restoration Regulation. Ensure implementation of Prioritised Actions Framework 2021-2027 (PAFs).</li> </ul>
<i>Recovery of species</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen the integration of biodiversity actions into other policies, e.g. on energy, agriculture, fisheries, forestry, urban and infrastructure planning and sustainable tourism, and promote communication between stakeholders.</li> <li>• Reinforce action for habitats and species in unfavourable conservation status, for example through restoration measures, increased connectivity, better policy coordination and integration, and increased funding.</li> </ul>
<i>Recovery of ecosystems</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement eco-schemes and agri-environmental measures and practices to address the environmental needs of Latvia.</li> <li>• Promote active management of grasslands through extensive grazing to maintain the condition of these semi-natural habitats.</li> <li>• Improve conservation status of forests by promoting sustainable forest management and ensuring compliance with the Habitats Directive before granting/renewing permits for forest logging.</li> <li>• Implement peatland conservation and restoration measures and include such measures and objectives in the national restoration plans.</li> <li>• Report updates on the assessment of the state of Latvia's marine waters, its target and its determinations of GES<sup>(199)</sup>, which are expected to include any threshold values for the descriptors in the MSFD that may have been established in cooperation with other Member States at the EU or regional level.</li> </ul>
<i>Prevention and management of invasive alien species</i>

<sup>(199)</sup> In accordance with Article 17 of Directive 2008/56/EC.

- Step up implementation of the IAS Regulation, including with regard to enforcement and capacity of inspection authorities.

### *Ecosystem assessment and accounting*

- Support development of national business and biodiversity network.
- Ratify the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization (ABS) to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

## Zero pollution

### *Clean air*

- As part of the NAPCP, take action to reduce emissions of air pollutants.
- Ensure full compliance with EU air quality standards and maintain downward emissions trends for air pollutants, while reducing the adverse impacts of air pollution on human health and the economy to ensure that future concentrations of air pollutants reach WHO guideline values.

### *Industrial emissions*

- Reduce industrial air pollution damage and intensity.
- Engage with industry and environmental NGOs to ensure proper contribution to and implementation of BAT conclusions and ensure timely updates to permits following the publication of BAT conclusions.
- Ensure effective public participation and access to justice in relation to the IED.

### *Major industrial accidents prevention – Seveso*

- Strengthen compliance with requirements on safety measures to prevent major accidents and ensure appropriate preparedness and response in relation to UTEs, in particular as regards reviewing, testing and updating EEPs, at intervals of no more than three years.
- Ensure access to transparent and clear information for citizens on risks and behaviour in the event of an accident.

### *Noise*

- Complete noise mapping.
- Complete and implement action plans on noise management.

### *Water quality and management*

- Improve river continuity and ecological flows, boosting efforts on nature-based solutions to reduce hydromorphological pressures.
- Ensure periodic reviews of permits for discharges, abstractions and other water uses, including hydropower pressures.
- Reduce pollution from nutrients, chemicals, metals and saline discharges.
- Better justify exemptions to the achievement of good status.
- Improve the classification of water bodies and strengthen monitoring systems.
- Develop more robust programmes of measures, tackle obstacles identified in the implementation of measures and ensure adequate financing for implementation, including through better use of the cost recovery and polluter pays principle.
- FRMPs should provide details on how the FHRMs were used in the choice of measures and how to consider pluvial flooding.
- Better explain the choice and implementation of flood prevention and protection measures (prioritisation, monitoring, costs of measures).
- Tackle nutrients pollution, especially nitrates from agriculture through the implementation of the Nitrates Directive.

### *Chemicals*

- Upgrade the administrative capacities in implementation and enforcement to move towards a policy of zero tolerance of non-compliance.
- Increase customs checks and checks of products sold online with regard to compliance with chemicals legislation.

## Climate action

- Implement all policies and measures that are needed to achieve targets laid down in the Effort Sharing Regulation (ESR) and the Land Use and Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) Regulation. More detailed priority actions are set out in the assessment of the final National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP).

## Financing

- Use more national funding (including by increasing taxes in favour of the environment and reducing environmentally harmful subsidies), EU funding and private funding to help close the investment gap.

## Environmental governance

### *Information, public participation and access to justice*

- Make spatial data more widely accessible and prioritise environmental datasets in implementing the Inspire Directive, especially those identified as high-value spatial datasets for implementing environmental legislation.
- Ensure that relevant information on EIA and SEA procedures (including on public participation opportunities and on publication of final decisions) is electronically accessible, through at least a central portal or easily accessible points of access, at the appropriate administrative level.

### *Compliance assurance*

- Encourage the use of training programmes provided by the Commission (or developed at the national level) covering the ELD and its interactions with the other national liability-related instruments, to ensure more efficient ELD implementation, improve the expertise of the competent authorities and raise awareness among all stakeholder groups.

### *EU-supported environmental capacity building*

- Improve overall national environmental governance, in particular administrative capacity and coordination at the regional and local levels between enforcing authorities to support the green transition, through the use of EU co-financing.