

A Report on regional studies in Latvia:

SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTIONS

There are several Universities and institutes research the issues of regional development - Latvia University of Agriculture, Daugavpils University, University of Latvia, University of Applied Sciences, Ventspils University College, Rezekne University of Applied Sciences, Institute of Economics etc. They organize conferences, seminars and publish journals and other materials to present the results of the research, to discuss about the regional issues with colleagues and other scientists, to find the best ways of resolving the problems.

NATIONAL LEVEL

Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development and State Regional Development Agency are the main institutions of regional policy and regional development in Latvia at the national level.

The State Regional Development Agency produce the annual report *Development of Regions in Latvia* (from 2003), it is an abundant compilation of data and analysis of the development of territories in Latvia and it is available in Latvian and English, for example *Development of Regions in Latvia 2011* - <http://www.vraa.gov.lv/lv/parskats/parskats2011/>.

The main objective of the report is to compile various basic indicators describing socio-economic development and provide an analysis of these across territories of different scale: nationally, including a comparison of Latvia with other European Union Member States, and by planning region, by city and by municipality (*novads*) – which can then be used by readers for their own purposes, which may include decision-making, planning of territorial development, assessment of implementation of such plans, various studies and surveys or simply as a reference. The report has been supplemented with maps, diagrams and tables.

The objective of the Territorial Development Planning Law (adopted 2011) is to ensure that the development of territories is planned in a way that enhances the quality of the living environment, uses the territory and other resources in a sustainable, effective and ration manner, and develops the economy in a targeted and balanced way.

The Territorial Development Planning Law provides that the development of a territory is planned by developing the following mutually coordinated territorial development planning documents:

- at the national level: a sustainable development strategy of Latvia, a national development plan and a marine spatial plan;
- at the regional level: a sustainable development strategy and a development programme for the planning region;
- at the local level: a sustainable development strategy, development programme, spatial plan, local plan and detailed plan of a local self-government.

In terms of hierarchy, the highest level long-term planning document is the Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030 (*Latvia 2030*). It defines the country's long-term development priorities and the perspectives of spatial development (approved 2010).

The highest level medium-term development planning document is the National Development Plan for 2007–2013 (approved 2006), Regulation No 564 “Regulations on the Latvian National Development Plan for 2007–2013” implemented since 2010 in accordance with the Latvian Strategic Development Plan for 2010–2013 (approved 2010).

REGIONAL AND LOCAL LEVEL

At the regional level there are five Administrations of Planning Regions (Riga, Latgale, Kurzeme, Vidzeme, Zemgale) and Regional Development Agencies which prepared the development strategies and a development programmes for the planning region including the analysis of particular situation.

Local governments are the active members of Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments.