

2026 Rule of Law Report Latvia

Post-country visit follow-up questions for the 2026 virtual country visit (via email)

QUESTION 2bis: In regard to professional confidentiality, the Council of Sworn Advocates mention in their written input reporting on "a dangerous tendency whereby conversations between advocates and their clients are being wiretapped without authorization, and recordings of these conversations are being made public by attaching them to unrelated criminal case files" and on "the recent increase in "strange" criminal proceedings against advocates". Could you elaborate on these concerns? Have you tried to address them?

The information will be sent as soon as it is received from Ministry of Justice.

QUESTION 5: Additional input on the expansion of the competences of the court in commercial cases as well as limitations on competences in criminal cases and the risks on cutting links on investigations on AML/corruption/organized crimes.

The information will be sent as soon as it is received from Ministry of Justice.

QUESTION 6: Overall, the 2025 report found that investigation and prosecution of corruption offences is carried out efficiently, but also highlights "challenges affecting the investigation of high-level corruption cases, including difficulties with gathering evidence from foreign jurisdictions" and "that in high-level cases it is difficult to coordinate with the many stakeholders involved, leading to long trials". Have there been any developments or improvements in this regard? Could you please update on the any persisting or new corruption challenges (e.g. increased risk for corruption)? What measure have been taken to address corruption threats in high-risk areas and sectors? Are there any plans to enhance the framework for judicial cooperation with other jurisdictions in corruption cases?

KNAB:

It should be noted that the greatest challenges are currently less about gathering information, especially at the EU level, but rather the current geopolitical situation, which hinders gathering information from Russia and Belarus. However, this does not mean information cannot be obtained at all, as alternative means are used, such as police-to-police cooperation, etc.

The greatest challenges to all law enforcement agencies (domestic and foreign) are the technological solutions that allow criminals to communicate or transfer funds at a pace that investigation is unable to match. It is currently challenging to intercept communication, as it takes place via various applications that are hard to control.

Regarding cooperation, it could be noted that in order to improve our work, KNAB uses cross-border connections. Over the years, we have identified similar antic-corruption institutions in Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, and Ukraine, as main partners with which cooperation has been the most successful. These institutions cooperate daily in international investigations, and the official cooperation is supplemented by close interpersonal connections, which is key to successful professional cooperation.

Regarding "What measure have been taken to address corruption threats in high-risk areas and sectors?" - the national anti-corruption action plan for the next period - the Corruption Prevention and Combating Action Plan 2026-2027, includes areas of public procurement and defense as priorities, both areas with the greatest financial impact (we spend about 17% of GDP on public procurement and about 4% of GDP on defense). Already in 2025, we started cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, regular meetings were held, and we provide support in identifying corruption risks and developing mitigating measures. In public procurement, in turn, in 2025 we participated in the Public Procurement Reform

Working Group, monitoring that the new regulations take into account possible corruption risks (we conducted a risk assessment for the existing system and a new one - after changes to the law).

Also please refer to the hackathons on procurement and defense mentioned in this year's submission.

QUESTION 7: The 2025 Report referred to discussions “on the need to amend the legal framework to directly provide for sanctions for failure to update the electronic asset declaration within one month after a non-compliance decision”. Have there been new developments since and are there any plans to modify the system of asset declarations?

State Revenue Service:

In 2025, the State Revenue Service initiated internal discussions on the need to amend the legal framework to provide for sanctions specifically for failure to clarify a public official's declaration following a decision in an administrative offense or criminal case and in other cases where there is an obligation to clarify declarations. At present, this is only at the level of the necessity and usefulness of such a regulatory framework, as there were only isolated cases where individuals did not clarify their declarations for subjective reasons, but after repeated negotiations, the declarations were clarified.

QUESTION 8: Concerning remuneration, have there been developments since the 2025 report as regards: a. judges and court staff; b. judicial assistants; c. could you please provide updated figures for 2026 judicial salaries, also as regards base salary and coefficient?

The information will be sent as soon as it is received from Ministry of Justice.

QUESTION 10: Latvia has one of the most comprehensive legislative frameworks in the EU regarding the integrity of political party finance. How would you assess its implementation and have there been any developments or challenges? We understand from your written input, that the development of the Register of Interest Representation and the System for Declaring Interest Representation has been put on hold due to potential changes at EU level, and that in the meantime, the Enterprise Register maintains a voluntary list of interest representatives. Could you provide more information in this regard? Is the voluntary list a temporary measure until Registry is in place? Additional input on the improvements on the financial system; further additional explanations on how the preliminary register for interest representation should ensure transparency and what legislative changes have been made in this regard in 2025 (if any).

KNAB:

The regulatory framework determines the procedure for granting and disbursing state budget funding to political parties and limits on its use. Simultaneously, it also determines restrictions on the amount, origin and transparency of private funding, establishing obligations for political parties to submit detailed financial reports. The implementation of the framework in practice can be described as effective, because KNAB's financial supervision of political parties, among other things, promoted greater discipline of political parties in complying with regulations, reducing their dependence on private donors, also reducing the risks of political corruption. Of great importance among the challenges is the strengthening of the resources of the controlling institution in order to ensure the maintenance of continuity of supervision and successfully prevent the formation of new risks of violations related to the risks of digitalization during the creation of political campaigns.

In the field of party finance, several changes have been made to regulations aimed at imposing higher penalties for violations by political parties, as well as improving control mechanisms, while significantly increasing the amount of allocated state budget funding. This confirms that the financial system of political parties is being improved and strengthened, which promotes the transparency, legality and compliance of the financial activities of political parties with the system of parliamentary democracy.

Additionally, KNAB's monitoring of the financial activities of political parties was based on increased monitoring of pre-election campaign campaigns before the 7 June 2025 local government elections, including the application of sanctions, which is in line with the institution's strategic goals of strengthening legality and public trust.

In 2025, KNAB also expanded training programs, ensuring targeted education on issues of pre-election campaigning and compliance with financial restrictions, including expanding the topics and range of interested parties.

Simultaneously, KNAB intensified its efforts to educate the public, preparing materials and information on the importance of integrity of pre-election campaign campaigns and information materials on social networks, placing special emphasis on preventing the risks of campaign digitization. As a result, no significant violations or attempts to influence the electoral process were detected before the 2025 local government elections.

It could further be noted that in 2025 KNAB also actively participated in the development of legislative initiatives, preparing proposals for the improvement of law in the field of integrity, including issues of monitoring the financial activities of parties and pre-election campaigning. For example, proposal for expanding the expenditure lines to which pre-election expense restrictions are applied, and proposals for facilitating greater transparency of political party financial activities.

Ministry of Justice:

On 28 June 2025, amendments to the Law on Transparency of Interest Representation entered into force, extending the deadline for the implementation of the interest representation register and the interest representation declaration system by three years—until 1 September 2028. Furthermore, the deadline for the regulations governing the registration process was extended until 31 August 2027. Also, these amendments provide for a transitional solution until the official interest representation register becomes operational, namely, amendments provide - the establishment of a list of interest representatives. This provisional list of interest representatives is maintained by the Enterprise Register of the Republic of Latvia, and the inclusion of information therein is voluntary, specifically, an interest representative may choose whether to apply for inclusion in the list. The list of interest representatives has been established with the aim of ensuring the transparency of the interest representation process during the period until the formal interest representation register is fully implemented.

So, we can confirm that as per current legal framework the voluntary list (which is available to anyone in Open Data Portal: <https://data.gov.lv/dati/eng/dataset/interest-representatives>) is a temporary measure. It includes narrower set of data than it was envisaged for the Register. Namely, legal form, name, registration number and country of registration, if interest representative is a legal person, and first name, surname and personal identification number (if none, - date of birth, number and date of issue of the personal identification document, country and institution that issued the document), if interest representative is a natural person.

As of 5 February 2026, 23 interest representatives have been included in the voluntary list - 4 natural persons and 19 legal persons (of which 7 limited liability companies and 12 associations).

As mentioned, full scale Register and System with a more comprehensive information and a mandatory use should be in place by 1 September 2028.

QUESTION 11: Written answer to the second half of the question: have there been improvements regarding confidentiality and protection of whistleblowers?

KNAB:

Please note that the whistleblower contact point is currently expected to begin operation as of March 2026. Therefore, it is far too early to assess changes or improvements.

QUESTION 13: The written input mentions that the proposal for the Action Plan 2026-2027 was submitted to the State Secretaries in January 2026 – do you have an update for its adoption? Could you please provide more information on content? Was civil society involved in its development and at which stage? What is the state of play of the long-term anti-corruption policy planning document scheduled to start as of 2028?

KNAB:

The proposal was adopted at the meeting of State Secretaries in January, with a protocol decision indicating further necessary changes and amendments based on the results of the meeting. The resulting amended proposal is to be submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers when ready.

The Action Plan 2026-2027 is a short-term planning document that includes only priority measures. It was developed by a working group comprising 41 institutions invited by KNAB, including 6 non-governmental institutions. As mentioned in the written submission, the plan defines four action lines, 20 measures and 28 performance indicators. The action lines are: 1) openness of information, transparency of institutional activities and promotion of public participation; 2) strengthening institutional resilience and integrity; 3) reducing corruption risks in public procurement; 4) effective detection and investigation of corruption, ensuring the inevitability of punishment.

The drafting of the long-term planning document from 2028 will partially depend on the national risk assessment to be developed in the coming years.

QUESTION 14: In your written contribution, you refer to two cases involving Russian/ Belarussian bribery. Have there been other instances of foreign bribery? Do you see a new trend? In case there were additional high-level corruption cases besides those mentioned in Latvia's written input to the 2026 Rule of Law report (respectively investigated by ISB and KNAB), could you please give the full overview on the high-level corruption cases handled in 2026?

KNAB:

The original written submission provides a complete and consistent overview based on the information available to date. While no new trends have been identified at this stage, KNAB continues to actively investigate cases in cooperation with EPPO (both as members of the respective investigation groups, and as person leading the proceedings), as well as those initiated on the basis of operational information obtained by KNAB. Notably, last year two such cases involving officials in responsible positions were successfully referred for prosecution.

QUESTION 15: How do you assess available resources (human, financial and competences) to fulfil your missions? Could you inform us about any change that occurred in the past year or planned regarding resources?

State Revenue Service:

In October 2024, the Latvian Saeima approved a major reorganisation of the State Revenue Service. This reform was designed to reposition the SRS as a service oriented tax administration partner rather than a law enforcement body. The main changes included:

- Separation of investigative functions: The investigative and operational functions of the Internal Security Department of the State Revenue Service were transferred to the Corruption Prevention and Combating Bureau (KNAB) as of January 1, 2025. This move was intended to centralize anti corruption efforts, enhance investigative independence, and improve inter agency cooperation.
- As part of the reorganization of the SRS, the functions of the Tax and Customs Police Department were separated from the SRS. These functions were transferred to a newly formed Tax and Customs Police structure under the Ministry of Interior (from 2026 1 January). This change was part of a broader reform aimed at transforming the SRS into a client oriented tax administration, with law enforcement responsibilities delegated to specialized institutions.

Units not directly serving taxpayers were separated, allowing the SRS to concentrate on consultation, support, and service delivery.

Until now, the State Revenue Service's Division for Administration of Public Officials' Data had 17 employees responsible for carrying out the verification functions of public officials' declarations. As a result of the major reorganization, the number of employees has been reduced to 14 (a decrease of approximately 18%). This reduction affects both the distribution of workload and the capacity to ensure full and timely completion of tasks.

To optimize work and compensate the lack of resources, we have introduced an automatic risk assessment system for public officials' declarations — a tool that enables more efficient identification of declarations with potential risks. Consequently, lower risk declarations are no longer reviewed manually, which helps direct limited resources toward the most significant cases.

To reduce the amount of manual work and increase efficiency in the verification process of public officials' declarations, we have implemented an automated solution that compares the information provided in the declarations with data held by the State Revenue Service, as well as with information available in information systems maintained by other institutions. In cases where the system detects discrepancies, it automatically generates and sends a notification to the public official via the Electronic Declaration System (EDS) regarding the identified inconsistencies.

QUESTION 16 – What are your views on the implementation provisions on conflicts of interest, with particular attention to politically exposed persons and top-executives?

KNAB:

In the context of the Rule of Law Report, it is understood that the reference is not to politically exposed persons within the meaning of the AML framework, but rather to high-level public officials subject to the national conflict of interest regulation, including politicians, deputies and ministers. Such persons would be subject to the general regulatory framework on the prevention of conflicts of interest under the circumstances prescribed therein, as well as to the applicable Code of Ethics. Furthermore, an Ethics

Commission has been established to oversee compliance with ethical standards and to provide guidance where necessary.

State Revenue Service:

The State Revenue Service is only responsible for issues related to declarations by public officials, i.e., the State Revenue Service checks whether declarations have been submitted and completed in accordance with the established procedure and submitted within the specified time limit.

The State Revenue Service pays particular attention to the declarations of senior public officials – politically influential and senior managers – and carries out mandatory manual checks on these declarations.

QUESTION 17: Could you provide the numbers of officials under obligation to submit (regular) asset declarations? What is the ratio compared to the overall number of officials in Latvia?

State Revenue Service:

In 2025, there were 55,525 public officials. The obligation to submit the regular declaration of public officials for 2025 applied to 54,677 officials, or 98% of the total number of public officials.

QUESTION 18: Could you provide the latest data as regards the number of asset declarations submitted through the system in 2025, the number of manually checked declarations, and administrative sanction proceedings and their outcomes? Where there recurring irregularities in those sanction proceedings?

State Revenue Service:

In 2025, a total of 61,778 declarations by public officials were submitted, of which 6,021, or 9.75% of all declarations submitted by public officials, were checked manually.

Decisions adopted in administrative violation cases in 2025:

- On the initiation of administrative violation proceedings	- 185
- On refusal to initiate administrative violation proceedings	- 157
- On the application of administrative penalties	- 162
- On termination of administrative violation proceedings	- 12
- Total	- 505

The State Revenue Service does not keep records of whether there were repeated violations in these sanction procedures.

QUESTION 20: Could you explain what the main corruption risks were in public procurement procedures since the 2025 Report was published and what measures were taken to mitigate these risks? Besides the specific cases mentioned in your written input, could you inform us about review and follow-up measures, where corruption was detected in public procurement procedures?

KNAB:

Based on the strategic analysis¹ of corruption risks in public procurements (mentioned in the original written submission), the report identified 16 warning signals (corruption risks) that can be observed in public procurements, and analyzed them in detail, concluding that the public procurement system continues to demonstrate systematic shortcomings previously highlighted by experts at both national and international levels. Research confirms that entrepreneur trust in the fairness of the public procurement process remains low, which not only discourages them from participating in procurement, but also creates fertile ground for manipulation and corrupt practices.

In the conclusion, six mitigating measures were proposed: 1) Increasing the transparency and availability of data in public procurement by ensuring the publication of all procurements and the availability of documentation on a website provided by the EIS or the PMB, or on another single platform, including for simplified and low-threshold procedures. 2) Expanding data analytics and risk monitoring capabilities by addressing identified limitations in data quality and availability and ensuring complete, consistent and reliable information in public procurement datasets. 3) Strengthening preventive control by improving monitoring and control mechanisms with automated solutions that allow for timely identification of cases when contracting authorities do not publish the information specified in regulatory enactments. 4) Reducing the administrative burden and improving the efficiency of the use of public funds by evaluating the possibilities of centralizing procurements in high-risk customer categories, taking into account the conclusions established in the analysis. 5) Promoting the international openness of public procurement by expanding procurement publication requirements and providing for wider use of English in the publication of procurement information, in procurements in which participation of foreign companies is possible. 6) Facilitating a unified and high-quality procurement documentation approach, reducing the risks of manipulation during the procurement preparation stage, by developing standardized templates of technical specifications, regulations and qualification requirements in collaboration with industry and technology experts, including using artificial intelligence solutions in the development of standard documents.

Have the changes to the public procurement law on electronic checks of conflicts of interests been introduced?

Ministry of Finance: With regards to electronic checks of conflicts of interests, no changes to the Public Procurement law have been introduced.

QUESTION 21: additional input on how far the procurement has been centralised at Ministry of Interior and what type of public procurement is still done at local level. In your written contribution, you refer to public procurement, sports funding, health services and migration as high-risk areas of corruption. Are there other high-risk areas? Are there other mitigative measures you would like to share, additionally to those identified in the written contribution?

KNAB:

In the context of the strategic analysis report mentioned in Q20, analyzing the accumulation of signs of sectoral corruption risks in municipal procurements in relation to the public funding invested in the respective sectors, revealed the following trends:

“Construction works” is simultaneously both the largest public procurement subject in the entire sector (5.05 billion euros) and one of the three sectors with the highest number of risk indicators in municipal procurements. This combination – high financial intensity in the entire market and high risk density in a specific category of customers – makes this sector a strategic priority for targeted monitoring.

¹ <https://www.knab.gov.lv/lv/media/7793/download?attachment>

“Wastewater, waste, cleaning and environmental services” ranks fourth in terms of total contract amounts (~463 million euros) and is one of three sectors with seven risk indicators at the municipal level. Thus, two important indicators intersect here: high concentration of public funds and increased level of corruption risks.

“Architecture, construction and engineering services” is the third sector with the highest number of identified risks, but it is not included in the list of the ten largest sectors in terms of contract amounts. This indicates a lower financial intensity, but a potentially high frequency of small purchases and a concentrated accumulation of risk features, which indicates the need for a detailed monitoring approach.

QUESTION 22: Are statistical data available covering 2025 regarding the number of reviews in case of breach of public procurement rules [e.g. from the Procurement Monitoring Bureau and/or the relevant courts] and, if so, could you share them with us in writing?

Ministry of Finance: As the first-instance review body within the meaning of Directive 89/665/EEC and 92/13/EEC, as amended by Directive 2007/66/EC, the Procurement Monitoring Bureau in 2025 received 433 applications from suppliers concerning procurement procedures conducted by contracting authorities. Of these, 368 submissions were examined (a part of the submissions were withdrawn or the proceedings were terminated prior to examination). Of the submissions examined, 36% were found to be substantiated, while 64% were found to be unsubstantiated.

QUESTION 23: Could you provide us with statistical data on single bids in procurements related to EU funds versus those related to national funds?

Ministry of Finance: According to the data of the Procurement Monitoring Bureau, in 2025 the overall share of public procurements published during the year (irrespective of the applicable regulatory framework and contract value thresholds) in which only one bidder participated amounted to 26.2% (calculated as the proportion of procurement lots with a single bidder in relation to the total number of procurement lots). At the same time, procurements financed by EU funds accounted for 27.1% of all procurements (procurement lots) in which only one bidder participated. Accordingly, procurements financed by EU funds constitute less than one third of the total number of procurements (procurement lots) with a single bidder.

If necessary, more procurement data are available at: <https://info.iub.gov.lv/visual>

QUESTION 28: In your written contribution you state that the draft report on cooling-off period for work in the public sector has been completed by the State Chancellery, KNAB and the Ministry of Welfare in 2025 - are any next steps planned regarding the proposals made in the draft report for a control mechanism?

KNAB:

Currently, Article 10(7) of the Law on Prevention of Conflict of Interest in the Activities of Public Officials establishes a two-year cooling-off period for public officials who have made certain decisions. Namely, a public official is prohibited, for two years after he or she has taken the decision or participated in the taking of the decision to grant a public procurement, a partnership procurement, a procurement of public service providers or a concession, to grant financial resources of a public entity, or has performed monitoring, control, investigatory, or punitive functions, or has administered insolvency proceedings, from obtaining the property of such merchant and also to become a

shareholder, stockholder, member, beneficial owner of such commercial company or to hold offices in such commercial company in relation to which, while performing his or her duties, this public official has taken the decision or participated in the taking of the decision to grant a public procurement, a partnership procurement, a procurement of public service providers or a concession to grant financial resources of a public entity, or has performed monitoring, control, investigatory, or punitive functions, or has administered insolvency proceedings.

A draft law “Amendments to the Law on Prevention of Conflict of Interest in the Activities of Public Officials” (No. 1166/Lp14) has been submitted to the national Parliament (Saeima). The aforementioned draft law provides for the right of the head of a public institution, based on the application of a public official and assessing the risks of corruption and conflict of interest, to decide on reducing the term specified in Part Seven of this Section to one year, if the application of the two-year term is not appropriate and proportionate.

Note that the aforementioned draft law was supported in the first reading at the meeting of the Saeima Committee on Public Administration and Local Government on 4 February 2026.

State Chancellery:

The draft report on cooling-off period for work in the public sector has been prepared, including analysis of legal framework, experience in other countries and recommendations. It was sent to the KNAB in January 2026 given that this report was an activity under the Corruption Prevention and Combating Action Plan 2023-2025.

In 2025, KNAB prepared the State Administration Integrity and Conflict of Interest Prevention draft law. Work on this draft is ongoing.

With this in mind, the assessment of the “cooling-off” period may be used in the framework of future work on this draft law and the report may be submitted to the Cabinet within the framework of the reference documents of this draft law.

Amendments to the Law On Prevention of Conflict of Interest in Activities of Public Officials have been developed to complement Section 10 with a new Paragraph eight:

“(8) the head of an institution of a public person, on the basis of a submission of a public official and evaluating the risks of corruption and conflict of interest, has the right to decide on reducing the time period specified in Paragraph seven of this Section to one year, if the application of the two-year time period is not appropriate and proportionate.”

At present Article 10 (7) contains a two-years cooling-off period after public official has taken the decision or participated in a decision described in this paragraph.

On 4 February 2026, these amendments were discussed by the committee of the Saeima and approved for 1st reading.

On 12 February 2026, amendments were adopted at the 1st reading by the Saeima².

Additional information from State Chancellery:

² <https://titania.saeima.lv/LIVS14/saeimalivs14.nsf/webSasaiste?OpenView&restricttcategory=1166/Lp14>

On 12 February 2026, amendments to the Whistleblowing Law were adopted at the final 3rd reading by the Saeima³

Additional information from KNAB:

The project “Strengthening the Anti-Corruption Framework in Latvia” implemented by KNAB and funded by the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support (DG Reform) concluded in May 2025. The main goal of the project was to provide Latvia with international expert support in the development and implementation of reforms in the field of anti-corruption. Thus, KNAB, in cooperation with experts from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), successfully implemented three main project activities:

- 1) a study “Strengthening the Latvian Conflict of Interest Regime: Towards Effective Implementation” has been prepared on the compliance of the Law on Prevention of Conflict of Interest in the Activities of Public Officials with international standards and good practice.
- 2) a report “Evaluation of the effectiveness of internal control systems for preventing corruption and conflicts of interest in Latvia” was prepared and a methodology for assessing the effectiveness of internal anti-corruption control systems was developed. The aforementioned report analyses the approaches introduced by the time of project implementation and the contribution to the assessment of internal control systems in Latvia, paying special attention to the prevention of corruption risks. The report also provides a methodological approach for Latvian public institutions on how to assess the effectiveness of internal anti-corruption control systems. The methodology was mainly developed for use by public institutions, however, its use is also recommended for private sector institutions in order to promote transparency of management, the trust of society and cooperation partners, as well as to reduce corruption risks in the business environment.
- 3) OECD experts, in cooperation with KNAB, prepared recommendations for the development of a National Corruption Risk Assessment Methodology. A national corruption risk assessment methodology specifically adapted to Latvia will allow for a much more accurate identification of high-risk areas and the adaptation of appropriate prevention measures. The methodology is planned to be prepared in the first half of 2026.

³[https://titania.saeima.lv/LIVS14/saeimalivs14.nsf/webAll?SearchView&Query=\(\[Title\]=*trauksmes*\)&SearchMax=0&SearchOrder=](https://titania.saeima.lv/LIVS14/saeimalivs14.nsf/webAll?SearchView&Query=([Title]=*trauksmes*)&SearchMax=0&SearchOrder=)

Ministry of Culture:

QUESTION 1: How is the merger of Latvian Television and Latvian Radio into Latvian Public Media being evaluated so far in terms of editorial independence, organisational efficiency and pluralism of content?

The study “The Role of Media and Journalists in Society and Democracy” (inter alia) provides comprehensive **evidence** on how the **new unified public media organisation** (Latvijas Sabiedriskais Medijs – LSM) is perceived by society. These findings allow a clear assessment **of editorial independence, organisational efficiency, and content pluralism.**

Editorial independence:

- Public media journalists are seen as **the most trustworthy** among all media groups: **52%** of respondents consider their information objective, while **29%** disagree.
- A widespread belief exists that **media owners, political elites and businesses influence journalists** (63% agree).
- The merger has **not damaged public media’s editorial credibility**: they remain the most trusted media actors.
- Yet overall scepticism toward media freedom in Latvia means that **public media still operate in an environment of perceived political pressure**, especially among minority audiences.

Organisational efficiency:

- Public media platforms (LTV, LR, LSM.lv) receive the **highest trust ratings** among all media types - This suggests stability and effective organisational performance.
- A **majority of society supports the existence of a single public media organisation**: **55% say Latvia needs a dedicated public media**, and only **25%** think private media could replace it. Support is highest among Latvian-speaking and older audiences.
- Public media are **disproportionately consumed by older and Latvian-speaking audiences**, while young people and Russian-speaking audiences rely far more on social media or foreign sources.

Pluralism of content:

- **60%** of respondents believe Latvian media provide sufficient diversity of opinions — below Lithuania, Estonia and the EU average.
- Public media are perceived as contributing **most strongly to democracy and free speech**, particularly by younger respondents.
- Society clearly expects **broad and inclusive opinion representation**: very high support for the principle that media should show all viewpoints, even those many find unacceptable
- However, Russian-speaking audiences and socio-economically vulnerable groups feel **less represented** and rely more on non-traditional or alternative sources (Telegram, influencers, etc.).

a. Could you elaborate on the state of play, including on the new structures, staffing and changes to programmes?

Structure:

Following the merger of Latvian Television, Latvian Radio and the LSM.lv portal, LSM has established the foundations of a single, unified public service media organisation. In 2025, the institution consolidated its operational principles and internal processes, creating a coherent organisational framework for the years ahead.

From 2026, LSM begins implementing a digitally oriented and audience-centred operational model, marking the start of a broader transformation. This model shifts the organisation away from a traditional channel-based structure toward integrated content planning based on public needs and unified editorial standards across all platforms and languages.

In 2026, the new editorial office of Latvian Public Media will start its work in Latgale (LSM Latgales redakcija) with the aim to:

- Strengthen LSM's presence in Latgale – a region, which is ethnically diverse (Latvians (56%), Russians, Poles, Belarussians), has a fragmented info space, local media suffer from political influence, information influence from RU & BY, and threats from disinformation are present.
- **LSM accessibility** in Latgale: total 68% (decreasing); LSM.lv 49% (increasing).
- **Trust in LSM:** among ethnic minorities is declining; trust and use of Russian media is declining, but use of Latvian media is not increasing.
- Provide unified, community-oriented, digitally strong, high-quality, diverse, reliable content in Latvian, Latgalian and Russian.

Changes to programmes:

- From 2026, LSM.lv will function as a single news platform in Latvian, while also offering content in English, Ukrainian and Russian, created within a unified editorial team and according to common quality, ethical and professional standards.
- Minority-language content will no longer exist as a separate segment; instead, minority-related topics are integrated organically into the overall public media offer, with strengthened representation of minority authors and experts.
- The transition also includes significant programme changes: for example, Latvijas Radio 4 discontinues broadcasting from 1 January 2026, with its existing content remaining available in the archive.

b. In your view, how is this change contributing to reach out to other communities, including minorities and increase trust in public media?

It is planned to integrate minority-related topics directly into the main public media offer, instead of isolating them into separate channels or segments. Minority authors and experts will appear more frequently, and topics important to these communities will be organically included in coverage. This promotes inclusion and helps build a common information space for all residents.

A single, multimediated editorial structure ensures that all language editions follow the same quality, professional and ethical guidelines, improving reliability and reducing fragmentation or mixed messaging. This consistent approach strengthens credibility among diverse audiences.

By transitioning to a digitally oriented and audience-centred model, LSM becomes more accessible on the platforms and formats preferred by younger, urban and multilingual communities.

c. How does the new board balance its role in setting up joint administrative and financial structures with the need to avoid interference in editorial matters?

N/A

d. Has new editor in chief been appointed? What safeguards are in place to ensure that the appointment of the new editor in chief remains free from political or managerial influence during the transition phase?

On 30 April 2025, the Public Electronic Mass Media Council (SEPLP) elected Ms. Anita Brauna (the editor in chief of the Latvian Radio) as the editor in chief of the Latvian Public Media (LSM) for a five-year term, effective 1 June 2025.

Ms Brauna was nominated by the **LSM Board** following a professional evaluation. Her candidacy was supported by key journalistic organisations, including the Latvian Journalists Association and Baltic Media Centre of Excellence, which publicly attested to her integrity and commitment to editorial independence.

Article 6(6) of the “Law on Public Electronic Mass Media and Administration Thereof” states: A person who is or, within the last 24 months until the day of election to the position, has been a member of the decision-making body or the executive body of a political party or alliance of political parties and also a person who is a member of a political party may not become the editor-in-chief of a public electronic mass medium. If on the day of approval in the position of editor-in-chief of a public electronic mass medium, the person is a member of a political party he or she shall immediately terminate his or her membership in the political party or alliance of political parties after approval in the position.

QUESTION 2: How is Latvian Public Media measuring changes in audience trust and outreach to minorities and other communities following the merger, and are any early results available?

LSM’s 2026 strategy (approved by SEPLP on 30 Dec 2025) starts a transformation in LSM’s second post merger year, supported by stable funding of ~€61M annually (about 0.14% of GDP in 2026).

It shifts LSM toward a single, digitally oriented, society needs based operating model, focusing on expanding reach, raising content quality, building a digital ecosystem, modernising technology/infrastructure, and strengthening a unified organisational culture.

LSM will replace “platform/channel thinking” with unified content planning and management guided by audience needs, while keeping accessibility and quality as central principles.

For minority audiences, LSM will primarily address minorities in the state language while increasing minority representation in content, and it will produce English/Ukrainian/Russian digital content in one newsroom under shared editorial standards, supported by designated editors for sustained community relationships.

The strategy also strengthens youth and regional presence by creating a unified Youth Content editorial unit and expanding regional production (Daugavpils + Latgale newsroom, work toward Liepāja studio, and assessing an eastern border regional radio option), alongside public value targets such as 79% weekly reach and 54% trust in LSM for 2026.

QUESTION 3: The Media Policy Guidelines for 2024–2027, approved on 1 October 2024, aim to align funding levels of public media with European averages, and establish a more predictable and transparent financing model

a. Which concrete measures under the Media Policy Guidelines 2024–2027 have already been implemented to improve the operating environment for commercial media, and what results have been observed so far?

Implementation of the Media Support Fund programmes. In 2025, a total amount of EUR 4,447,772.51 was allocated to media through the Media Support Fund.

In 2026, the total funding allocated across the four programmes amounts to 4,447,772.51 euro:

1) 2,114,198.52 euro has been allocated under the National Media Programme.

- 2) 1,916,420.99 euro has been allocated under the “Support Programme for Regional, Local, Diaspora Media and Cooperation Projects”.
- 3) 72,525.00 euro has been allocated to the programme “Election debates in television programmes of electronic media”.
- 4) 344,628,00 euro has been allocated to the programme “Support for the production of regional news in 2026”.

Total investment in media digitalisation: 13 million euros under the EU Recovery and Resilience Facility, aimed at modernising media processes and digital platforms, strengthening digital skills, introducing new technological solutions, and improving the sustainability and competitiveness of commercial media (11.1 mil euros), and trainings to improve the digital competence and knowledge of media industry specialists (2 mil euros).

b. Do you have any update concerning the change of the financing model for Public Electronic Media? Is this change contributing to the development of modern digital content, technology, and infrastructure, as well as opportunities to improve the staff working conditions?

Article 7(1) of the “Law on Public Electronic Mass Media and Administration Thereof” states that 1) subsidy from the State budget for the implementation of a public service remit may not be less than that of the previous year if the annual State budget is not less than the State budget of the previous year.

On 7 October 2025, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the Media Policy Guidelines Implementation Plan for 2025-2027. For the implementation of task No. 3.4. “Change the public media financing model, ensuring the predictability of funding growth” of the abovementioned Plan, it is envisaged that the Public Electronic Mass Media Council (hereinafter – SEPLP) will develop a conceptual report on the most appropriate legal status for the Latvian Public Media (LSM) company and its funding model by the end of 2027.

LSM’s 2026 plan frames the year as the start of a transformation that includes launching technology and infrastructure modernisation as one of the core priorities.

In practice, this is tied to building the foundations of a digital ecosystem and moving to a single, digitally oriented operating model, where tech development supports broader reach and higher content quality.

Budget of the LSM:

- 2023 – 41,186,950 euros
- 2024 – 46,728,388 euros
- 2025 – 50,388,117 euros
- 2026 (as well as in 2027, 2028) – 61,704,236 euros

QUESTION 4: What concrete changes will the planned amendments to the Press Law introduce to ensure that the Mass Media Register becomes complete, accurate and up to date?

The purpose of updating the Mass Media Register is to ensure objective information about media services and media service providers in Latvia, helping the public understand the sources from which information is received.

Updating the register also provides access to information about funding allocated for state advertising by public institutions and other public entities.

As of 1 September 2025, the Latvian Open Data Portal reports that the Register includes **4,237 mass media outlets**, whose registration began shortly after the Law was adopted on 20 December 1990.

Over 35 years, owners (founders) have notified the Register of Enterprises about the termination of operations for approximately one-fifth of all registered outlets — **844 media outlets**.

Although registration is not mandatory under the Law, **3,393 press and other mass media outlets** are nonetheless registered, including newspapers, magazines, bulletins, electronic media, newsreels, information agency releases, and audiovisual recordings intended for public distribution; websites may also be registered as mass media.

A portion of the registered entities does not meet the definition of a “media service,” and mass media outlets that do not constitute actual media services continue to be registered.

On 22 July 2025, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the Ministry of Culture's informative report on ensuring the application of the EMFA. The informative report provides for the gradual transposition of EMFA requirements in two stages:

Stage 1: The Ministry of Culture has drafted, and the Cabinet of Ministers has approved amendments to the Law “On the Press and Other Mass Media” and the Electronic Mass Media Law to:

- Take over EMFA definitions (media service, media service provider, online platform, media market concentration, state advertisement etc.).
- Supplement with a new obligation for media service providers – make updated information (Article 6) easily and directly available.
- Ensure that the existing Mass Media Register (hereinafter – Register) includes and makes publicly available the self-declared information submitted by media service providers on the total annual amount of public funding allocated to them for state advertising.
- Supplement with a new obligation for public authorities and entities to compile and publish their public expenditure allocated to media service providers for state advertising (via the Open Data Portal).
- Implement a mandatory obligation that the establishment of a mass media outlet or the creation of an electronic media programme or service must be registered.

Stage 2: To ensure the updating of the existing Mass Media Register, amendments to the Law “On the Press and Other Mass Media” will introduce:

- **by 1 June 2026**, the Ministry of Culture, in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice, the Register of Enterprises, and other competent institutions, must draft and submit to the Cabinet of Ministers the draft laws (amendments) necessary to transform the Mass Media Register into a register of media service providers, in accordance with the transparency structure of high-level media ownership established in the EMFA, and define criteria for evaluating and verifying the compliance of media service providers to ensure the inclusion of appropriate subjects in the register.
- **by 1 July 2026**, media service providers will have to inform the Register of Enterprises about the continuation of their activity or any changes related to their mass media outlet.
- **by 31 December 2026**, the Register of Enterprises shall remove from the Register those media service providers who have not informed the Register of Enterprises about the continuation of their activity or the registration of changes to their mass media outlet.

On 11 February 2026, the Parliament’s (Saeima) Human Rights and Public Affairs Committee began considering the prepared amendments to the Press Law and Electronic Mass Media Law.

QUESTION 5: What explains the instances of public institutions withholding information despite a strong legal framework for access to documents, and how are such practices addressed? Are there effective remedies or sanctions when public authorities fail to comply with freedom of information obligations, and are these used in practice?

Latvia's **Freedom of Information Law**⁴ gives journalists the same right as any person to obtain **accessible information** held by public institutions, and an institution must provide it upon request **without requiring the applicant to justify their interest**.

For reporting, the key limitation is that the law also defines **restricted access information**—including internal-use documents, commercial secrets, and private life data—so such information may be withheld or only provided under special conditions, and requests for restricted information must be **in writing with stated grounds and purpose**.

The law also supports data-driven journalism by requiring institutions to publish certain information online as **open data / high-value datasets**, and it obliges institutions that refuse a written request to **state the legal grounds and how the refusal can be challenged or appealed**.

QUESTION 6: Are there any developments following the adoption of the Action Plan for the Safety of Journalists and Other Media Professionals and the study on “public perceptions of the role of media and journalists in society and democracy”?

On 22 January 2026, a meeting was organised between the Ministry of Culture, the State Police, the Latvian Journalists Association, and the non-governmental media organisation “Media Hub Riga” to review and update the cooperation memorandum signed in 2020, to improve collaboration to enhance the safety and protection of journalists and other media professionals, as well as to ensure faster cooperation and information exchange. It is anticipated that the renewed memorandum will be signed on 23 March during the conference “Media and National Security”.

The Latvian Journalists Association, which serves as the national contact point for the safety of journalists in Latvia, plans to launch an informational campaign in the autumn of 2026, ahead of the upcoming Parliamentary elections. The campaign will highlight the importance of journalists and media safety in strengthening democracy, emphasising that free speech, independent journalism, and open public debate are essential preconditions for an informed society and resilient democratic processes.

On 3 February 2026, the Study on public perceptions of the role of media and journalists in society and democracy (it was mentioned in the answers to the questionnaire) was also presented to the Parliament's (Saeima) Human Rights and Public Affairs Commission.

⁴ <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/50601-freedom-of-information-law>