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## **LATGALIAN**

**The Latgalian language in education in Latvia**

| 2nd Edition |

| Regional Dossier series |



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## Foreword

### background

Regional and minority languages are languages that differ from the official state language. The Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning uses the following definition for these languages, as stated in the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML):

Regional and minority languages are languages traditionally used within a given territory of a state by nationals of that state who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the state's population; they are different from the official language(s) of that state, and they include neither dialects of the official language(s) of the state nor the languages of migrants.

The Mercator European Research Centre aims to acquire, apply, and circulate knowledge about these regional and minority languages in education. An important means to achieve this goal is the Regional Dossier series: documents that provide the most essential features of the education system of regions with a lesser-used regional or minority language.

### aim

The aim of the Regional Dossier series is to provide a concise description of minority languages in education, mainly in Europe but also in other parts of the world. Aspects that are addressed include features of the education system, recent educational policies, main actors, legal arrangements and support structures, as well as quantitative aspects such as the number of schools, teachers, and pupils, and financial investments. Because of this fixed structure, the dossiers in the series are easy to compare.

### target group

The dossiers serve several purposes and are relevant for policy-makers, researchers, teachers, students, and journalists who wish to explore developments in minority language schooling in Europe. They can also serve as a first orientation towards further research, or function as a source of ideas for improving educational provisions.

**link with Eurydice** The format of the Regional Dossiers follows the format of Eurydice—the information network on education in Europe—in order to link the regional descriptions with those of national education systems. Eurydice provides information on the administration and structure of national education systems in the member states of the European Union.

**contents** Every Regional Dossier begins with an introduction about the region in question, followed by six chapters that each deal with a specific level of the education system (e.g. primary education). Chapters 8 and 9 cover the main lines of research into education of the minority language under discussion, and the prospects for the minority language in general and in education in particular, respectively. Chapter 10 provides a summary of statistics. Lists of (legal) references and useful addresses regarding the minority language are given at the end of the dossier.

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### List of Abbreviations

<b>LgSC</b>	Student Centre of Latgale ( <i>Latgolys Studentu centrs</i> )
<b>LKB</b>	Latgalian Cultural Society ( <i>Latgališu Kultūrys Bīdreiba</i> )
<b>LKC</b>	Latgalian Cultural Centre ( <i>Latgales Kultūras centrs</i> )
<b>LPI</b>	Research Institute of Latgale ( <i>Latgales Pētniecības institūts</i> )
<b>LVA</b>	Latvian Language Agency ( <i>Latviešu valodas aģentūra</i> )
<b>LVLKSA</b>	Association of Teachers of Latgalian Language, Literature and Cultural History ( <i>Latgališu volūdys, literaturys I kulturviesturis školuoju asociaceja</i> )
<b>MI</b>	Medium of instruction
<b>RTA</b>	Rēzekne Academy of Technologies ( <i>Rēzeknes Tehnoloģiju akadēmija</i> )

## 1 Introduction

### language

Latgalian is a Baltic regional language originating in the region of Latgale (Latgalian: *Latgola*) in Eastern Latvia (see Figure 1). It is mostly spoken in Latgale, but also in families and small communities of people from Latgale living in other parts of Latvia.

Latgalian is closely related to Latvian in a relationship similar to how other regional languages in Europe are related to the main languages of society, such as Scots and Scottish English, Kashubian and Polish, or Low German and High German. Boundaries between Standard Latvian and Latgalian are, in this sense, fluid, both regarding structures and use. Whether Latgalian is considered a language in its own right or is seen as part of Latvian has long been debated. The linguistic differences between Latgalian and Latvian are largely a result of the separate historical development of the region of Latgale, which exposed Latgalian to strong contact with its Slavonic neighbouring languages (i.e. Polish and Russian), but also with Lithuanian. In contrast, Latvian varieties from other regions have by far more influence from High and Low German.

In addition, Latgalian has a separate history of standardisation and its speakers display a strong sense of regional identity often linked to Catholicism. Latgale has for centuries been exposed to cultural and political developments separate from the other parts of present-day Latvia. The first written version of Latgalian was created at the beginning of the 18th century. In the 19th century, Latgalian was used as a medium of instruction (MI) in some parish schools in Latgale and in two church seminaries (Zeile, 2006). Different types of publications appeared until the Latin alphabet was prohibited for printing in tsarist Russia from 1865 until 1904, also affecting the Latgalian written language. The MI during this time was only Russian. At the beginning of the 20th century, a standardised written language was developed. In 1917, the famous Latgalian Congress took place in the city of Rēzekne; delegates from all over Latgale demanded unification of Latgale with other Latvian-speaking regions, thereby explicitly





identifying themselves as a part of the Latvian nation. This was the basis for the inclusion of Latgale into the new Latvian state in 1918. One of the other demands by the Congress was cultural autonomy, including the possibility to use Latgalian for official purposes with a standard orthography based on Polish spelling traditions.

During the first Latvian Republic (1918–1940), Latgalian enjoyed the strongest level of official support. It was officially recognised as a regional language of administration, although centralist and anti-Latgalian attitudes were known during this period. Starting in 1923, Latgalian was taught in the first years of primary school, with a slow transition to Latvian as the main MI in later years. Latgalian was used by an increasing number of writers and in about 40 periodicals, and about 10 school books for Latgalian were published every year. However, when the Latvian government was taken over by the authoritarian Ulmanis regime in 1934, the Latvianisation of Latgalian proper names and toponyms set in, and the use of Latgalian in schools and the publication of books in Latgalian stopped. After a short revival of Latgalian printing during Nazi-German occupation (1941–43), Latgalian suffered again from both communist anti-Catholic and Latvian anti-decentralist attitudes after World War II. In education, a law was passed in 1956 based on explicitly purist suggestions by Latvian linguists, which encouraged teachers to mark any use of Latgalian as “wrong Latvian”. This stigmatisation of Latgalian had its effect on the prestige of the language until the 21st century.

The only place where the oral use of Latgalian was still quite strong, besides its use in (mostly rural) homes, was the Catholic Church. The use of the Latgalian written language, however, ceased altogether when a printing prohibition took effect in the 1960s, directed against the Catholic Church Calendars. The written tradition was continued at a very low level in exile in countries such as Germany, the United States, Canada, or Sweden, most prominently by the Latgalian research institutes that were created in 1960 in Indianapolis and Munich.

These traditions continued to have a significant impact on Latgalian after the re-establishment of Latvian independence in 1991. Latgalian suffered from policies that aimed to reverse the shift from Russian towards Latvian, which left little space for other varieties. In official language policies, Latgalian was frequently regarded as a threat to national unity. Yet, among Latgalian activists, the overwhelming self-identification continued to consider Latgalian identity to be a sub-ethnicity of Latvian identity.

Despite a continuing lack of official support, however, independence also allowed enthusiastic intellectuals to start Latgalian cultural activities and to initiate new debates. Linguists started to work on a new orthography and took care of Latgalian toponyms. Teachers developed materials, programmes, and curricula for Latgalian literature, culture, and geography. Latgalian language and culture started to attract young people, due to new authors and trends, supported by the publication of textbooks and primers (Cibuļs & Leikuma, 1992; Leikuma, 1993). Pop and rock bands sang in Latgalian, which had a substantial impact on interest in Latgalian among the younger generations. In 2007, a new Latgalian orthographic standard was officially adopted by the Latvian State Language Centre.

A larger impact on society could, however, be felt only after several decades. One key moment in the change of attitudes towards Latgalian in society was the 2012 referendum on Russian as Latvia's second official language. Whereas the proposal was clearly defeated in Latvia as a whole, the majority of voters in Latgale voted in favour of Russian as a second state language. Society understood that the interests of the regions needed to be taken more seriously. As a result, the Latgalian language started to enjoy not only a stronger presence in regional media, but also on a small scale even on national TV and radio.

In 2012, the Latgalian World Congress was held in Rēzekne, which played an important role in creating future cultural and educational activities. Latgalian literacy was included in the new school subject "Regional Studies", and Latgalian became part of the official list of national school competitions (although com-

petitions in Latgalian had been held since 2000 already). The first official use of the Latgalian flag during the Congress by the county of Rēzekne is of notable symbolic importance. In 2017, 100 years after the first Congress, a new Latgalian Congress was organised in Rēzekne. Again, it had a considerable impact on the Latgalian language and self-confidence, and triggered political discussions. In 2018, the Latvian Parliament approved the 27th of April as the Day of the Latgalian Congress, which since 2019 has officially been celebrated in both Latgale and Riga.

Research throughout the past decade has shown that Latgalian has also reached new levels of prestige and that this has had its impact on the economy. Latgalian is today present to a much higher degree on public signs. The bilingual Latvian-Latgalian name of the concert hall Gors / Gars in Rēzekne (inaugurated in 2013) is of high symbolic importance. Moreover, the presence of Latgalian on café menus even in Riga (where the owners have Latgalian roots) displays changes in societal attitudes. On initiative by Latvian President Levits, a law was passed in April 2021 which aims to strengthen the Latvian language, and as part of it regional linguistic identities including Latgalian (About securing Latvian as the only state language, 2021). At the same time, a new draft Law on Administrative Regions includes aims to re-structure and coordinate educational issues as well as regional language policies.

In total, however, discourses on language and regional issues in Latvia are still highly diverse. In online forums, for instance, long-standing clichés and discourses that link support of Latgalian to separatist threats can still be found, even if public voices seem to have become more moderate. Many people continue to use Latgalian in largely diglossic patterns, with Latgalian as the low variety of the (rather rural) homes, and Latvian used for more official purposes and in the towns. In addition, not all people who speak one of the varieties of Latgalian are used to reading Latgalian, and as a result of long-term educational practices, numbers of people with written competence are only slowly increasing.

**population** Latgale has for centuries been a highly multilingual and multicultural region. It was not before Soviet times, however, that migration resulted in a higher number of inhabitants without knowledge of Latgalian than speakers of Latgalian in Latgale. In this distribution of competence in Latgalian, there is a large rural-urban divide; whereas many parts of the Latgalian countryside continue to be dominated by speakers of Latgalian until the present day, the cities are much more diverse. Table 1 juxtaposes the ethnic composition of Latvia and Latgale since 1935; persons with a predominantly Latgalian identity are included in the category “Latvians”.

**Table 1**
*Ethnicities in Latvia (LV) and Latgale (LG)*

	LV 1935	LG 1935	LV 1989	LG 1989	LV 2007	LG 2007	LV 2020	LG 2020
<b>Latvians</b>	77.0	61.3	52.0	39.4	59.0	43.9	62.5	46.1
<b>Russians</b>	9.0	27.1	34.0	43.4	28.3	39.6	24.7	36.3
<b>Belarusians</b>	1.4	2.4	4.5	6.5	3.7	5.6	3.2	5.0
<b>Ukrainians</b>	0.1	*	3.5	1.9	2.5	1.4	2.3	1.3
<b>Poles</b>	2.6	3.5	2.3	6.5	2.4	7.1	2.0	6.4
<b>Lithuanians</b>	1.2	0.2	1.3	0.7	1.4	0.6	1.1	0.5
<b>Jews</b>	4.9	4.9	0.4	0.4	*	*	0.2	0.1
<b>Germans</b>	3.3	0.2	*	*	*	*	0.1	0.1
<b>Other ethnicities</b>	0.6	0.2	1.7	0.9	2.7	1.8	3.7	3.8

\* Figure around or below 0.1; included in “Other ethnicities”

*Note.* The ethnic composition of inhabitants in Latvia and Latgale in 1935, 1989, 2007, and 2020 (displayed as percentages; self-assessment by the inhabitants; no differentiation between Latvians and Latgalians). From Centrālās statistikas pārvalde (n.d.) (Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia).

The 2011 Latvian census for the first time explicitly asked about competence in Latgalian; plans for the 2021 census do not, however, envisage including a question about languages, only about ethnicity. In 2011, about 165,000 people or 8.8% of the population of Latvia (35.5% in Latgale) claimed to use Latgalian on a regular basis. However, among under 17-year-olds, only 5.7% in Latvia and 27% in Latgale made this claim, which indicates a continuing decline. In the census, Latgale is understood as an administrative region. There are no

decentralised political structures in Latvia. Latgale as an entity is perceived in a cultural and linguistic sense, and it is one of five regions in regional planning and a constituency in elections (Figure 1). Broadly speaking, it includes the areas around the cities of Rēzekne, Balvi, Krāslava, Ludza, and Preiļi, the area south of Alūksne, the areas to the west and east of Daugavpils, and to the east of Jēkabpils and Madona. In the east and south-east, Latgale borders Russia and Belarus. Historically, the region of Jaunlatgale (New Latgale) around the city of Abrene was part of Latgale; it was incorporated into Russia after World War II. Individual perceptions of the borders of Latgale may differ, as displayed, for example, in fierce discussions in some of the regions bordering other parts of Latvia around the current administrative reforms, such as in Varakļāni where the population is divided by their wish to belong to Rēzekne county in Latgale or to Madona county in Vidzeme. The region of Latgale is the region with the highest unemployment rate and the lowest average income in Latvia.

In terms of age, Latgalian is still spoken by higher proportions of the older generations. Inter-generational transmission takes place, but it is not guaranteed. The Latgalian of many younger speakers is characterised by features that are much closer to Standard Latvian in a continuum of standard, regional, and local variants. At the same time, there are highly dedicated Latgalian circles among younger speakers who are culturally active, including the use of Latgalian in the economy, literature, and culture. Competence in Latgalian of people outside Latvia is difficult to estimate. About 1,000 people of Latgalian descent live in Siberia in the regions of Krasnoyarsk, Tomsk, and Omsk, some of whom continue to use Latgalian in everyday conversations alongside Russian, even after a century of separation from Latgale. Likewise, descendants of Latgalian emigrants to Western countries after World War II may use some Latgalian, such as in Germany, Canada, and the United States. As part of open borders within the EU, Latgale has lost a considerable share of its inhabitants, which means that Latgalian competence is present in many European countries, including transnational

families who maintain close ties with Latgale. There is, however, no official support for Latgalian in this new diaspora.

**language status** Latvian is the only official language in Latvia (or state language, in Latvian terminology). At the end of Soviet times, Latvian society was characterised by so-called “asymmetrical bilingualism” with many Russophones speaking only Russian, whereas most ethnic Latvians spoke both Latvian and Russian. Russian was the language of political prestige and served much wider functions in official domains. This functional hierarchy together with migration from other parts of the Soviet Union led to a situation, at the end of Soviet occupation, in which only 23% of non-Latvians in Latvia were able to speak Latvian. Of all the population in Latvia in 1989, 62% spoke Latvian, whereas 81% spoke Russian.

Since the reestablishment of independence in 1991, Latvian language policy has therefore attempted to reverse the language shift from Russian back to Latvian. According to the Official Language Law (1999), Latvian is the only language to be used by public authorities (with some exceptions such as in touristic contexts). In private companies, other languages may be used alongside Latvian. There are no restrictions in private contexts and regarding the additional use of other languages in the media. Officially recognised minorities receive support for their cultural development. Except for Latvian, however, the only other officially recognised language is the micro language of Livonian, of which there are today only a handful of neo-speakers. In a separate section of the language law, the state takes responsibility for maintaining, protecting, and developing Livonian as an autochthonous language, and it is, for instance, supported by the Livonian Institute (founded in 2018). Latgalian, in contrast, is protected in the language law only in one subsection of the section on Latvian, but the wording “Latgalian written language as a historic variant of the Latvian language” focuses on its historic role and leaves room for interpretation. Whereas Latgalian speakers, some linguists, and politicians tend to see this law as an encouragement for active language

policy and support, other central authorities and linguists have frequently stressed the historical aspect—that is, Latgalian may be cherished as a heritage language, but it has been by far more difficult to reach the recognition of contemporary functions. At the same time, recent changes in functions and discourses as outlined above indicate that the strict legal separation of Latvian and Latgalian is not maintained.

A solomonic solution to the question of language versus dialect is provided by the ISO language code 639. It tries to do justice to different views and the unclear linguistic boundaries—ISO unites both (Standard) Latvian (LVS) and Latgalian (LTG) as sub-divisions under the umbrella of Latvian (LAV). In this way, Latgalian can be considered a separate regional language in its own right, yet be part of the Latvian language and ethnos, and, most importantly, calm down the political debates around it (on regional languages see Wicherkiewicz, 2014; on the Latgalian context see Nau, 2021). Even most Latgalian activists have accepted that Latgalian is part of Latvian in the meaning of the ISO code. Yet, even if ISO applies the term “language” to Latgalian, it is hardly used in Latvian discourse. This is also reflected in the inclusion of Latgalian in regular reports by the Latvian Language Agency on the language situation in Latvia, notably using the term “language” in relation to Latgalian only in connection with its written form.

Latgalian is today occasionally and without official objection used in situations where otherwise only the use of Latvian would be legal—for example, in public speeches by state officials in regional contexts. However, there is no systematic use of oral Latgalian and almost no use of written Latgalian in state documents. Even after the latest statements by Latvian President Levits that Latvian also means Latgalian, it has not been defined what this would imply for systematic public use. In this climate of unclear official status and limited official support, the unofficial status of Latgalian is by far more relevant. In unofficial terms, Latgalian has improved in status considerably during recent years. Latgalian has started to play a more cen-

tral role in language initiatives. These mirror the slow changes in attitudes towards multilingualism in Latvia in general, from which also Latgalian benefits. In Latvian political discourse, Latvian nationalism remains strong, but there is also a young population influenced by pragmatic attitudes and liberal European values, which is more open-minded to linguistic diversity and multiple identities. An important example of where diversity and multilingualism have become more influential is the education reform (see following paragraphs) in which more attention is given to individual language biographies and linguistic repertoires of students as sources for enhancing their cognitive skills. A new official language policy plan for Latvian for the period 2021-2027 has been approved in August 2021. It includes unprecedented reference to Latgalian and Livonian. For example, the development goals state that the Latvian state aims to support the maintenance, research, and development of regional diversity of Latvian, the Latgalian written language, and Livonian.

At the moment, Latgalian continues to be under-funded and there is neither systematic research nor language planning nor an established research institute. Part of the research on Latgalian (mostly in sociolinguistics but currently also, e.g., by improving a corpus) takes place at the Research Institute for Regional Studies at the Rēzekne Academy of Technologies (RTA). Latgalian continues to be disputed in society, as shown, for instance, by debates on place name signage in the towns of Karsava or Ludza, where the use of Latgalian on road signs above and in a bigger script than Standard Latvian created political controversies.

**status of  
language  
education**

Until about a decade ago, Latgalian in education did not receive any official support and existed, if at all, only on the basis of individual enthusiasm as afternoon activities or as a topic within other lessons. Since the 2012 Latgalian World Congress, however, many local municipalities have started to support the subject “Regional Studies” at schools, for example, in Rēzekne city and county, and in Ludza, Balvi, and Krāslava



counties. Latgalian has thereby slowly started to be included in education, albeit on a very low scale.

These changes are most visible in the official school standards that were passed by the Latvian government in 2018 and 2019. In primary schools (grades 1–9), children are encouraged to reflect on individual plurilingualism, their language biographies, and societal functions of languages in their everyday lives. Curricula have been developed that contextualise children's family languages and explicitly mention Latgalian. A programme for "Latgalian written language" has been developed that allows schools all throughout Latvia to offer Latgalian as an elective. Also for secondary schools (grades 10-12), a similar elective is offered now. Latgalian is explicitly mentioned in the curricula of compulsory Latvian lessons: students shall understand the sociolinguistic situation of Latvia including the status and functions of Latgalian, Livonian and the languages of ethnic minorities. As learning outcomes, the students are meant to understand differences between regional varieties and functions of non-standard varieties in the broader sense. For the acquisition of written Latgalian within the context of Latgalian as an elective, the same school standards will be used as for Standard Latvian. Finally, an elective subject "Regional Studies" may also include content on Latgalian.

Although these changes will all remain subject to sufficient demand and financing by individual school communities and decisions by local school authorities, even these moderate changes imply a paradigm shift in Latvian educational policies. For the first time, Latgalian is officially recognised and allowed to be part of the curriculum. The first schools started to implement these programmes in the school year 2020/21. At the time of writing, it was too early to understand longer-term implications. An obstacle may be the consolidation of the Latvian school system; many countryside schools may be forced to join with other schools due to too low numbers of children, which may result in enthusiastic teachers and headteachers not receiving sufficient support for Latgalian. It also remains to be seen how

teachers will adapt to the new courses and how quickly adequate teaching materials will become available. Furthermore, parents and pupils will have to make difficult choices between, for example, Latgalian, international languages, and other subjects such as additional mathematics or science lessons.

In this sense, there is no guarantee that these changes will have a larger impact on the status of Latgalian in education. According to first reports by activists and teachers, students at many schools find other optional subjects more relevant. Therefore, even despite fundamental changes in attitude and support, steps taken in favour of Latgalian still depend on demands by parents, paired with initiatives by individual teachers and officials, in particular school directors. Where Latgalian classes exist, these have been created on the initiative of the individual schools but they will have to be financed by local authorities.

**education  
system**

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The education system in Latvia consists of pre-school education, of which the last 2 years (from age 5–7) are compulsory, and 9 years of compulsory primary education. After primary education, there are several options for secondary education: basic vocational, general secondary, vocational secondary, and vocational education. In most cases these consist of 3 or 4 years. Attending higher education at one of the universities, academies, or university colleges (*augstskolas*) is only possible upon successful completion of secondary education. Study programmes are mostly modelled to the Bologna-based BA-MA structure.

The two main laws that regulate education are the 1998 Education Law and the 1999 General Education Law with several later amendments. In addition, there are various other laws such as the 1995 Law on Institutions of Higher Education, the 2005/2007 Law on Scientific Activity, and the 1991/2001 Vocational Education Law.

During Soviet times, there were two largely separate Latvian and Russian education systems, which contributed to the societal segregation of ethnic Latvians and Russians (including other ethnic minorities who usually attended so-called Russian

schools). Since the 1990s, education reforms have therefore aimed to slowly integrate minority schools into the main education system. Minority schooling in Latvia is predominantly aimed at the Russian-speaking population, and there are schools for Ukrainians, Poles, and other minorities, which are often supported from abroad (e.g. from Poland). However, there are no specific Latgalian schools and there are no regulations for Latgale and its linguistic needs.

The educational reforms since the 1990s have largely succeeded in overcoming the lack of Latvian language knowledge among people with other first languages (L1); in the younger generation, knowledge of Latvian has increased considerably. Since the 2004 reform, a share of 60% of classes has to be taught in Latvian in secondary education—which at the time led to considerable protests mostly among Russophones. In recent years, however, there have been much fewer protests, and research on attitudes towards Latvian and teaching and learning processes has shown that the Russophone community has largely come to agree that sufficient competence in Latvian is crucial for successful participation in Latvian society (LVA, 2020). In 2019, as a final step on this path, the government initiated a discussion on the transition to a unified school system that would end the segregation between Latvian and Russian schools. Pupils who speak languages other than Latvian at home would join their Latvian-speaking peers but would continue to receive mother tongue and literature classes in their L1s; all other subjects would be taught in Latvian.

At the same time, recent reforms have also aimed to modernise curricula and approaches to teaching under the heading “A Competence Approach to the Curriculum – School 2030”. New curricula were introduced in the school year 2020/21, giving secondary schools more choices and more flexibility in assigning lessons to subjects. As seen in previous paragraphs, Latgalian may also benefit from these reforms, given that schools and parents agree on the wish to include Latgalian in the curriculum (Eurydice—European Commission, 2020).

**private and public**

Most schools in Latvia are public schools funded by the Latvian state. There are currently 688 schools, of which 68 are private (Ministry of Education and Science, 2020).

The private schools are usually of religious nature, oriented towards ethnic minorities, or they are based on alternative educational principles or environment-friendly profiles. Most of these schools are pre-schools located in or nearby Riga. Six private international schools in or close to Riga offer international curricula, four in English, and one each in German and French. In Latgale, there are four private schools: two secondary schools in Rēzekne (Rēzekne Catholic Secondary School and Eastern Latvia Technology High School), one in Aglona (Aglonas Catholic Grammar School), and one primary school in Preiļi (Preiļi Free School).

Some minority schools receive support from the respective countries whose language and culture they focus on, but they are essentially financed by and under the administrative responsibility of the Latvian state. In Latgale, there is a Polish primary and secondary school in Rēzekne, a Polish grammar school in Daugavpils, and a Polish primary school in Krāslava. There are no schools that focus on Latgalian.

**bilingual education forms**

Bilingual education has had a long tradition in post-Soviet Latvia in the context of the integration of Russophones into Latvian society. This tradition does not apply to Latgalian. Latgalian is incorporated into schools that otherwise function in Latvian, as part of subjects taught in Latvian or, most recently, as an optional separate subject (see section on the education system on p. 16).

In 2019, about 81,000 children in Latvia attended pre-school with Latvian as the MI, about 18,000 with Russian as the MI, and 245 with Polish (Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, 2020a).

About 135,000 students attended primary and secondary schools with Latvian as the MI, 39,000 students with Russian, and 22,500 were enrolled in mixed schools, of whom 10,300 had Latvian and 12,200 Russian as the main MI. About 2,700

students had another language than Latvian or Russian as the MI (Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, 2020b). Schools for smaller minorities include Polish, Ukrainian, Jewish, Lithuanian, Estonian, and Belarusian schools, in which the MI is mostly Latvian, but which offer ways to acquire the minority language, culture, and literature. Of the 116 schools in Latgale, 74 have Latvian as MI, and the remaining 42 are bilingual, mostly Latvian-Russian.

To further advance the integration of young people from the majority and minorities, new bilingual models have been introduced in schools in recent years. The 2018 amendments to the education laws have envisaged that, starting with the school year 2019/20, at least 50% of the subjects in grades 1–6 are taught in Latvian, with an increase to at least 80% in grades 7–9. The final exams at the end of grade 9 are now held entirely in Latvian. Starting from the school year 2022/23, all subjects in general secondary education (grades 10–12) will be taught in Latvian, while the languages of ethnic minorities will continue to be offered as L1, and as classes in literature and other subjects related to culture and history, even though for the time being the dual school system with Latvian vs. minority schools will be maintained (Eurydice—European Commission, 2020).

In addition to bilingual education addressed to the official minorities, some schools focus on international languages such as German or French, and in rare cases also on Spanish, Swedish, and other languages. These schools operate in Latvian but have increased language classes from early ages and partly adapt CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) approaches to subjects other than the language lessons. Finally, special rules apply to private schools, including international schools.

#### **administration**

The school standards are determined by the Latvian Ministry of Education and Science. The Ministry has not developed any policy on Latgalian, but some changes towards increasing the administrative role of the regions (also in education) are

planned in the context of the administrative-territorial reform, which was implemented in 2021.

Currently, all schools in Latvia develop their own profiles, which need to be approved by the education authorities. Local coordination and supervision of schools are the responsibility of educational councils in every city and district. In addition, there is a separate unit in every city and parish for the development of educational, cultural, and sports issues. These offices may support individual projects in a more informal, unsystematic way. In reality, this implies that school directors have a high level of influence. Latgalian can be offered as an optional subject if accepted by the director or the educational council of the respective city or county. Teachers can include Latgalian in their curricula on the Latvian language, Latvian literature, geography, cultural history, and music. It ultimately depends on the individual school directors to approve these suggestions; educational authorities in practice rarely object to Latgalian in the curricula. In higher education, study programmes and research are coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Science and the Latvian Council of Science. Study programmes need official accreditation by independent international commissions.

**inspection**

The accreditation of educational programmes at all primary and secondary schools is organised by the State Education Quality Service, and by the Quality Agency for Higher Education for university programmes. Accreditation takes place through peer group reviews. For schools, these can be, for example, the directors of other schools, and for universities, these are representatives of foreign universities and academic staff from other Latvian institutions. If accreditation is granted, it has to be reviewed after 2 or 6 years, according to the accreditation commission.

The inspection of educational institutions in Latvia is regulated by the Education Law (1998). Inspections fall into the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science and can be conducted at any time without prior announcement. Inspections are carried out in cooperation with local educational administrations. The

duties of the inspectors are to supervise the connections between the Ministry of Education and Science, the local administration, and the educational institutions, to ensure that the laws are respected, and to act as representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science towards these institutions.

**support  
structure**

Support for Latgalian is organised mostly on private initiative, but there are a few exceptions. After the 2012 Latgalian World Congress, the Association of Teachers of Latgalian Language, Literature and Cultural History (LVLKSA) was included in the State Language Plan (2014–2020) to receive financial support. In the new language development plan for Latvian for the period 2021–2027, goals and aims are included for the development and support of Latgalian, including in education. Private projects regularly get funded by state sources.

In the 1990s, the development of Latgalian language and culture was accelerated thanks to the activities of some enthusiastic intellectuals. The tradition of the *Latgales Pētniecības institūts* (LPI, Research Institute of Latgale) at the Daugavpils University was revived in 1991, and the publishing house of the *Latgales Kultūras centrs* (LKC, Latgalian Cultural Centre) started its work by taking over the heritage of the V. Lōcs Publishing House in Munich.

The 2017 Latgalian Congress showed the diversity of organisations and individuals working on regional issues and identity, including language. The celebration marked a symbolic start to Latvia's 100th anniversary of independence in 2018. The congress resolution focused on the following four issues: to call for more recognition of the Latgalian language and to increase its use in different sociolinguistic domains, particularly in education and the media; to officially approve the Latgalian flag; to officially celebrate the Day of the Latgalian Congress; and to work towards the decentralisation of Latvia, for example with regard to economic development. The main idea was to maintain, protect, and develop Latgalian language and cultural uniqueness as a value within the Latvian nation.

For the time being, however, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) continue to play the most important role in supporting Latgalian. Among the most important institutions is the LVLKSA, established in 2000, which addresses methodological issues and publishes general information on Latgalian. It has organised the *Vosoruošona* (Summer Life) summer camps for teachers and students, speech and other competitions, and works for the maintenance of Latgalian, its cultural heritage, and its inclusion in schools. Since 2015, the N. Rancāns Award for Excellent Educators of Latgale has been awarded by the Latgalian Cultural Society (LKB) in cooperation with the RTA and municipalities in Latgale. The LKB continues to be one of the most relevant leaders of Latgalian sociopolitical developments.

*Latgolys Saeima* (The “Parliament of Latgale”) is an NGO founded in 2011 that also supports diverse initiatives. Its main aims are to protect the rights and interests of Latgalian, support a modern education system, promote the decentralisation of the state power, and to care about the economic development of the region. The Student Centre of Latgale (LgSC) has from 1990 until 1994 and again since 2005 developed and coordinated Latgalian cultural, economic, and social activities. Its largest projects include a summer school for secondary school students, a festival of Latgalian music, a monthly evening of folklore and Latgalian traditions, and the Latgalian Cultural Newspaper *LaKuGa*. *LaKuGa* is the main Latgalian digital medium, which includes information on events, competitions, films, exhibitions, and books as well as interviews and other texts on Latgalian and Latgale. It also offers some online materials for learning Latgalian, ways how to test one’s literacy in Latgalian, and video materials. Moreover, it is worth noting that the LgSC has organised events for learning the Latgalian written language outside Latgale, most notably in Riga.

Latgalian presence in the mass media has increased throughout the past decades. An important publication is the bimonthly magazine *A12 – ceļš uz Latgali* (A12 – Road to Latgale, since 2012). Among important online resources is the virtual gallery, which



describes important concepts in the Latgalian cultural space (in Latgalian, Latvian, and English; <http://futureofmuseums.eu/en/virtual-gallery/rezekne-higher-education-institution-collections/>). The only radio station exclusively broadcasting in Latgalian is *Latgolys Radeja* (Latgalian Radio), which started as a general radio station but was taken over by the Catholic Church and now broadcasts a mix of religious content, news, and music. Some other local radio stations also have occasional contributions in Latgalian. Latgale Regional Television has frequent contributions in Latgalian. On Latvian State TV and radio, there are regular Latgalian broadcasts of various types amounting to a few hours per week. Since 2012, National Latvian Radio 1 has featured the weekly 30-minute-programme *Kolnasāta* (Hillhome) on various topics. The programme *Cytaidi latviskais* (Differently Latvian; <http://lv.lsm.lv/lv/dokumentalie/cytaidi-latviskais/>) is a documentary series with subtitles in Standard Latvian (since 2013). The Latvian public media portal LSM features a small section with texts in Latgalian.

There are many initiatives for developing Latgalian cultural events by NGOs, small local organisations, and individual Latgalian enthusiasts. For instance, the oldest Latgalian festival called *Upeitis Uobeļduorzs* on Latgalian poetry and songs has taken place since 2002. A number of theatre groups throughout Latgale regularly perform plays in Latgalian, and also the number of literary publications has increased over the past few decades, in particular poetry and short prose. Since 2007, the NGO *Latgolys Producentu Grupa* has supported Latgalian cultural projects (in particular music; <http://www.muzyka.lv/>), and has organised the annual cultural award *Boņuks* since 2008.

During the last decade, Latgalian has also become quite strong in music, including a number of bands of different genres—not only folklore, but also pop, rap, and heavy metal.

There are several museums in the region dedicated to language, literature, and culture, including the *Kolnasāta* museum in Sakstagals, the Bread Museum in Aglona, and the Museum of Latgalian Cultural history in Rēzekne.

All in all, these examples show that there is a lively scene of Latgalian cultural activities, which, in addition to their main purposes, always carry a function as places where the Latgalian language can be used, developed in a creative way, and acquired. One of the most recent culturally important events was the 2019 film shot in Latgalian about multilingual and multicultural Latgale in the times of first independent Latvia (1930s) and throughout the changing political regimes (*Pijsāta pi upis*, 2019). An important documentary on the history and political issues of Latgalian culture and language is *Laiki. Cylvāki. Volūda* (2020).

## 2 Pre-school education

- target group** Pre-school education in Latvia covers children from 1.5 or 2 years up to the age of 7. From the age of 5 years, children have the obligation to attend the last 2 years of pre-school provided by general kindergartens or primary schools as part of compulsory primary education. The aim is to ensure that children have the necessary skills for entering the first year of primary education. Besides aspects of the individual mental, physical and social development of the children, pre-school programmes are also explicitly aimed at ensuring they acquire basic skills in Latvian as the official language.
- structure** Pre-school education in Latvia is organised by the Ministry of Education and Science, and examples of pre-school curricula are created by the Ministry. Since 2018, there have been four curricula for pre-school children, namely general pre-school curricula, curricula for minorities, curricula for children with special needs, and curricula for minority children with special needs.
- legislation** Pre-school legislation is included in the main education laws. The 1999 General Education Law states that each municipality has to provide access to pre-school education. Section 20 (1) 6 of this law stipulates that the acquisition of basic skills in Latvian is one of the aims of pre-school education. Since 2020, amendments to the General Education Law state that pre-school education institutions should support the acquisition of Latvian, including by learners for whom it is not their mother tongue.
- language use** There are pre-school establishments both for children with Latvian as L1 and for the children of minorities, that is, predominantly Russian-speaking children. Since one of the aims of pre-school education is to guarantee pupils have basic Latvian language skills before they enter primary education, the focus of language acquisition in the latter is on Latvian. Yet, parents or pre-school authorities may take initiatives to organise and finance other language elements, including Latgalian. These

may be financed by municipalities or by the parents themselves. In schools with Latvian as L1 or with minority programmes, this is often directed towards an early acquisition of English as part of afternoon activities. In some minority schools such as the Polish school in Rēzekne, Polish lessons are organised in the adjacent kindergarten for preparing children for this school. In the same way, some Latgalian elements, such as songs and games, can be included.

In Latgale, there are several kindergartens where Latgalian is used on the basis of such initiatives. Teaching Latgalian is oriented towards both children from Latgalian-speaking families and towards other children, sometimes as afternoon activities. Today, in about 4% of all kindergartens in Latvia, Latgalian is used as a language of communication among children. Some kindergartens that have been particularly active in the introduction of Latgalian are located in Nautrēni, Makašāni, and Gaigalava in the district of Rēzekne, in Baltinava and Upīte in the district of Balvi, and in Galēni in the district of Preiļi and Preiļi town. Due to the unsystematic ad-hoc basis of a considerable amount of Latgalian teaching, more detailed figures are not available.

An important aspect in this context is that individual efforts depend entirely on the initiative and attitudes of individual schools and parents. Besides successful efforts by some enthusiasts, attitudes are also reported where parents are looked down on by pre-school teachers for having raised their children in Latgalian instead of in Latvian, and where kindergartens see their main aim in eradicating “wrong” Latgalian elements from the children’s Latvian. Recently, however, such attitudes have become less frequent.

**teaching  
materials**

The number of teaching materials available for Latgalian for any level of education is low. Where materials exist, they have been developed by teachers or academics working in Latgalian education. The digital ABC book *Skreineite* by linguists Juris Cibulis and Lidija Leikuma (2014) aims at developing literacy

in Latgalian. The materials are intended for studying the Latgalian written language without prior knowledge, including a primer, a workbook, and instructional materials for teachers. These materials were developed with support from the Latvian Language Agency.

If pre-school teachers decide to use Latgalian, they usually use books of Latgalian songs, folklore, and traditional stories. During recent years, mostly two genres of books have been published in Latgalian for pre-school children: songs (textbooks with CD), such as *Sirdsgunteņa* (Heartfire) (Guntra Kuzmina-Jukna 2017), *Zalta puče* (Golden Flower) (Ieva Saliete, 2018) and colouring books with texts (fiction, fairy tales, and crosswords) in Latgalian, such as *Munā sātā* (In my home) (Ilze Sperga, Rudīte Kaša, 2013), *Duraceņš īsmīdynoj kieneņa meitu* (The fool makes the King's daughter laugh), *Bruoli i lelais tuorps* (Brothers and the big worm) (Aņss Ataols Bērzenš, 2015, 2019), and *Meikuleņš īpazeist omotus* (Meikuleņš gets to know handicrafts) (Meldra Gailāne, 2018). There are also poetry books for children; for example, *Otkon giunu sapynus* (Again catching dreams), *Lobuo i nalobuo* (Good and not good) (Ineta Atpile-Jugane, 2015, 2019), and *Vuss apleik maņ, munā volūdā skaņ* (All around me it sounds in my language) (Ontons Slišāns, 2018). These books for children are quite diverse, but there are no materials for teaching Latgalian to pre-school children.

#### statistics

In the school year 2020/2021, there were 640 pre-schools in Latvia, of which 80 kindergartens were in Latgale. The biggest share of them was located in the cities and districts of Daugavpils and Rēzekne. About 77% of these pre-school establishments used mostly Latvian, about 8% used a minority language (mostly Russian), and about 15% used Latvian and a minority language (Latvian Ministry of Education and Science, personal communication, December 2020).

These data are characteristic for the attitude towards languages in Latvia in three aspects. Firstly, they show that language issues are central for educational policymakers. Sec-

only, there is a distinction between groups using Latvian, groups using a minority language, and groups that use two languages, with a dominance of policy efforts to increase the number of children attending institutions in Latvian rather than in other languages, since Russian as a home language still stands very strong in many families and automatic acquisition of Latvian through society is not guaranteed. Thirdly, there is no official information on Latgalian. Yet, this does not mean that Latgalian is never used (although usage is low)—different questionnaires or student theses report that Latgalian is unofficially used by children and (rarely) also by pre-schools teachers in communication with children.

### 3 Primary education

**target group** Primary education in Latvia consists of nine school years in primary and lower secondary schools, which are compulsory for children from the age of 7.

**structure** The curriculum of Latvian primary schools is determined in the National Basic Education Standard. The content of the final national examinations is supervised by the Ministry of Education and Science.

Besides schools for children of the Latvian-speaking majority, some programmes are dedicated specifically to the needs of the linguistic minorities. They aim to provide the opportunity for these minorities to acquire sufficient knowledge of Latvian in order to integrate successfully into Latvian society, while at the same time maintaining and developing their specific cultural and linguistic identity. Languages for which these programmes exist are Russian, Belarusian, Polish, Ukrainian, Estonian, Lithuanian, Hebrew, and for the Roma population.

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The individual schools decide on how to plan this type of multilingual education, including which subjects should be taught in the minority language, which subjects should be taught bilingually (i.e. in Latvian and in the minority language), and which subjects should be taught in Latvian. The aim is to conduct a gradual transition from the minority language to Latvian as the MI.

The 2018 amendments to the education laws demand that starting in the school year 2019/20, at least 50% of the subjects in grades 1–6 have to be taught in Latvian, with an increase to at least 80% in grades 7–9. In practice, this means that in grades 7–9, the minority language is only used in minority language and literature lessons. The final exams at the end of grade 9 are now held entirely in Latvian. In addition, a programme for the “Latgalian written language” has been developed, which allows schools all over Latvia to offer Latgalian as an elective.

**legislation** Primary-school legislation is included in the main educational laws. In Section 30 (5) of the 1999 General Education Law, it is stated that the basic educational programmes may be combined with programmes for ethnic minorities, including their native language, and content related to their identities and to their integration into Latvian society.

**language use** In the school year 2020/21, there were a total of 688 schools in Latvia (including private schools). Of these, 359 were primary schools including 37 primary minority schools. In Latgale, 54 schools offer primary education from grades 1 to 9. The MI in these schools is mostly Latvian, but there is a considerable number of Russian minority schools, such as in Rēzekne, Daugavpils, Ludza, and Krāslava, one Polish primary school, and two Polish secondary schools (in Krāslava, Rēzekne, and Daugavpils). A survey conducted by the Ministry of Education and Science among schools in 2020 revealed that students used Russian in addition to Latvian (in about half of the schools in Latvia), English, and—as the language mentioned in third place—Latgalian in communication with each other on everyday issues.

For several years, classes in the Latgalian language and literature have, on the initiative of individual schools, been organised for students from grades 4 to 9 (most often grades 4–6) as an optional subject or in study groups outside the regular curriculum. The subject names vary between “Regional Studies”, “Latgalian Cultural History”, and “Latgalian Literature”; students from grades 4 to 9 study together in one group. Twenty-one schools have reported that they provide opportunities to learn Latgalian after the regular lessons.

The Latgalian language is also used by teachers in individual lessons within the Latvian language and literature curriculum. On an informal level, Latgalian is used as a MI and between lessons by teachers and pupils according to individual choice. Such use of Latgalian depends on both the Latgalian skills of teachers and pupils and on their attitudes towards Latgalian,



which range from very positive to very negative. Prestige patterns that consider Latgalian to be “bad” Latvian prevail in many places among both teachers and parents. There are no data specifying the amount of this type of use of Latgalian.

In addition, folklore, singing, and dancing groups exist in almost every primary school in the region, which encourage pupils to maintain Latgalian culture and linguistic heritage through their activities. Twenty-four schools report using Latgalian in other after-school activities and events.

#### teaching materials

Teaching materials in Latgalian are mainly developed by individual teachers and a few activist organisations. In addition, a number of scholars have worked on the development of teaching materials for Latgalian in the past decade. One of the newest digital sets of teaching materials is *Olūtenš* (The Spring) (Lidija Leikuma, Veronika Dundure, Anna Vulāne, 2017) for fourth grade students. For first grade pupils, the primer *Skreineite* is available (see Chapter 2). Two editions of classical literature have been translated into Latgalian, which may also be used as material for developing literacy in Latgalian: Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* (translated into Latgalian by Evika Muizniece and Iveta Senkāne, 2016, including games on the story) and Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *Le Petit Prince* (2018, translated into Latgalian by Evika Muizniece).

During the past years, a number of educational materials of an interdisciplinary character have been published; these are useful for studying the language as well as learning about the culture, history, geography, and economy of Latgale (e.g. a DVD from different parishes with interviews in Latgalian). A CD of Latgalian fairytales (2010, produced by *Latgales Producentu Grupa*) is available for free online:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcZQzZg3lrg3saXotkemHfA/search?query=Latgal%C4%AB%C5%A1u%20puosokys>.

A bilingual Latvian-Latgalian children's book that is suitable for children in grades 1 to 4 is *Gostūs pi Boņuka. Stuosti bērniem par Latgolū* (Visiting Boņuks. Stories about Latgale for Children)

by Ilga Šuplinska, Līga Rundāne, and Aelita Andrejeva (2017). There are also several multimedia projects, such as *Dūmoj ar komotim* (Think with comma) where popular people of Latgale read Latgalian poetry and literature (*Latgolys aiļu i prozys skreine* (Box of Latgalian Poetry and Prose)), and an online course for learning Latgalian made by *LaKuGa*. All these materials are available on YouTube.

For the beginner's level (especially for acquiring vocabulary), 20 video activities have been developed since 2015, with support from the association *Bruoli un Muosys* (Brothers and Sisters), the Latvian State's Culture Capital Foundation (VKKF), the National Forests of Latvia, and the Regional Development Agency for Latgale. These videos are available online (<https://www.lakuga.lv/>).

Moreover, CDs with audio games are available for developing language skills (*Audio SPIELIS breineigom strēčom*, 2012, by LaKuGa), as are the computer game *Īsapazeisim* (by Ilga Šuplinska, RTA 2017) that is suitable for primary and secondary school pupils (<http://iepazisimies.rta.lv/>) and the virtual museum materials "Future of museums" (2014, <http://futureofmuseums.eu/lg/games/>). The blog *LATGALISKI – NU!!* created by Nicole Nau aims to enhance awareness about learning Latgalian (<https://ltgnui.com/>). This page also provides an overview of teaching materials for Latgalian, offers discussions on teaching and learning Latgalian, and helps to acquire literacy in Latgalian through diverse tasks and games.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Education and Science initiated the national TV project *Tava klase* (Your class) with video lessons in different subjects for primary school students. As part of it, 14 TV lessons were created for the subjects "Latgalian Written Language" and "Regional Studies" ([https://www.tavaklase.lv/programma/re\\_visi\\_latgaliesu-valoda\\_006/](https://www.tavaklase.lv/programma/re_visi_latgaliesu-valoda_006/); [https://www.tavaklase.lv/programma/sc\\_05-06\\_novadmaciba\\_004\\_surd/](https://www.tavaklase.lv/programma/sc_05-06_novadmaciba_004_surd/)).

**statistics**

In Latvia, there are 322 primary schools with Latvian as the MI, of which 41 are located in Latgale (Latvian Ministry of Education and Science, personal communication, December 29, 2020). There are 33 bilingual Russian-Latvian schools and 12 of those are in Latgale. There are also seven other minority primary schools (Belarusian, Polish, German and French), of which three Polish schools are in Latgale.

About 20 schools offer Latgalian as an optional subject, and about 10–20 students choose this subject every year (i.e. between 200 and 350 pupils study Latgalian at primary schools every year). In the study year 2021/2022 Latgalian was taught in 17 primary schools as a 36 h long course for about 200 pupils (Ministry of Education and Science, personal communication, 2021).

For the first time it was financed by *Valsts Kultūrkapitāla fonds* (State Culture Capital Foundation (SCCF)) and *SIA Latvijas Valsts meži* (Joint Stock Company Latvia's State Forests). Latgalian teaching mostly started in the year 2000, with a few enthusiasts offering Latgalian classes already in the 1990s (in Nautrēni, Baltinava, and Tilža).

Since 2001, approximately 130–150 pupils from about 30 schools in Latgale have participated annually in two competitions, namely a speech competition in which pupils perform poetry, a story, or similar in Latgalian, and the so-called “Olympics of Latgalian language, literature, and cultural history”. Since 2013, the “Olympics” have received state financial support as a national-level competition, which gives pupils extra credits when applying for higher education.

## 4 Secondary education

**target group** Secondary education in Latvia consists of 3 years that follow 9 years of compulsory primary education, that is, for students aged 15/16-18/19 years. The 2018 amendments to the Laws on Education and General Education introduce a gradual transition to instruction primarily in Latvian in secondary schools by 2021/22. All general subjects in grades 10–12 in general education are now taught in Latvian. Subjects related to minority languages, literature, culture, and history will continue to be taught as mother tongues in seven of the minority languages, for which also primary school programmes are funded (Russian, Polish, Belarusian, Ukrainian, Estonian, Lithuanian, and Hebrew).

**structure** Secondary education comprises general secondary education, vocational secondary education, and vocational education. In general education, the new competency-based content (see Chapter 1, education system p.16) will be introduced gradually by 2023.

**legislation** According to the 1999 General Education Law, Section 42 (2):

A general secondary education programme of the corresponding direction may be combined with the educational programme for ethnic minorities, including therein the native language of the ethnic minority, the educational content related to the identity of ethnic minorities and the integration of ethnic minorities into Latvian society.

There is no specific mention of Latgalian in the educational law.

Although upper-secondary education is not compulsory, the proportion of the population with completed upper secondary education is above the OECD average. The following eight subjects are compulsory for all programmes: Latvian language and literature, two foreign languages, mathematics, history, sports, economics, and applied informatics. Students have to choose three subjects that they study at a more advanced level.

In this way, about 30% of the time is used for individual choices, namely, the subjects studied at a higher level and as electives (including Latgalian and Regional Studies).

**language use** Starting from the school year 2022/23, all subjects in upper-secondary general education (grades 10–12) except foreign languages will be taught in Latvian. Young persons from ethnic minorities will continue to learn their language, literature, and subjects related to their culture and history in the respective minority language. For the first time, Latgalian is currently officially recognised and allowed to be offered as part of the curriculum. In 2020/21, the first schools started to implement this opportunity. Latgalian and Regional Studies (part of which is Latgalian) can be chosen as electives along the lines of minority language studies.

Folklore, singing, and dancing groups exist in almost every secondary school in Latgale, in which the regional culture and linguistic heritage are maintained through their activities. Latgalian is also used in secondary schools by teachers and students both during and between classes on an ad-hoc basis, depending on language skills and attitudes.

**teaching materials** Teaching materials in Latgalian are rare and usually based on individual efforts by teachers, scholars, and writers. In recent years, however, texts in Latgalian have been included in teaching Latgalian or about Latgalian. Examples are the “Latgalian CV” (online version in Latgalian, Latvian, and English; <http://books.rta.lv/index.php/RTA/catalog/book/13>), the “Lingvoterritorial Dictionary of Latgale” (in Latgalian, Latvian, Russian, and English), and the popular scientific version of the dictionary particularly suitable for secondary pupils (<http://futureofmuseums.eu/lv/virtual-gallery/rezekne-higher-education-institution-collections/subcollections/?collection=rezekne-higher-education-institution>). All of these resources were prepared at RTA.

A linguistic map including Latgalian is available at [www.lingvistiskakarte.lv](http://www.lingvistiskakarte.lv), and also the Latgalistika page (<https://www.lu.lv/filol/latgalistika/index.htm>) with publications about Latgalian issues can be used for pupils. Latgalian language corpora are rich sources of material for vocabulary development, such as the *Latgalian language corpus* ([http://hipilatlit.ru.lv/bonito/run.cgi/first\\_form](http://hipilatlit.ru.lv/bonito/run.cgi/first_form)) and the multimodal corpus *Reiti*, which mirrors language use of the Latgalian diaspora in Siberia ([https://reiti.rta.lv/about\\_project.html](https://reiti.rta.lv/about_project.html)). A collection of Latgalian songs from Siberia (*Sibīrijas latviešu dziesmas*) is available on CD and DVD, together with text prints, the history of the speakers, and other materials (Ilmārs Mežs (ed.), 2009). Three CDs with almost 100 different Latvian varieties, including many sub-dialects of Latgalian, can also be a resource for studying Latgalian (*Viena zeme, vieni ļaudis, nav vienāda valodiņa. Latviešu valodas izlokšņu paraugi* (The same land, the same people, not the same language. Examples of Latvian dialects), Lidija Leikuma (ed.), 2015). There are also modern music projects emphasising the linguistic diversity of Latvian in different regions, including Latgale, such as Kārlis Kazāks' CD ("13 i 1") with songs with written subtitles in 13 dialects (<https://muzikaspasaule.lv/home/others/5750-karla-kazaka-dziesmas-latviesu-valodas-izloksnes-apkopotas-albuma-13-i-1>).

Textbooks specifically designed for teaching Latgalian in secondary schools do not exist yet. At present, a textbook with contemporary Latgalian texts is being prepared for students aged 14–18. In practice, any teaching materials mentioned above, including for primary education, are used.

#### **statistics**

There are 329 secondary schools (including professional secondary schools) in Latvia, of which 62 are located in Latgale (Ministry of Education and Science, personal communication, 2020). These include minority schools such as the Polish schools in Daugavpils and Rēzekne, and Russian schools in all regional centres of Latgale.

In the study year 2021/2022 Latgalian is taught in four secondary schools of Latgale as a 36 h long course for about 30 students (Ministry of Education and Science, personal communication, 2021). For the first time it was financed by *Valsts Kultūrkapitāla fonds* (State Culture Capital Foundation) and *SIA Latvijas Valsts meži* (Joint Stock Company Latvia's State Forests).

The number of students who learn Latgalian as an optional subject or as a part of Regional Studies changes every year, and there are no statistics. Notable secondary schools that have a tradition of organised school or after-school groups for learning Latgalian are Baltinava Secondary School, Nautrēni Secondary School, and the Rēzekne State Polish Grammar School. Students from about 15–20 secondary schools (i.e. about one third of the secondary schools in Latgale) have participated in the annual “Olympics of Latgalian language, literature, and cultural history” since 2001. The Latgalian summer camp *Atzolys* (Growth) organised by the Latgalian Student Centre (now LgSC) took place in different parts of Latgale every year from 2004 until 2014. It attracted around 30 students aged between 15 and 19 years annually. Since 2015, there have been summer camps of different sizes for young people organised by different organisations, such as by the Latgalian Cultural Association in cooperation with RTA (*Sūpluok* 2018). The participants enjoy classes about various aspects of the Latgalian language, literature, and cultural history.

## 5 Vocational education

**target group** Vocational education and training programmes are one possibility of continuing education after the compulsory 9 years of primary education. The aim is to prepare adolescents for a specific profession from both a practical and a theoretical angle.

**structure** Subjects in vocational educational institutions cover the following: general education; humanities and art; social sciences, business and law; physical sciences, mathematics and IT; engineering and manufacturing; agriculture; health and welfare; and services (e.g. personal services such as hotel, restaurant, and beauty treatment, transport services, environmental protection, and civil and military defence). Most of these programmes last for 3 or 4 years. Compulsory subjects include Latvian, foreign language(s), mathematics, applied informatics, history, basics of business, and sports. The ratio of theory and practice in vocational secondary programmes is 50/50. Institutions with a certain minimum number of students may gain the title of “vocational education competence centre”.

Vocational education in Latvia consists of the following branches: vocational initial education, vocational secondary education, and higher vocational education. Higher vocational education is divided into two levels: college education and a second level. As with any other education in Latvia, the general rules are set by the Ministry of Education and Science. Local governments cooperate in the development and implementation of educational programmes. Programmes and institutions for vocational education are currently being modernised with the aim of making vocational education more solid and more attractive.

**legislation** The 2001 Vocational Education Law regulates vocational education in Latvia. This law does not mention languages.

**language use** The dominant language in vocational education is Latvian. There is very little use of Latgalian in vocational education. At the vocational secondary schools for trade in the region



of Latgale, some exercises are occasionally carried out in Latgalian, including conducting practical professional tasks. Furthermore, vocational schools focusing on music or art in Latgale use Latgalian for expressing Latgalian identity in their works (e.g. in the description of installations or paintings). In addition, Latgalian is occasionally used in informal ways in and outside the classrooms by teachers and students according to individual preferences.

**teaching  
materials**

There are no specific teaching materials for vocational education in Latgalian. There are, however, numerous materials in Latgalian used in musical vocational education, including books of songs and diverse editions of folklore (books and CDs). Almost all counties and parishes in Latgale have not only collected and published materials to transmit authentic music traditions but also to create contemporary interpretations (e.g. the music group “Tautumeitas”, <http://www.tautumeitas.lv/>).

**statistics**

In Latvia, there are about 30 vocational secondary schools, including sport, music, and art schools, of which about 10 are in Latgale. There are no data on the number of lessons or the number of students involved in vocational education that include classes or exercises in Latgalian.

## 6 Higher education

**structure** In the region of Latgale, there are two higher education institutions, namely the Daugavpils University, founded in 1952, and RTA (until 2015 Rēzeknes Augstskola / Rēzekne University College), founded in 1993.

**legislation** In Latvia, state institutions of higher education are autonomous, but largely financed and supervised by the Ministry of Education and Science. Higher education is regulated by the 1995 Law on Institutions of Higher Education. Study programmes in state institutions of higher education have to be carried out in Latvian, with the exception of courses on foreign languages and cultures and of specific courses for international students. The question of whether this implies that Latgalian as a historical variety of Latvian may be used in teaching has not officially been answered.

### language use

The use of Latgalian in formal contexts or lectures is very low and largely limited to courses dealing with Latgalian issues. Since 1991, Latgalian has been taught as an optional language course for students of Latvian language and literature at the Rēzekne branch of the University of Latvia. These courses were maintained when the branch was transformed into Rēzekne University College in 1993 as part of the professional programme in Latvian language and literature. From these, the current academic bachelor's and master's programmes in philology and in history were developed. Until 2019, RTA was therefore the only higher education institution in Latvia in which the Latgalian literary language, the history of the Latgalian written language, Latgalian literature, and Latgalian Folklore were compulsory topics of Latvian philology. Since 2017, Latgalian language and literature has also been part of the curricula for teachers of Latvian language and literature at RTA. Moreover, Latgalian literature and the Latgalian written language have been offered as optional courses at the Daugavpils University since 1994 and at the University of Latvia since 1989. Latgalian was also taught for a short time (2003–2004) at St Petersburg State University in Russia.

There is no specific teacher training for Latgalian since the language only recently started to play a role in official school contexts. Training for teachers of Latvian language and literature at RTA includes content on Latgalian. This occurs sporadically all over Latvia, with a focus on Rēzekne as highlighted in the previous paragraphs. Besides the specific courses, Latgalian is addressed in the context of Latvian literature; the use of the Latgalian language in teacher training courses ultimately depends on individual teachers and students. Similarly, this applies to in-service teacher training as part of the training of teachers of Latvian language and literature.

In some institutions in Latgale, Latgalian is frequently used by staff and students in informal contexts. In general academic life, Latgalian is used and contextualised on various occasions. Latgalian has frequently been used as a working language in Rēzekne since 1995. In September 2008, St Petersburg State University, the University of Latvia, and Rēzekne University College organised the first international academic conference on Latgalian Studies, which aimed to bring together researchers working on Latgalian language and culture from countries of Western and Eastern Europe in the context of studies of minority languages and cultures. This conference was the starting point of a regular exchange of research in Latgalistics; conferences have taken place almost annually at institutions of Baltic studies—in Rēzekne, Riga, St Petersburg, Vilnius, Poznań, and Greifswald. The latest of these conferences took place in 2017 in Rēzekne and in 2019 in Riga.

#### **statistics**

Between 1993 and 2019, about 250 students passed the 12 ECTS study cycle on Latgalian language, literature and folklore as part of the bachelor's degrees in Latvian philology or history or of the teachers' programme on Latvian language and literature in Rēzekne. Many of these graduates today work in the media, museums, libraries, and schools in Latgale.

In the winter schools of Achinski Pedagogical College in Siberia, about 80 participants, among them many future teachers, have

attended Latgalian language courses. There are no other data on how many students have included explicit Latgalian elements in their teacher training programmes, in Latvia or elsewhere.

## 7 Adult education

### structure and language courses

Adult education courses that include Latgalian exist on a low scale. The summer school *Vosoruošona* (Summer Life) has taken place at different locations in Latgale since 2000 (with some years of interruption). It is financed by the Latvian Cultural Capital Foundation and the Ministry of Education and Science, and also receives support from the local municipalities. For one week, about 20 to 30 participants (mostly teachers of Latvian language and literature or of cultural history) are introduced to various aspects of Latgalian language, literature, and folklore, the sociolinguistic situation of Latgalian, and traditional handicrafts. Lectures are given by staff from higher education institutions in Rēzekne, Daugavpils, and Riga, sometimes also from abroad, as well as by musicians, writers, specialists in ceramics, and other artists.

Since 2005, there have been several courses at different places in Latgale for professionals who use Latgalian in their work, such as for journalists, musicians, or the staff of radio and TV stations. In virtual space, the Latgalian Student Centre (now LgSC) and its online media portal *LaKuGa* have been particularly active in promoting and teaching Latgalian. Multimodal courses with video lectures and exercises are available with open access on YouTube and other platforms. In Riga, the private Language House (*Valodu māja*) offers different language courses (English and Scandinavian languages) including Latgalian. Snorre Karkkonen-Svensson, one of the Language House founders, in cooperation with Māra Mortuzāne-Muravska, is currently working on a modern Latgalian textbook for beginners, which will also include explanations in English and Russian.

### language use

In the aforementioned courses, Latgalian is used throughout the lessons, with the exception of some lecturers who have insufficient command of the Latgalian language.

**statistics** Normally, approximately 5–15 persons participate in adult courses in Latgalian (data obtained from the Latgalian Student Centre). They are held at irregular intervals. There are no statistics about learners on internet platforms.

## 8 Educational research

Until the restoration of Latvian independence in 1991, research on Latgalian was conducted on a limited level by exiled Latgalians. Seven editions of the publication *Acta Latgalica* were published in Munich between 1965 and 1981.

This tradition was resumed after Latvian independence with six more editions published in Rēzekne between 1993 and 2005. Topics included the history of Latgalian language and culture, including education in Latgale, such as the role of Latgalian in the Latvian curricula and in relation to minority education or methodological issues. Since the early 2000s, several research projects have dealt with educational issues such as Zeile's Latgalian Cultural History (2006), or publications of the state teachers' institutes in Daugavpils and Rēzekne.

Latgalian education in Siberia was investigated in 2004 during an expedition by the University of Latvia in Riga and St Petersburg State University. Based on field trips to Siberia, a new corpus of Latgalian in the diaspora (audio and video recordings and transcripts) has been in development at RTA since 2018. The Latvian Language Institute at the University of Latvia regularly conducts research on Latgalian folklore and language. Furthermore, the Daugavpils University Institute of Comparative Studies is carrying out research on Latgale as a border region.

Since its creation in 1993, RTA (*until 2015*: Rēzeknes Augstskola, i.e. University College) has conducted research on Latgalian. Its Department of Philology (today as part of the Faculty of Humanities, Education and Design) has conducted research on cultural, linguistic, and educational processes in Latgale, Latvia, and Europe, and has organised international conferences, seminars, folkloristic and ethnolinguistic/sociolinguistic expeditions, and academic projects. The RTA's Institute of Regional Studies (REGI) coordinates research on Latgale including history, linguistics, cultural studies (folklore and literature), and social sciences, and has become one of the internationally most visible players in sociolinguistics from Latvia. Latgalian has also

been the focus of the State Research Programme on “Latvian Language” in which RTA has organised field trips with students and scholars, the *Latgalistica* conferences, conference proceedings, the journal *Via Latgalica*, and seven DVDs with authentic oral recordings of Latgalian from different areas of Latgale (e.g. *Vīļakys ticiejumi* (Beliefs from Vīļaka), 2016) since 1997.

Research on Latgalian, including education, reached a new level with the large-scale Ethnolinguistic Survey of Latgale *Valodas Austrumlatvijā* (Languages in Eastern Latvia), conducted between 2006 and 2009 by the Department of Philology of Rēzekne University College in cooperation with the *Centre d’Etudes Linguistiques pour l’Europe* (Centre of Linguistic Research for Europe), particularly with Gabriele Iannàccaro and Vittorio Dell’Aquila. The survey investigated the ethnolinguistic situation of Latgale in 89 territorial units based on more than 6,000 responses, including answers to questions on the use of Latgalian in education. Fundamental for understanding structures of Latgalian and educational purposes is the book *A Short Grammar of Latgalian* by Nicole Nau (2011). The sociolinguistic situation of Latgalian during the period 2010–2015 is discussed by Pošeiko (2017). Discourses on Latgalian issues, particularly on orthography, are discussed in Šuplinska (2016). Most recently, the entries “Latgalian Written Language” by Lidija Leikuma and Aleksejs Andronovs (2020) and the discussion about the status of Latgalian (Nicole Nau, 2021) in the new online National Encyclopaedia provide overviews of research on Latgalian.

Since 2010, some fundamental research projects have been conducted on Latgalian. The ESF project “Cultural Linguistic and Socioeconomic Aspects of Territorial Identity in the Development of the Latgale Region” (2009–2012) resulted in the *Lingvoterritorial Dictionary of Latgale* (in Latgalian, Latvian, English, and Russian), which incorporates information on important places, persons, and cultural objects, an encyclopaedia for school children (*Ausmas zeme*) as well as in popular scientific publications such as the “Latgalian CV” and a leaflet



on languages and cultural objects in Rēzekne. All of these publications are relevant for Latgalian language and cultural studies at schools and may be used for enhancing the economic development of the region through their use in tourism. As part of the project, systematic linguistic landscape research was also conducted, with Latgalian being analysed in different contexts and functions, including its economic value and for touristic purposes. This work has been taken further by Solvita Pošeiko (2015) in the only doctoral thesis on the linguistic landscape in Latvia so far.

Another important project conducted by RTA in cooperation with Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas (Lithuania) and the University of Latvia in Riga (2007–2013, <http://hipilatit.ru.lv/lv/>) resulted in two language corpora, namely, *MuLa*, the first corpus of contemporary Latgalian (<http://www.korpuss.lv/id/MuLa>), and a bilingual corpus of Lithuanian and Latvian, as well as a trilingual Lithuanian-Latvian-Latgalian Dictionary. Since 2020, RTA has been updating this corpus and creating a new oral speech corpus (financially supported by the State Research Programme “Digital Humanities in Latvia” 2020–2022). In the State Research Programme period 2018–2021, theoretical research on Latgalian has been taking place at the Latvian Language Institute of the University of Latvia. As one result of this project, a digital spell-checker for Latgalian is being developed (<https://va.hugo.lv/proofing>). *Multilingualism in the Baltic states. Societal Discourses and Contact Phenomena* (2019) also includes chapters on Latgalian. Furthermore, the cross-border project Virtual Past–Museum Future (2012–2014, <http://futureofmuseums.eu/lv>) created a virtual gallery and an online game based on the Lingvoterritorial Dictionary. It has been converted into a virtual gallery and an educational computer game about Latgale. In 2015, the project received the European Union Cross-Border Award for Innovative Methodology.

Research at the European level included participation in a project about languages in Open Educational Resources (“Enhance Teaching and Learning of Less Used Languages through OER/

OEP”, 2014–2016) as part of the Lifelong Education Programme of the European Commission. The project created courses for educators, teaching them the practical use of digital tools for designing tasks for learning less-used languages. Materials in Latgalian that were developed can be used to explain to students the use of Latgalian in its written and spoken forms in various functions; at the same time, data have been used to analyse discourses and educational practices on Latgalian.

For the academic development of Latgalian, the *Latgalian Written Language Subcommission* is also of importance, which discusses questions of the codification and standardisation of Latgalian. This is important not least with regard to the development of educational terminology in the context of standards for Latgalian in primary and secondary education.

In individual studies, Latgalian has in recent years been researched in various fields, including regards and attitudes towards the language, its economic value, discourses and emblematic use, or its role in changing linguistic landscapes. Projects have included the creation of corpora and databases on linguistic landscapes. Academic articles have been published in Latvian, Latgalian, English, German, and Russian. Important papers from the *Latgalistica* conferences are available, such as in the *Via Latgalica journal* (2008–2018). International publications on Latgalian include papers on language maintenance and its status as a minority language (Lazdiņa & Marten, 2012), on societal discourses on Latgalian (Marten & Lazdiņa, 2016), and on Latgalian in education (Lazdiņa & Marten, 2019; Marten & Lazdiņa, 2021). Publications on language learning (including Latgalian) analyse current tendencies in the education reforms in Latvia including Latgalian (Lazdiņa, 2015b, 2017), whereas Lazdiņa (2015a) discusses perceptions of Latgalian. An overview of the situation of Latgalistics is given in Šuplinska and Leikuma (2012, 2018), and Latgalian family names are discussed by Mežs (2017).

Finally, an interactive application called “The Development of Latvian Linguistics: an Informative Educational Electronic Map” (<http://www.lingvistiskakarte.lv/info/1>) has been developed as part of studying the Latvian language and the history of linguistics. About 20 entries are related to questions of Latgalian Studies such as publications, linguists, or scientific events.

In spite of these projects and publications on Latgale as a region and on Latgalian education, research is, however, by far not sufficient, both in quantity and regarding the fields covered. Suggestions for further research include a close observation of discourses and steps towards more official recognition, the use and intergenerational transmission of Latgalian in the context of multilingual practices, and not least the impact of the recent moderate inclusion of Latgalian issues—including language—in educational curricula on language practices, discourses, and intergenerational transmission.

## 9 Prospects

More than a decade after the publication of the first edition of this dossier in 2009, an evaluation of the situation of Latgalian—both its general status and its role in education—still largely depends on the point of reference. On the one hand, important steps forward have been achieved, and compared to the long tradition of ignoring or even prohibiting Latgalian, its situation has improved considerably. On the other hand, Latgalian is still far from being officially recognised, its use in society at large and in education is still very limited, and support remains unstable. Initiatives in education, research, and culture continue to depend on devoted enthusiasts, and political steps are moderate and slow.

In a 2006–2009 survey of languages in Latgale, 54.4% of the respondents answered that it is necessary, very important, or quite important to have a command of Latgalian in order to feel like a full-fledged member of society in Latgale, whereas the other half said that it is not important (Šuplinska & Lazdiņa, 2009). The survey thereby showed that the population in Latgale is divided on the role of Latgalian in contemporary society. Only 28.7% of the respondents claimed that it was impossible to have a successful life in their local environment without knowledge of Latgalian, whereas 50.5% and 66.7% stated that it was impossible to live without Russian or Latvian, respectively. At the time, 43.3% supported the idea that Latgalian should gain status as a regional official language, whereas 29.8% were against this idea, and a remarkable 26.9% had no opinion on this matter. Today, Latgalian still does not have regional official status, in spite of more inclusion in educational programmes, increased prestige in society, and more confident use in the speech community.

Language continues to be a “hot potato” in Latvian politics. Linguistic nationalism still favours Standard Latvian and constructs a threat towards ethnic Latvians by migrants from other European countries and other parts of the world, as well as by

the increasing number of transnational individuals who live in Latvia, many of whom (but by far not all) acquire Latvian. Voices that do not see a contradiction between supporting Latvian as the main language of inclusion in society and opening up spaces for other languages and multilingual practices (including, but not limited to Latgalian, Russian, and English) are only slowly gaining ground. Even though the Latvian-Russian linguistic divide of society has become less dominant, with the younger generation of minorities having better competence in Latvian than ever before, the main topic of language policies and discourses remains the consolidation of Latvian. Together with scepticism towards an improvement of skills and an increased use of English in international contexts, these discourses continue to construct an often ungrounded threat to the societal position of Latvian. In this climate, Latgalian has been able to achieve more attention and recognition, but it is still not considered to be of particular importance in society. In this sense, Latgalian continues to be in an intermediate position in which it is sometimes sided with Standard Latvian as part of Latvian ethnicity and identity—not least in opposition to other languages and ethnicities—while at other times it continues to be considered an obstacle to linguistic consolidation.

Another topic is that new speakers of Latgalian—namely, young speakers who grow up with a linguistic continuum between Standard Latvian and Latgalian as well as learners who acquire the language of their ancestors as adults—use the language in ways less distinct from Standard Latvian. These practices raise debates in the Latgalian community about the “right” variety of Latgalian. Similarly, the officially sanctioned orthography is still revoked by some speakers who feel that it is too remote from their local variety.

In education, the inclusion of more multilingual realities in general and Latgalian in particular—albeit on a low level and as electives or afternoon activities—raises some hopes for a continuation of the slow path towards language maintenance. Through the means taken throughout the past decade, chances

of intergenerational transmission, societal acceptance of Latgalian, and of literacy in Latgalian have certainly improved. Yet, Latgalian competes with other subjects in education. For the time being, there is no automatism in introducing Latgalian and a lot continues to depend on individual decisions by teachers, school directors, parents, or educational authorities. Tendencies to unite small rural schools in Latgale for more administrative efficiency, even if generally a reasonable way of cutting state expenses, always pose a threat to additional educational offers. Even if the official recognition of Latgalian allows it to be included in official educational trajectories, which is a milestone in the history of Latvian language and educational policies, it still remains to be seen if these measures will have a sustainable impact on the use of Latgalian.

An important further step would be to award regional official language status to Latgalian. This might not only result in more positive attitudes towards Latgalian in society, by parents, pupils, and teachers, but also increase the necessity to acquire spoken and, in particular, written Latgalian. A serious language policy change in this direction is, however, far from being on the agenda. The future of Latgalian will highly depend on an increase in language awareness among the speakers of Latgalian (and other inhabitants of Latgale), particularly among families with children who have the potential for intergenerational language transmission. The language attitudes of teachers and parents will also be essential for choosing Latgalian language courses at school. A moderate indication of a change of societal discourses and further political steps towards more recognition of Latgalian (as well as of other regional varieties) may be found in the debates on regional identity and regional language varieties, which started as part of the initiative launched by Latvian President Levits in 2020.

Overall, the past decade has therefore seen an increase in tolerance towards multilingualism and diversity in Latvian society. This has also had its impact on Latgalian, particularly regarding its presence in official and semi-official contexts, as

well as in policies, and opportunities in education. Maintenance of Latgalian continues to take place in dedicated families, but there is still a decline in speaker numbers with more older people dying than young competent and regular speakers being raised. The diglossic situation with little use of Latgalian in more official or prestigious functions largely remains. Latvian continues to be the main topic of language policies and discourses, and Latgalian would still require considerably more attention and support to have a safe future, both in society and in the education system.

## 10 Summary of statistics

**Table 2**

*Primary schools in Latvia and in Latgale*

	<b>Latvia</b>	<b>Of these in Latgale</b>
<b>Schools with Latvian as MI</b>	322	41
<b>Bilingual Latvian-Russian schools:</b>	33	12
<b>Other minority schools</b>	7 (Belarusian, Polish, German, and French)	3 (Polish)

*Note.* Data collected from the Ministry of Education and Science (personal communication, December 29, 2020).

Because of the traditional perception of Latgalian as part of Latvian and the resulting inclusion of elements of Latgalian in the teaching of Latvian language and literature, only few data are available on the number of pupils and students who learn something about Latgalian culture or the Latgalian language, and at which level. It can be assumed that most pupils and students in Latgale and a considerable number in other parts of Latvia come into contact with some aspects of Latgalian language, literature, or culture at some point during their studies of Latvian language and literature.

The information presented in Table 3 therefore refers only to the explicit teaching of Latgalian in its own right.



Table 3

*Student numbers in courses explicitly dedicated to Latgalian*

<b>Pre-school</b>	There are no data on pupil numbers, but some Latgalian elements are incorporated in informal ways in many kindergartens in Latgale. Data for pre-schools from the Ministry of Education and Science (personal communication, December 2020).
<b>Primary School</b>	About 20 schools in Latgale offer Latgalian as an optional subject, and usually about 10–20 students in each of these choose Latgalian every year, that is, between 200 and 350 students study Latgalian at primary schools. New elective programmes have been established in recent years, which contextualise Latgalian as part of Regional Studies or teach the Latgalian written language. In the study year 2021/2022 there are 17 primary schools in Latgale region where Latgalian is taught to about 200 children. Between 130–150 pupils from about 30 schools in Latgale participate annually in the Olympics of Latgalian language, literature, and cultural history (since 2001) and speech performances in Latgalian. Data for primary schools from the Ministry of Education and Science (personal communication, December 2020).
<b>Secondary School</b>	New programmes have been established recently that offer Latgalian as part of the electives Regional Studies and Latgalian Written Language. In the study year 2021/2022 there are 4 secondary schools in Latgale region where Latgalian is taught for about 30 students. About 50 students annually from 15–20 secondary schools participate in the Olympics of Latgalian language, literature, and cultural history (since 2001). Between 2004 and 2014, about 30 students participated annually in the Latgalian summer camp Atzolys (Growth). In 2018, the Latgalian summer camp “Sūpluok” took place (32 participants between the age of 10 and 14). Data for secondary schools from the Ministry of Education and Science (personal communication, December 2020).
<b>Vocational Education</b>	No explicit courses in Latgalian, some institutions with practical exercises in Latgalian. Information from personal experiences and networks by the authors.
<b>Adult Education</b>	Some summer schools in Latgale and Riga, irregular language training for adults. Information from authors' personal experiences and networks.
<b>Higher Education</b>	About 250 students enrolled in the study module on Latgalian language, literature and folklore at RTA (1993–2019). Occasional Latgalian courses as part of Latvian studies at the Daugavpils University and University of Latvia. Data for higher education from RTA, Daugavpils University, and the University of Latvia (personal communication, December 2020).



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**Latgališu volūdys, literatūrys I kulturviesturis školuoțuoju  
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W <http://www.taiseitslatgola.lv/>

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**Upītes Kultūrtelpa** (Upīte Culture Space)

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## Other websites on minority languages

- Mercator European Research Centre** [www.mercator-research.eu](http://www.mercator-research.eu)  
Homepage of the Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning. The website contains the Regional Dossier series, a database of experts, a bibliography, information on current activities, and many links to relevant websites.
- Mercator Network** [www.mercator-network.eu](http://www.mercator-network.eu)  
General site of the Mercator European Network of Language Diversity Centres. It gives information about the network and leads you to the homepages of the network partners.
- European Commission** <http://ec.europa.eu/languages>  
The website of the European Commission gives information about the EU's support for language diversity.
- Council of Europe** <http://conventions.coe.int>  
*European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* (1992) and *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* (1995). European Treaty Series 148 and 157, Strasbourg.
- Eurydice** <http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice>  
Eurydice is the information network on education in Europe. The site provides information on all European education systems and education policies.
- European Parliament Committee – supporting analyses database** <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/home>  
In this database, you will find research papers produced by the European Parliament's research service. A study for the CULT Committee, conducted by the Mercator European Research Centre, was published in 2017: *Minority Languages and Education: Best Practices and Pitfalls*.

**NPLD**

**<http://www.npld.eu/>**

The Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity (NPLD) is a European-wide network working in the field of language policy & planning for Constitutional, Regional and Small-State Languages (CRSS) across Europe.

**FUEN**

**<https://www.fuen.org/>**

The Federal Union of European Nationalities is the umbrella organisation of the autochthonous, national minorities/ethnic groups in Europe and represents the interests of European minorities at the regional, national and European levels.

**ELEN**

**<https://elen.ngo/>**

The European Language Equality Network (ELEN) is a non-governmental organisation that has as its goal the promotion and protection of European lesser-used (i.e. regional, minority, endangered, indigenous, co-official, and smaller national) languages, to work towards linguistic equality for these languages, and multilingualism, under the broader framework of human rights, and to be a voice for the speakers of these languages at all levels.

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