

Latvia

National report on the Beijing Declaration
and Platform of Action adopted at the
Fourth World Conference on Women and
on the results of the 23rd Special Session
of the General Assembly

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CDPC - Centre for Disease Prevention and Control

CSB - Central Statistical Bureau

EC – European Commission

EIGE – European Institute for Gender Equality

ESFMDP - European Support Fund for the Most Deprived Persons

EU – European Union

MoES - Ministry of Education and Science

NCE – National Centre for Education

NGO – non-governmental organisation

OECD - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals

SEA - State Employment Agency

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SECTION ONE. PRIORITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND SETBACKS FROM 2014 TO 2018

Equal rights and opportunities for women and men are a fundamental human right, stipulated by Article 91 of the Constitution of The Republic of Latvia (*Satversme*) with the following emphasis: "all humans in Latvia are equal before the law and the courts. Human rights are being exercised without any discrimination whatsoever". Latvia has joined several international documents in the field of human rights and gender equality, confirming the readiness of Latvia as a democratic country to respect and adhere to the said principles. Simultaneously, the laws of various sectors regulate prohibition of discrimination or discrimination based on gender, for example such legislative enactments as the Labour Law [*Darba likums*], the Act on Education [*Izglītības likums*], the Social Security Act [*Par sociālo drošību*], the Law on the Unemployed and Support for Job Seekers [*Bezdarbnieku un darba meklētāju atbalsta likums*], Act on the Youth [*Jaunatnes likums*], the Sports Act [*Sporta likums*], the Law on Scientific Activities [*Zinātniskās darbības likums*], the Judicial Power Act [*Par tiesu varu*], the Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination against Natural Persons Who Perform Economic Activities [*Fizisko personu, kuras veic saimniecisko darbību, diskriminācijas aizlieguma likums*], the Administrative Procedure Law [*Administratīvā procesa likums*], etc.

Latvia has chosen an integrated approach to gender equality, which means that gender equality should be seen as a horizontal principle that fits into all sectorial policies defined in the country (defence, foreign affairs, economics, finances, internal affairs, education, science, culture, welfare, traffic, justice, health, environment, regional development and farming policies) at all stages of their development and implementation, involving all stakeholders and cooperation partners. The Ministry of Welfare [*Labklājības ministrija*] (hereinafter referred to as MW), as the responsible national regulatory authority, develops national policy to implement an integrated approach to gender issues.

In evaluating past achievements and positive developments in ensuring women's equal rights and opportunities, one should recognise that the gender equality situation has improved, with the following valid examples:

- the level of economic activity and employment of women is gradually increasing, and women are increasingly taking up higher positions, especially in the public sector;
- a high level of education for women, as well as their learning and study achievements;
- health indicators in the field of sexual and reproductive health are gradually improving, increasing the average life expectancy of women;
- the risk of poverty has decreased significantly during the recent years, especially for households with children. This can be explained by a substantial increase in state-ensured monetary support for families with children and children located in out-of-home care, especially during the recent years;
- There are changes apparent in public attitudes and understanding of the need to ensure equal opportunities for women and men. There has been a significant increase in male involvement in family and household responsibilities, as evidenced by the increasing tendency to exercise the rights to take paternity leave and parental leave for males, and public opinion polls on gender attitudes to public opinion show a greater awareness;
- In recent years, significant changes have been made in Latvian legislation to reduce domestic violence and violence against women, as well as educational work has been carried out in order to raise awareness of domestic violence issues amongst the specialists involved, as well as to strengthen inter-institutional co-operation to effectively address violence. As a result, tolerance to violence has decreased. During the reporting period, Latvia signed the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence on 18 May 2016.

Details of the policy framework and progress in the above-mentioned aspects (areas) are provided in Section 2 of the report.

Although gender equality principles have been enshrined in the legislation and the situation has improved, a number of challenges still remain in ensuring women's rights and opportunities in practice. As the most substantial, the following shall be mentioned:

- Explicit gender segregation in the choice of vocational education and higher education study programs/thematic directions, which indicates the need to continue work on the integration of the principle of equal rights and opportunities in the educational curriculum of general and vocational studies, strengthening the capacity and role of educational institutions and teachers, and career guidance specialists;
- Sectoral labour market segregation is explicit in some sectors and there are pronounced payment gaps between genders. The factors determining the pay gap between women and men, which would allow for more targeted planning of policy measures and/or changes in the regulatory framework, were underestimated, insufficiently assessed and studied;
- Women at retirement age are at high risk of poverty;
- Problems of accessing care services for children and elderly family members, which hinder women from entering the labour market and staying longer in the labour market.
- A different understanding in respect to the integration of the principles of equal rights and opportunities for women and men in public administration, responsible for policy making, implementation and assessment, which are partially, caused by the lack of regular training and methodological and consultative support to the public administration officials.
- While gender equality and gender mainstreaming are taken into account in various policy planning documents of the various sectors, the policies implemented are not sufficiently targeted at solving the social, economic and other aspects of inequalities of women or men, addressing the inequalities or specific needs;
- Continuing the professional development of professionals, involved in prevention of domestic violence, particularly in women, particularly in strengthening inter-institutional cooperation in the recognition of violence, prevention and mitigation of its causes and effects. Further discussions on the promotion of the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.
- There is no permanent public funding granted for the development of gender equality policies. The measures are being implemented within the framework of the “existing approved budget”, attracting funding within the framework of the budget allocated by various foreign financial assistance or activities specified by other public administration institutions. Consequently, measures to strengthen the capacity of professionals involved in policy-making, as well as to raise public awareness and awareness, are taking place in an irregular and non-systematic manner.
- During the reporting period, Latvia expressed its political commitment to preventing violence against women by signing, on May 18, 2016 the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. The ratification of the said Convention is now pending.

Simultaneously, new challenges are being constantly identified, particularly in respect to multiple forms of discrimination, such as the rights of women with disabilities, attributing and linking discriminatory attitudes towards women and persons with disabilities in general, or research on the spread of violence outside the family, including in the social media, or at work.

In Latvia, policy priorities and measures in the medium term, founding them on an integrated approach, are defined by the Plan for the Promotion of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men for 2018–2020. **The objective of the Plan is to promote integrated, purposeful and**

efficient implementation of sectorial policies thus facilitating the implementation of equal rights and opportunities for women and men into practice. Five directions of activities are set for achieving the goal:

- 1) promotion of economic independence and equal opportunities for women and men in the labour market;
- 2) promotion of equal educational opportunities for boys and girls, men and women;
- 3) reduction of the prevalence of gender-based violence;
- 4) strengthening the capacity of authorities in gender equality issues;
- 5) Educating the public in gender equality issues.

The plan sets out measures to ensure implementation of the equality principles enshrined in the legislation as much as possible in practice, for example, by promoting the involvement of men in childcare and family responsibilities, identifying the main causes of the gender pay gap in certain sectors, promoting zero tolerance against violence against women. Range of measures is aimed at promotion of comprehensive understanding of the fundamental principles of equality between women and men among experts of authorities involved in education, labour and economic policy. A number of measures have also been identified through which it is planned to investigate, in depth, and link these sectors up with gender equality issues existent within them. In order to raise public awareness of gender issues, work on public awareness of policy outcomes will be stepped up, while simultaneously raising the profile of gender equality in daily life. The measures of the Plan, especially those affecting employment, education and gender-based violence, shall take into account the aspect of ensuring equal opportunities and rights for women and men with disability.¹

¹ Concluding remarks on the implementation of the Convention in the Republic of Latvia ([Recommendations](http://www.lm.gov.lv/upload/invaliditate/rekomendacijas_lv_fin_060218.pdf))
http://www.lm.gov.lv/upload/invaliditate/rekomendacijas_lv_fin_060218.pdf

SECTION TWO. PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN OF THE PLATFORM FOR ACTION SINCE 2014

EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF WOMEN

Policy/Legislative Framework

The current policy planning document in the field of education is the Education Development Guidelines from 2014 to 2020. The said document defines the basic principles, goals and directions of action of education development policies for the next seven years. The goal of the Education Development Guidelines from 2014 to 2020 is to define the highest goal of the educational policy: development of high-quality and inclusive education for personal development and human well-being, as well as sustainable growth of the country.

Considering the fact that education processes directly affect everybody in all age groups, these guidelines cover all types and levels of education. In addition to the document "Education Development Guidelines from 2014 to 2020", the plan "Career Education Implementation Plan from 2015 to 2020" has also been developed. The purpose of this document, in its turn, is to provide a comprehensive and accessible career guidance system in all the state and municipality founded (public) general education institutions, including special education institutions, and vocational education institutions.

"Education Development Guidelines from 2014 to 2020" foresee the design of competence-based curriculum at all levels of education, starting at the age of one and a half in pre-school, to grade 12 in the secondary school, and with the inclusion of new competences, such as human security. Accordingly, new educational standards were developed at all levels of general education. As regards implementation of the general curriculum in Classes 1, 4 and 7, these will enter into force on September 1, 2020, as for Classes 2, 5 and 8, these will enter into force on September 2, 2021, and implementation of general curriculum in the grades 3, 6 and 9 will enter into force on September 1, 2022. The regulatory framework for the evaluation of education, information, training materials and tools, as well as the methods and procedures for learning, defines the following: tools or methods used in the learning process do not call for cruelty and physical or emotional violence; they do not contain the propaganda of pornography, humiliation, fornication and addictive habits.

Situation Description

In Latvia, in general, the trend in education is that women are more educated than men, and the difference is particularly pronounced among those with higher education – in year 2015, the proportion of women among graduates was 65.4%, while in year 2018 – 63.5%. Simultaneously, women are less represented in scientific and technical disciplines at all levels of education, this is in line with the current labour market situation, where labour market segregation by gender is observed. The tertiary education system is characterized by both horizontal segregation by fields of study and vertical segregation among academic staff – the higher the academic position or post, the smaller the proportion of women in the respective position. For example, in terms of segregation across different domains, 92% of 2017/2018 academic-year graduates in the field of education, and 92% in fields of health and social care are women, while 74% of graduates in engineering, manufacturing and construction are men. In the dynamics, the proportion of women in the education and humanities sectors has the tendency to increase, but the proportion of women in science, mathematics and information technology has remained almost unchanged (ref. to Table No. 1).

Table No. 1

**Share of female STEM and Education graduates at
Tertiary level 2015/16 and 2016/17 years²**

Thematic group	2015/16		2016/17	
	No of students	Women %	No of students	Women %
Education	5 610	90,6	5 676	91,06
STEM	6 777	32,06	6 995	31,76

Source: MoES

Although the education system in Latvia offers a wide variety of educational opportunities and programs, some of the young people who have started their education are faced with various problems in the educational process, such as socio-economic, socialization issues, including peer violence, etc., and leave school without education appropriate to their age. Low levels of education contribute to young people's vulnerability in the labour market and increase their risk of discrimination.

Gender equality aspects in curriculum

The State pre-school education guidelines and The State basic education standard both define that the planned results to be achieved by the pupil are complex, they reveal the final result within the activity, include the necessary knowledge, understanding and basic skills in the fields of study. The achievements in social and civic study field, when the pupil finishes grade 9, for example, indicate that the pupil shall explain how respect for human equality and the principles of equality promotes the creation and maintenance of people-to-people relationships; develops and maintains respectful relationships with different people; respects the needs, interests and values of others when making decisions.

Simultaneously, in the State curriculum framework defined in pre-school and basic education, the issues of justice, health and safety include the context of values, critical thinking, knowledge and understanding of human rights, including the prevention and combating human trafficking, socio-emotional development, equal opportunities irrespective of gender, favourable mutual communication and cooperation, conflict resolution, the human body, its functioning, health preservation and promotion, skills and healthy lifestyle habits.

The curriculum is based on an algorithm – human rights and freedoms, recognizing risks related to personal and public health and safety in respective situations, and making decisions in favour of safe and active behaviour. Health – related competences, safety – related competences and physical competences are mainly developed by the pupils in the study fields of Health and physical activity, Natural Sciences, Social and Civic Sciences, and Technology. For example, in Social and Civic study field, it is envisaged that, within the program, the pupil shall understand the value of human life and dignity; shall be able to show respect and personal responsibility for the safety and well-being of one's own and others. The curriculum also addresses topics such as reduction of prostitution and human trafficking. At the same time, various teaching and support materials are being developed for implementation of improved curriculum content.

² <https://www.izm.gov.lv/lv/publikacijas-un-statistika/statistika-par-izglitiba/statistika-par-augstako-izglitiba>

In order to ensure the development of STEM [*Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics*] and in order to strengthen students' interests, including the interests and competence of girls in STEM areas, various infrastructure modernization measures have been taken. It is planned that proportion of colleges with fully upgraded STEM study program environment of first level professional higher education will reach 61%.

For the purposeful use of resources of higher education institutions, by means of promoting the territorial spatial concentration of the STEM study and scientific work and the modernization of the material and technical base, higher education institutions are determined, which shall concentrate resources for implementation of STEM programs, including regional higher education institutions.

Simultaneously, the offer of curriculum of interest education in general education institutions is expanded, for example, in 338 general education institutions, support is being provided for introduction of new forms of learning in order to develop individual approach to both learning content, and out-of-school activities, in the following areas: STEM, including technical creativity and the environment, language training, cultural education and creative industries, multidisciplinary fields and sports.

Professional development of teachers

In 2017, the National Centre for Education [*Valsts izglītības satura centrs*] in cooperation with Riga Stradins University implemented a program for professional competence development of educators "Current human security issues and their implementation" (36academic hours) with the aim of improving professional competence of teachers/administrators of general education institutions on various issues – life as a value, ability to cooperate and participate, to identify and evaluate situations, different threats and risks, on how to participate in creating a safe and healthy living environment. In the framework of the program, more precisely, in the content area "Social security", issues of economic security were included (including risks related to unregistered employment) and information safety (including media content as a means of influencing, and compliance with the idea of national state and public benefit). Overall, 906 teachers attended the course.

In 2017, the National Centre for Education [*Valsts izglītības satura centrs*] organised various workshops for pedagogues on topics such as human trafficking, providing information on human trafficking in Latvia, as well as information on support and assistance available to victims of trafficking, support in criminal proceedings and social rehabilitation.

Likewise, the National Centre for Education [*Valsts izglītības satura centrs*] organised an assembly session of the Advisory Board for Publishers of Learning Resources [*Mācību literatūras izdevēju konsultatīvā padome*], where the issues related to improvement of professional competence of authors of the teaching and learning aids and artists were discussed with the publishers, including on various issues related to gender equality, rule of law, safe travelling and mitigation of risks for human trafficking.

Career education

In Latvia, a career development support system has been established, which is implemented in Latvian municipal education institutions and Vocational Education Competence Centres [*Profesionālās izglītības kompetences centri*].

Classes lead by career counsellors or other specialists emphasize equal opportunities in the labour market, learners learn to recognize signs of gender segregation, and acquire new information on equal opportunities for both genders in the labour market. Career counsellors are required to coordinate career guidance measures at schools, and to ensure access to information for career guidance, group/individual counselling for learners, and to collaborate with partners in career development issues.

Samples of plans of career guidance measures in general education, special education and vocational education have been developed, as well as methodological materials. These materials help to break stereotypes about occupations and the labour market in general, to develop young people's way of thinking and attitudes towards gender roles. They also contain role-plays where pupils get into the roles of the representatives of diverse social groups, conduct self-studies, identify the resources required for life and careers, and learn to take career decisions which are not restricted by gender. While carrying out surveys with pupils, it was found that school youngsters had noticed signs of gender inequality and segregation in society, such as different pay for women and men, socially shared stereotypes about professions, and job advertisements which set limits to gender equality in real life.

Within the framework of promoting access to career education and professional competence development of educators, professional competence development program "Pedagogue – career counsellor" was implemented, in which 195 teachers participated in 2014 (of those 160 were women), 207 teachers in 2015 (of those 150 were women), 126 teachers in 2016 (of those 105 were women), 195 teachers in 2017 (of those 160 were women) and 35 teachers in 2018 (of those 25 were women).

Support for girls of Romani nationality in education

Within the framework of promotion of inclusion of children, and among them, girls, of Romani nationality in the educational process, regular monitoring of Romani nationality pupils is being carried out. In cooperation between the Ministry of Education and Science [*Izglītības un zinātnes ministrija*] and the Ministry of Culture [*Kultūras ministrija*], support measures for teacher assistants of Romani nationality are being ensured by means of Romani mediators. It involves organising regular meetings with representatives of education authorities and parents of Romani children.

According to the monitoring data compiled by the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), in the academic year 2016/2017, 900 Romani pupils studied in 144 general education institutions (which make up 20% of the total number of educational institutions). Among them were 501 girls. The number of Romani pupils who did not acquire compulsory primary education, decreased significantly. In the 2015/2016 academic year, 7.5% of the total number of Romani pupils did not acquire compulsory primary education (in major cases, families left the country or pupils reached the age of 18).

WOMEN AND HEALTH

Policy/Legislative Framework

The framework and priorities for public health policy are set out in the Public Health Guidelines [*Sabiedrības veselības pamatnostādnes*] for the period 2014 - 2020. Aim of the policy is to increase the number of years of healthy life of the population and to prevent premature death. It is envisioned to increase the number of healthy life years by 3 years until 2020 (reaching the age of 57 for men and 60 for women), as well to reduce the indicator of number of potentially lost life years by 11%. In order to achieve the said goal, by means of attracting co-financing from EU funds, activities are planned to reduce the spread of risk factors for non-infectious diseases, to improve health of pregnant women and children, to reduce the impact of traumatism and environmental risks on public health, to promote high-quality health care system and access to equal health services for residents of the country. Specific objectives and activities to implement the guidelines are outlined in several of the plans described below.

On June 6, 2018, the Cabinet of Ministers [*Ministru kabinets*] approved the "Mother and Child Health Improvement Plan for 2018-2020" [*Mātes un bērna veselības uzlabošanas plāns 2018. – 2020. gadam*], which aims to improve the situation in maternal and child health through health promotion and disease prevention, as well as by promotion of early diagnosis, timely treatment and medical rehabilitation. The said plan aims to improve care for pregnant women, women who are giving birth, who are within 6 weeks after having given birth, as well as for newborns, by improving the availability of outpatient services for children and by improving access to, as well as quality of, healthcare for chronic paediatric patients. With the support of the European Social Fund, it is planned to establish a single national level program for educating young people in the field of sexual and reproductive health to be implemented in municipalities, by developing handbook for health education providers and additional materials for youth information, as well as training for at least 119 health education providers and young people in 119 municipalities. In order to reduce maternal mortality from indirect causes, the said Plan also includes measures aimed at ensuring that women at risk of social exclusion are provided with state-funded contraception services from the year 2020 and onwards. At the same time, it is planned to provide social workers with knowledge about the possibilities of receiving these services for women at social risk. For this purpose, it is planned to develop appropriate informative materials for social workers.

In order to improve the quality of pregnant women care, maternity care and neonatal care, thus reducing maternal and child mortality in the country, changes have been made to the legal provisions for maternity assistance. The new regulation stipulates that monitoring of the quality of work in maternity assistance during pregnancy, childbirth and postpartum, including in the medical treatment institution in accordance with its work profile and scope, must include procedures for assessment of pregnancy and childbirth risks, and for actions in such cases, as well as for certain actions in case of complications, emergency situations and problematic cases in obstetrics. Quality requirements include regular training of pregnant women and professional development of the staff involved in the care of the obstetrician, including coordinated action in critical situations for life and health. It is also envisaged to investigate more precisely the risk factors for pregnancy, to update and clarify examinations to be carried out during pregnancy, childbirth and postnatal period, as well as the procedures for implementation of the said examinations, and stricter requirements for outpatient maternity and child-birth equipment.

From January 2018 and onwards, the patient's contribution to health care services related to pregnancy and postnatal care, is not to be paid by the respective birth-giving woman for the period of up to 70 days after birth (previously – up to 42 days).

In order to limit the spread of HIV infection, STIs, hepatitis B (VHB) and hepatitis C (VHC), by reducing the risk of infection in the population, and by promoting timely diagnosis and treatment, the Cabinet of Ministers [*Ministru kabinets*] approved the "Proliferation Reduction

Action Plan for HIV Infection, Sexually Transmitted Infections, B and C hepatitis for period from 2018 – 2020" (the HIV Plan). Various lines of action are being envisioned to reach the target set in the HIV Plan: raising public and professional awareness of transmissions for infectious diseases and measures to prevent the spread and transmission of infectious diseases; improving access to early diagnosis and treatment of HIV, hepatitis B and C and STIs, including, by promoting the participation of family doctors in the diagnosis of these diseases; as well as measures to reduce the risk of HIV infection from mother to child.

The HIV Plan also includes specific measures for groups at risk of infection with these diseases. This also applies to persons incarcerated in prison. At the same time, within the framework of the HIV Plan, the availability of harm reduction measures in the country is expanded, for example, in 2019 and onwards annually by ensuring funds in the amount of EUR 47,556 from the state budget in support of operations of a mobile unit. The activities and work carried out by mobile units is one of the most effective ways to implement harm reduction programs. Within the scope of a mobile unit, it is possible to receive medical worker consultations on prevention of HIV and other blood-borne infectious diseases and tuberculosis, on their treatment options, as well as to receive social worker consultations on available forms of social support, to perform HIV, hepatitis and STIs exams. From there, customers are being motivated to refer to further healthcare processes. The service includes issue of secure syringes, exchange of needles and their disposal, and dispensing of condoms. In turn, sex workers within the HIV Plan are expected to raise awareness of the availability of preventive measures and treatment options for, and in cases of, HIV, hepatitis B and C and STIs. At the same time, it is planned to provide for work of a team of specialists, family doctors, infectologists, and gynaecologists with women at risk of HIV and VHC infection. With the support of the European Social Fund (ESF), the HIV Plan envisions to organize campaigns on sexual and reproductive health issues for the Latvian population within the reproductive age, including adolescents and young people. These campaigns would explain contraception and HIV/AIDS, STIs, as well as their prevention issues. At the same time, it is planned to improve professional competence of about 1,500 teachers, including on how to communicate with pupils about health education issues in the field in general and vocational education. In turn, in order to improve the skills of social workers working with families and children working with HIV, hepatitis B and C, and those at risk of STIs infections, the HIV Plan aims to train 100 social workers and medical personnel of child crisis centres.

In addition to that, and in order to reduce the risk of infections to pregnant women and in order to prevent influenza-induced maternal mortality, all pregnant women in Latvia will receive 100% influenza vaccination from the state budget from autumn 2019 and onwards.

In year 2014, the National Network of Health Promoting Schools [*Nacionālais Veselību veicinošo skolu tīkls*] was established, renewing the movement of health promotion in Latvian schools. Currently, 103 educational institutions are working within the network.

Since year 2009, a cancer screening program has been implemented. The program includes a centrally organized preventive screening of cervical cancer in women aged from 25 to 70 (once every three years, after receipt of an invitation letter) and a breast cancer prevention test for women aged from 50 to 69 (once every two years, after receipt of an invitation letter). The preventive program also includes preventive screening for intestinal cancer, for women and men aged 50 to 74, which is not organized centrally. In addition, a reform called the "green corridor" for faster diagnosis and more successful treatment of oncological diseases was launched in 2016, but with effect from 1 January 2018, all locales of oncological diseases have been included in the "green corridor", leading to the payment of all tests and medical advice needed to diagnose all locale malignancies.

Situation Description

In 2016, healthy life years in Latvia reached 52.3 years for men and 54.9 years for women.³ Compared to 2014, life expectancy for men has increased to 69.8 years in 2017 and to 79.6 years for women. At the same time, the ratio of life expectancy between genders has remained unchanged – women live nearly 10 years longer than men.⁴

Self-evaluation of people's health and their attitude towards their health are important information for identifying the public health situation. The data of the 2016 survey of health habits of Latvian residents carried out by Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (CDPC) [*Slimību profilakses un kontroles centrs*] show that there are differences in health self-evaluation between the sexes. 62.6% of men and 53.5% of women, respectively, consider their state of health to be good and quite good, and 7.9% of men and 11.8%, respectively, consider their state of health as somewhat bad and bad.

According to the control data compiled by Eurostat on unsatisfied health care needs in 2011, 20.4% of Latvian men and 23.3% of Latvian women report that they have not received health care when it was needed. The three main reasons for not receiving health care are the far too long distance to medical care facility, too high expenses or too long lines for health services – 13.7% of Latvian men and 17.9% of Latvian women point to these problems.

Human resources are an important indicator of national health assessment, which indicates the overall capacity of the industry. In 2017, there were about 34.6 doctors per 10,000 inhabitants in Latvia (number of doctors without dentists, trainees and residents), of which 9.0 family doctors and 43.7 nurses (nurses with average professional, first level professional higher education) per 10 000 inhabitants.⁵ This number has not changed since 2014. According to World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines, this number is not sufficient. The availability of gynaecologists and obstetricians is also an important indicator of the critical situation in maternal and child health issues. In 2017, there were 1.8 doctors – gynaecologists incl. maternity specialists in Latvia per 10,000 inhabitants in (2.0 in 2014). Distribution at regional level is also uneven – the highest number of specialists is in Riga – capital city - region⁶.

The most common cause of mortality in Latvia is non-infectious diseases – cardiovascular diseases (CVDs). In 2017, the number of deaths from CVDs account for 56% of all deaths, but up to 64 years of age – for 34% of all deaths. Mortality due to CVDs is higher among women. In 2017, mortality from blood circulatory system diseases has increased. It reached 877.0 deaths from circulatory diseases per 100,000 inhabitants (for women) and 742.3 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants (for men) (ref. to Table No. 2). The main causes of these diseases are high blood pressure, obesity, high cholesterol, and smoking.

The CDPC regularly conducts research into the habits affecting the health of the Latvian population. The aim of the study is to obtain information on health-related behavioural manifestations of the Latvian population, to reveal public health problems, to show their geographical and socio-demographic distribution, and to get a more accurate picture of health promotion and education tasks in the future. Survey data for 2016 show that the percentage of overweight and obesity in the 15-74-year-old population is high – 54.6% (53.2% for women and 56.2% for men). Prevalence of excess bodily weight is 37.1% for men and 26.4% for women, while the prevalence of obesity is higher for women – 26.8% (compared to 19.1% for men). With increased age, the prevalence of excess weight and obesity also increases. Also, a rather sedentary lifestyle, being one of the many risk factors for non-infectious diseases, has now become a topical

³ Calculations by disease prevention and control centre

⁴ <https://www.csb.gov.lv/lv/statistika/statistikas-temas/iedzivotaji/muza-ilgums/galvenie-raditaji/paredzams-muza-ilgums-pakapeniski-pieaug>

⁵ State Statistics Report "Report on the operation of medical treatment institutions" [*"Pārskats par ārstniecības iestādes darbību"*] CDPC

⁶ State Statistics Report "Report on institution staff" [*"Pārskats par iestādes personālu"*] CDPC

public health issue. The results of the 2016 survey show that at least 4 to 6 times a week physical exercises (at least 30 minutes) are being generally carried out by 12.5% of the informants (13.4% of men and 11.8% of women). Informants' answers to the question of their habits during the leisure time also indicate to a sedentary lifestyle. 43.7% of men and 34.6% of women choose to spend their free time reading or watching TV. Data from a study by the CDPC show that men are more likely to use substances which induce addictions (alcohol, smoking). Results of the 2016 survey show that in total 33.0% of Latvian population aged from 15 to 74 years smoke daily, of which 48.4% are men and significantly less (19.5%) are women. Also, there is significant difference between sexes in relation to consumption of alcohol: 2-3 times a month and more frequently, strong alcoholic beverages are consumed by 43% of men and 14.2% of women, wine is 2-3 times a month and more frequently used by 12.5% of men and 20.8% of women, and beer is used by 58% of men and 17% of women, respectively⁷.

The second most common cause of death in Latvia is malignant tumours. The incidence of malignant tumours in women increases already after the age of 25 in women and after the age of 45 years in men. These numbers are related to sex-specific tumours that are also found in younger age groups (cervical cancer, breast cancer). In 2010, vaccination of 12-year-old girls against the Human Papillomavirus (which causes uterine cancer), was introduced. Among women, the rate of mortality caused by tumours is lower – 263 cases per 100,000 inhabitants in 2017, while among males it reaches 362 cases per 100,000 inhabitants (ref. to Table No. 2). The most common cause of malignant tumours among males is bronchial and lung cancer, as well as other highly common malignancies – gastric, colorectal, pancreatic, and prostate tumours. For women, the most common cause of death in the malignancy group is breast and colorectal malignancy, followed by pancreatic, bronchial and lung malignancies and gastric malignancies.

External causes of death are one of the three main groups of causes of death in the population. External causes of death include deliberate self-harm, transport accidents, drowning and sinking, violence, etc. In general, mortality from external causes of death in Latvia is decreasing, from 2014 to 2017 – by 8%, *id. est.*, from 93.8 per 100,000 inhabitants to 86.4 per 100,000 inhabitants (ref. to Table No. 2). Mortality rates from external causes of death have significant gender-related differences. Mortality in men is approximately three times higher than mortality in women. In year 2017, mortality from external causes of death was 132.9 per 100,000 men and only 46.9 per 100,000 women⁸.

⁷ Research on habits affecting the health of the Latvian population, 2016, CDPC, 2017

⁸ Database of causes of death of Latvian residents. CDPC

Table No. 2

**Mortality by major cause and sex in Latvia
(No of deceased per 100 000 population)⁹**

	2014		2015		2016		2017	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
In total	1356,4	1483,7	1404,1	1450,6	1408,2	1476,7	1432,6	1502,7
Tumours	253,8	353,8	264,7	335,3	259,4	349,8	262,6	362,1
Circulatory system diseases	868,1	732,8	893,8	724,1	874,3	731,9	877,0	742,3
External mortality causes	41,8	155,2	40,7	145,4	42,8	136,8	46,9	132,9

Source: The Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (CDPC)

In order to promote health of the population, Ministry of Health [*Veselības ministrija*] is constantly working on the improvement of the regulatory framework in various areas of public health. In addition to that, and in cooperation with the CDPC, the Ministry of Health [*Veselības ministrija*] constantly informs and educates the public, develops informative materials, info graphics, learning videos, as well as implements other activities for promotion of sexual and reproductive health, especially for young people and students of vocational education institutions (in subjects about abortion, puberty, relationships), develops materials for young parents (for mothers about breastfeeding), on the importance of a healthy diet, physical activities, mental health promotion and prevention of addictions, including professional development activities for professionals and educators on health promotion issues. With the support of ESF funding, 24 municipalities have launched training and practical activities for the population of different age groups, not only to promote the physical activity of the population, but also to strengthen cohesion of the generations.

In order to promote public interest and proliferate information on health care services, the Ministry of Health [*Veselības ministrija*] has implemented public awareness-raising measures in cooperation with NGOs during the reporting period – campaign "Let Yourself Be Healthy" [*"Atļaujies būt vesela"*] with the aim of inviting women to pay attention to their health and reminding them of annual preventive state-paid tests. Women were being informed about the importance of gynaecological, prophylactic examinations, their availability, processes, and promotion of reproductive health in general. In 2015 and 2017, the Ministry of Health [*Veselības ministrija*], in cooperation with CDPC, implemented the campaign "HIV distinguishes not – it may applies to you" [*"HIV nešķiro – tas attiecas arī uz Tevi!"*] with the aim of gradually changing public attitudes towards HIV as the "wrong" disease, explaining HIV prevention issues and the importance of quick-test diagnosis for early diagnosis of the infection. In 2017, the "Safe for the Child" [*"Bērnām droši"*] campaign was carried out, informing young and emerging parents about the prevention of child traumas, and with publishing the informative material for parents on how to make the home safer for the child.

⁹ Database of causes of death of Latvian residents. CDPC

One of the indicators portraying behavioural principles and habits of the population is the number of abortions. The number of artificial abortions in Latvia continues to decrease (from 248 per 1,000 live births in 2014 to 190 per 1,000 in 2017). For 1,000 women of reproductive age (aged 15 – 49), the number of artificial abortions in 2014 was 11.8; 10.9 in 2015; 10.2 in 2016, and only 9.3 in 2017¹⁰. In year 2014, the average age of a mother giving birth to the first child in Latvia, was 26.3 years. Over the last few years, it has been growing (in 2017, it was 27.2). In 2017, the proportion of new-borns to minor women (15 - 17 years) has slightly decreased – 0.8% of new-borns (1.0% in 2014).¹¹.

In 2014, maternal mortality was 14.0 per 100,000 of live births. In 1 out of 3 dead women, the cause of death has directly been related to pregnancy. In 2015, the rate increased 4-fold (55.2 per 100,000 live births), and 8 out of 12 cases of death were directly related to pregnancy. The figure for 2016 decreased by half – to 23.1 per 100,000 live births (5 cases of death in total). There was 1 maternal death case in 2017, which is 4.9 per 100,000 live births, the cause of death being directly related to pregnancy¹².

In Latvia, during the period from 2014 to 2017, a tendency has manifested for the newly-discovered STI cases to gradually decrease (in 2017 94.5 cases per 100 000 inhabitants, of which 77.1 cases of STIs were registered for men, and 109.4 cases form women). However, the prevalence of syphilis in Latvia exceeds the average incidence in the EU/EEA countries, indicating that there is still a lack of knowledge amongst the population, including adolescents and young people, about prevention issues of STIs. Data from CDPC show that in 2017, the newly discovered cases of HIV infection in 100,000 inhabitants in Latvia has kept a similar trend during the last three years. In 2017, the incidence of HIV was 19.1 HIV cases per 100,000 inhabitants. Of these, 65% of HIV-infected people were male, and 35% were female.

Table No. 3

Number of HIV infections per 100,000 populations by sex

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017
Men	25,8	29,1	25,6	27,0
Women	10,3	12,1	12,7	12,4

Source: The Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (CDPC)

In recent years, there has been a tendency for heterosexual sexual contact to be one of the most common HIV pathways (35.3% in 2017). For this reason, there is an increased risk of infection with HIV in women, as well as an increased risk of vertical transmission of HIV infection from a woman to a child. In year 2017, 66 cases of HIV-infected pregnant women and 3 cases of vertical transmission of HIV, were registered. In year 2017, data from CDPC show that still 36.4% of newly diagnosed cases of HIV infection are with an unclear transmission path, suggesting that HIV-infected individuals are stigmatized and do not want to detect the factual causes of infection.

In order to more effectively identify the ways of spreading HIV infection, the involved risk factors, diagnostic and treatment effectiveness, starting from June 1, 2019, HIV/AIDS cases will be provided with the ability to enter their information in the newly established National registry of HIV/AIDS cases (HIV Registry) ["HIV/AIDS gadījumu valsts reģistrs" or "HIV reģistrs"], which

¹⁰ https://www.spkc.gov.lv/upload/Gadagr%C4%81mata/Gadagr%C4%81mata%202017/8_mate_un_berns_2017.docx

¹¹ https://www.spkc.gov.lv/upload/Gadagr%C4%81mata/Gadagr%C4%81mata%202017/8_mate_un_berns_2017.docx

¹² https://www.spkc.gov.lv/upload/Gadagr%C4%81mata/Gadagr%C4%81mata%202017/2_mirstiba_2017.docx

will enable the tracking of each HIV/AIDS case, course and treatment of the disease. In order to improve exchange of information among professionals involved in the care of HIV-infected pregnant women (gynaecologists, obstetricians, neonatologists, infectologists) and in order to ensure the full treatment of HIV-infected pregnant women and prevention of HIV infection in newborns born to HIV-infected mothers. Such information contained in the HIV Registry will help to track the child's state of health in an antenatal and perinatal state and to provide timely and appropriate neonatal health care.

From April 2017, the state budget provides full support for the purchase of infant formulas and additional nutrition infant formulas for HIV-infected mothers in order to reduce the risk of HIV infection in breast milk.

A network of HIV prevention points (HPP) [*HIV profilakses punkti*] is established and operating in Latvia. In 2018, there are 20 HIV prevention points in 16 municipalities. The HIV Prevention Point Network, in collaboration with the CDPC, implements preventive measures in order to limit the spread of HIV, hepatitis B and C, as well as syphilis, and other blood and sexual pathway-transmitted infectious diseases, and tuberculosis, in groups at high risk of infection with these infectious diseases. In 2017, personnel of HPP, NGO specialists, social workers and other involved professionals were trained to provide harm reduction services based on gender differences ("Effective Harm Reduction Services for Women Using/Injecting Drugs" [*"Efektīvi kaitējuma mazināšanas pakalpojumi sievietēm, kuras lieto/injicē narkotikas"*]), which raised issues of female perception/ understanding of health; risks and harm to women; issues related to pregnancy and sexual and reproductive health; sexual and intimate partner violence and violence against women in prisons; issues of women – sex workers; how to reach women who use drugs; issues relating to suggestions on how to improve existing services and create a supportive environment.

WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY

Policy/Legislative Framework

On May 12, 2015, the Cabinet of Ministers [*Ministru kabinets*] approved the "Inclusive Employment Guidelines for period 2015 to 2020" [*"Iekļaujošas nodarbinātības pamatnostādnes 2015. - 2020. gadam"*] which aim at promotion of equal opportunities for everybody in the labour market, regardless of age, gender or disability, and attempt to improve employment opportunities for different groups of the population, such as young people, women, the elderly. Reducing the pay gap between women and men is one of the defined policy objectives.

On November 22, 2013, the Cabinet of Ministers [*Ministru kabinets*] approved "Guidelines for Implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for period 2014 - 2020". Purpose of the said Guidelines is to ensure implementation of the Convention, and to ensure that persons with disabilities are able to exercise their rights and freedoms to a dignified living in an equal manner to others. The Guidelines define four lines of action to promote equal inclusion of people with disabilities in society, one of which is directly aimed at promoting the employment of people with disabilities.

Regulation of the occupational legal relations in Latvia is governed by the Labour Act [*Darba likums*]. In Latvia, the principle of equal pay for work of equal value is incorporated into the Labour Act [*Darba likums*]¹³, which stipulates that the employer is obliged to set equal pay for men and women for the same work or work of equal value. If the employer violates this rule, the employee becomes entitled to claim the remuneration normally paid by the same employer for the same work or work of equal value. The responsible institution for state supervision and control in the field of labour relations is the State Labour Inspectorate [*Valsts darba inspekcija*], and the responsible institution for the observance of equal treatment and anti-discrimination is the Ombudsman's Office [*Tiesībsarga birojs*].

On January 1, 2015, amendments to the Labour Act [*Darba likums*] came into force providing for additional paid leave for employees (both women and men) with less than three children under the age of 14 – no less than one working day (up to now, additional paid leave was granted to those employees who care for at least 3 children under the age of 16, or a disabled child under the age of 18, as well as those employees whose work is associated with a special risk).

During the reporting period, the regulatory framework aimed at reconciling work and family life, has been improved. As of October 1, 2014, changes to the parental benefit payment came into force. The new regulation on parental benefits is more favourable for employed parents, i. e., allowing a partial parental benefit (30%) to be paid to the income-earning person during parental leave, and allows for flexibility in combining work with childcare.

Amendments to the Law on Maternity and Sickness Insurance [*Par maternitātes un slimības apdrošināšanu*] came into force in 2017, stipulating that the right to parental benefit is also granted to a person who is not employed on the day of granting the benefit, yet the person has been employed upon the occurrence of maternity or child-birth leave. Similarly, the rights to paternity benefit are also granted to one of the parents due to the adoption of a child under the age of three, previously under an outside-of-family care. If the person has adopted a child under the age of 3, the person as one of the parents (mother or father) of the child is entitled to 10 calendar days of leave due to adoption of the child.

Tax policy has a significant impact on both the motivation of people to enter the labour market, and the income and standard of living of workers. Since January 1, 2018, a wide tax reform is being implemented. The most important measures implemented within the framework of the tax reform are aimed at reducing of the labour tax burden, increasing income for low-income workers, and families with children. A higher reduction of tax burden is planned for low-wage earners and

¹³ <http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=26019>

families with children, for example, for a worker with no persons in his/her care, which shall receive 67% of the average wage, the labour tax burden¹⁴ will decrease from 41.8% in 2016 to 39.1% in year 2020. However, for a worker with a single person in his/her care, who receives 67% of the average wage, the labour tax gap will decrease from 36.2% in 2016 to 33.5% in 2020. Under the tax reform, there is an increase in the allowance for a person in someone's care (from EUR 175 in 2017) to EUR 200 in 2018, with the planned annual increase to EUR 230 in 2019 and EUR 250 per month in 2020 for a single person in someone's care. Also, a progressive system of personal income tax (hereinafter referred to as PIT) has been introduced, the amount of PIT relief for a person in someone's care has been increased, and the differentiated non-taxable minimum has been increased.

In order to increase the income level of low wage earners, the minimum monthly wage has been increased several times between the years 2014 and 2018 (in 2014 – EUR 320, in 2015 – EUR 360, in 2016 – EUR 370, in 2017 – EUR 380 and in 2018 – EUR 430).

In order to promote the reconciliation of family and work life, thus promoting the participation of women in the labour market, in year 2013, national financial support was provided to facilitate the availability of pre-school education institutions. National support was provided to private pre-school educational institutions and private childcare providers – babysitters, with the pre-requisite that between September 2013 and December 2015, municipalities will find an opportunity to address the issue of pre-school access. At the end of this period, some municipalities had not managed to address the said problem. Therefore, the state budget support was extended until May 31, 2016 in order to ensure continuity and provide additional time to municipalities to reorganize. In the future, the obligation of the municipality shall be to cover the costs of a private pre-school educational institution in case the child who has reached the age of one and a half, and whose place of residence is declared in the administrative territory of the respective municipality, is not provided with a place in the municipal kindergarten. Since year 2016, a common methodology and procedure for determining costs has been established in order to provide a transparent and similar approach to local government calculations. In year 2017, 20 municipalities, according to their budget possibilities, had also determined the amount of support for children using childcare services (babysitters).

In order to make it easier for families with children to provide first instalment within a loan for housing or construction, a joint stock company "Development Finance Institution Altum" [*Attīstības finanšu institūcija Altum*] has been issuing security guarantees to persons with whom, and under the care of which, at least one minor child lives. In year 2017, the program was expanded. In the future, the first instalment of a loan for purchase or construction of a dwelling will be available not only to families with children, but also to persons under the age of 35 who have completed higher or vocational education. The changes made to the eligibility conditions for support for families with children will be available to those persons with whom, and under the care of which, a child under the age of 24 lives, thus extending this group of people eligible for the program.

Since year 2017, workers, including those with a low level of education, have the opportunity to increase their professional competence and competitiveness by applying for project co-financed by the ESF "Improvement of Vocational Competence of Employed Persons". The project implements vocational adult education, professional development and non-formal curriculums. In addition to that, the project also implements the assessment of professional competences acquired outside the formal education system for persons aged 25 years or over, including those with low educational attainment, with education in a profession with labour

¹⁴The tax burden or the so-called *tax wedge* characterises the difference between employee's net income and how much the specific workforce costs for the employer. The amount is calculated as the percentage of labour taxes (personal income tax, compulsory employee and employer national social insurance contributions) in relation to the salary before the total tax payment, and the total amount of the employer's state social insurance compulsory contributions.

shortages, or education in a profession where the supply of human resources exceeds demand. Priority support is given to workers in social risk groups. In order to promote involvement of employees at risk of social exclusion, additional support is available during the training – including sign language interpretation and assistant for disabled persons. In addition to that, support is provided for regional mobility, for workers who have been granted a status of low or poor income. By the end of the project implementation period, December 31, 2022, it is planned that 36 thousand people will be involved in the project as beneficiaries.

In order to promote a longer and higher-quality participation in the labour market for senior workers¹⁵, labour market support measures for people aged 50 and over are being implemented, especially until reaching the retirement age, including for people which face barriers to entry or remain in the labour market. Support measures provide for the implementation of informative measures aimed at raising the awareness of the employer and the public as a whole about the ageing trends of the society, and the workforce and possible solutions for longer and better working lives; assessing the potential of the work environment and human resources by identifying the suitability of the work environment and organization to exploit the potential of senior workers, and by assessing the knowledge, skills and health status of senior workers; providing training and lifelong learning opportunities, adapting workplaces and introducing flexible forms of work, as well as promoting the transfer of intergenerational skills.

Situation Description

The level of economic activity of both women and men (existing employment or active job search) has increased over the last decade; women's economic activity tends to grow faster (by 4 percentage points for women and 1.5 percentage points for men). In 2017, according to the data from Central Statistical Bureau [*Centrālais statistikas birojs*] (hereinafter CSB), the economic activity of women aged 20 - 49 has become lower than that of men in the respective age group. Accordingly, at the age of 25 - 39, it is around 82-86% for women, and 91-94% for men. At later stages of life, the differences in economic activity are diminishing.

Over the last seven years, there has been a steady upward trend in both male and female employment rates. In 2017, the employment rate for men was 71.9%, and for women – 68.4% (ages from 15 - 64). Employment rates vary for certain age groups where the employment rate for women in the 25 - 34 age group is lower than for men (26.8% for men and 21.9% for women in 2017), while the employment rate for women in the 55-64 age group is higher than for men (in year 2017, 16.6% for men, and 20.4% for women). In pre-retirement age, the proportion of women in both the number of employed and the unemployed persons, is higher than the number of men in the same respective groups.

In recent years, the number of people with disabilities has increased. If in 2014 these were 39 435 persons in total, in 2018 the number has increased to 49 204 persons. It should be noted that the employment rate is increasing with the increase in the number of people with disabilities. The highest employment rate among people with disabilities was among the people with disability category III. In 2014, they accounted for 59% of the total number of people with disabilities, while in 2017 – 63%. This, however, can be explained by the fact that persons with disability group III have more moderate level of disability (at a rating of approximately 25-59%). Also, the overall labour market situation is gradually improving; the number of registered vacancies and job placement opportunities are increasing. Of people with disabilities, 51% are women, and 49% are men.

¹⁵ ESF Activity programme *Growth and employment*, specific support aim No. 7.3.2. *Promotion of retention of employment, and employment of senior workers*, project No. 7.3.2.0/16/I/001 "Support for longer work lives".

The level of education correlates directly with the level of employment – the higher the level of education obtained, the higher the employment rate. In the first quarter of 2017, the employment rate for men with higher education in the age group 20 - 64 reached 87.6%, while for women the number reached 84.1%. The positive impact of education is particularly pronounced among women, namely that the employment rate for women with lower education is less than twice as low as for men with the same level of education, yet with an increase in the level of education obtained, the employment rate of women is increasingly converging with the level of male employment with the same level of education. This trend confirms that acquiring education is one of the most effective strategies for gaining prosperity and economic independence for women.

Within the framework of the project co-financed by the ESF "Improvement of Professional Competence of Employed Persons" launched in 2017, 9 038 employees have completed their studies (incl. 1 677 workers with low level of skill). In total, 16.8 thousand adults were involved in training, incl. 3 481 workers with low level of skill). In cooperation with the State Employment Agency (SEA) [*Nodarbinātības valsts aģentūra*] from October 2017 to the end of 2018, 321 employees have received career counselling, while 209 employees have received the competence assessment service for professional competences acquired outside the formal education system.

According to the statistics, women prefer to work part-time more often than men (in 2017, 11.6% of employed women, and 5.3% of employed men, worked in Latvia part-time). Although the difference between the proportion of women and men in part-time employment is relatively small, it is important to take into account the reasons how women and men justify their choice of such employment. In year 2017, 4.3% of women indicated that they chose to work part-time because the rest of the time they were looking after the child, while exercising their childcare responsibilities did not affect the men's choice to work part-time. Similarly, 16.8% of women indicated that they chose to work part-time due to other personal or family circumstances, while men reported this reason to be effective in 15.5% of cases. Such choice is largely influenced by a number of conditions, including gender segregation in the labour market, and the resulting inequality of income, as well as a lack of childcare services in municipalities.

In 2014, the difference between the gross wage of men and women reached 17%, which is higher than the average indication in the EU-28 countries (16.3%).¹⁶ The situation improved slightly in year 2017, with the gap declining to 15.7%. As with most EU countries, the highest wage differences in Latvia are for full-time workers, with the most pronounced workers in the age group from 35 to 44. In contrast to most EU countries, where the wage gap is widespread among the private sector, Latvia has higher wage differences in remuneration existent in the public sector (19.4% and 14.2%, respectively). The results of the public survey show that 54.6% of the female respondents and 41.5% of the male respondents think that men are more likely to receive higher wages for the same workload.¹⁷

In Latvia, there are sectors and professions in the labour market where there is marked gender segregation in place. The highest predominance of men is observed in the construction sector, transport, storage, information and communication services, as well as in agriculture, forestry and fisheries, as well as industry and energy. Meanwhile, women have the highest predominance in health and social care, in education, as well as in trade, tourism and hotels, and catering.

After having analysed the wage gap by sector, the wage gap between women and men appears to be higher in sectors where more than half of the employed are women.¹⁸ In year 2017, the most prominent wage gap existed in the financial sector, where women earned 37.48% less than

¹⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Gender_pay_gap_statistics

¹⁷ Latvian Facts. Attitudes towards gender equality. September, 2014

¹⁸ Database of CSB, thematic area "Employment remuneration", available at <http://data.csb.gov.lv/sq/19902>

men. In trade, this figure was 26.9%. In contrast, in public administration, where women compose more than half of employees, wage differences are relatively small, constituting only 1.8%.

Wage differences consist of a number of reasons: both horizontal and vertical segregation of the labour market, unequal division of responsibilities within the family and household responsibilities, where women carry a higher share of unpaid work, as well as stereotypes and perceptions of the role of women and men in society, influencing people's choices in relation to education and later on also in relation to employment.

During the reporting period, there was an increase in female activity in business. Although the number of male entrepreneurs is almost twice as high, the number of female entrepreneurs is gradually increasing (ref. to Table No. 4).

Data from the European quality of life survey for year 2016 show that only 24% of women and 21% of men in Latvia admit that their working hours are not sufficiently harmonised with their family and social responsibilities. 32% of women surveyed and 31% of men believe that it is somewhat difficult, or very difficult, to combine paid work with family care responsibilities. The study included both working and non-working people who exert care for another family member. It was typical for working people to select a form of employment or workload that could be combined with responsibilities of care (self-employment, casual work, flexible working hours or work in shifts, matching work schedule with that of the partner). These strategies for reconciling work and care responsibilities are equally common for both men and women. In turn, the inability to find a job that can be combined with care responsibilities is the most common cause of female unemployment.¹⁹

Table No. 4

Employed men and women by status, %

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Men					
Employee	86,2	85,6	84,2	84,0	85,0
Employer (owner)	5,5	5,6	6,1	6,1	6,3
Women					
Employee	90,6	91,2	90,5	90,1	89,6
Employer (owner)	2,9	2,4	2,6	2,5	3,1

Source: CSB

The results of the 2018 Eurobarometer survey on Latvia indicate that 60% of respondents have used, or know that it is possible to use, flexible forms of work. At the same time, 36% of people are not offered such opportunities in the workplace. Women slightly less (59%) than men

¹⁹ BISS (2017) "Profiling of potential target groups for motivation and support services and the needs assessment study". Final report, p. 24, ref. To http://www.sif.gov.lv/images/files/nodevumi/ESF_Da%C5%BE%C4%81d%C4%ABbas/Motivacijas_paaugstinasana/Kopsavilkums_EN.pdf

(63%) agree that it is possible to reconcile work and family life at their workplace. On the other hand, only 47% have used or plan to take parental leave, of which women (63%) use it more than men (22%). As to what could encourage more men to take parental leave, the most important factors were named the availability of sufficient financial resettlement (62%) and the possibility of flexible use of leave (34%). 22% indicated to the requirement to receive a more positive attitude from the colleagues and employers. Among work and family reunification initiatives, the most often offered aspects in companies are flexible working hours (in 30%), reduced workload (in 26%) and the possibility to work part-time remotely (in 18% of the companies).

Parental benefit is one of the short-term benefits of the state social insurance system, the purpose of which was initially to compensate for the loss of income that a person loses while on parental leave, and while the person is fully committed to child care. Taking into account the new legislative regulation which extended the parental benefit payment period to the child's age of one and a half years, and provided for the parental benefit to be paid also to the parents under employment, the number of parental benefit recipients has increased since 2014 from 12,541 benefit recipients (monthly average) to 22,959 benefits recipients (monthly average) in year 2018. In 2018, 18 743 women and 4 216 men received parental benefit. In year 2018, the average insurance contribution wage for parents was EUR 1,318.26 for men and EUR 923.08 for women (in year 2014: EUR 728.09 for women and EUR 1,228.77 for men). In 2018, as compared to the data for 2015, the number of working parents has increased by 63% – respectively, the number of working men has increased by 41% and the number of working women has increased by 3.5 times.

Promotion of access to pre-school education and pre-school care contributes to empowering women to enter the labour market. Unfortunately, the pre-school education institution (PSEI) service is not fully provided in Latvia. As per October 1, 2018, there are queues in about 40 municipalities in the municipal PSEI. In total, 7,536 children are waiting in the queue. Although the normative legislation does not stipulate requirements for local municipalities to provide support to children using childcare services, 20 municipalities in total have, however, determined the amount of support for children using childcare services in accordance with their own municipal budgets.

In order to motivate local governments to engage in work and family reconciliation issues and to highlight the best examples and solutions for local governments to take care of families with children, the program "Family-Friendly Municipality" [*"Ģimenei draudzīga pašvaldība"*], which is the first of its kind in Europe at the government level, is being implemented from year 2017 onwards.²⁰ The program foresees the organization of the "Most Family-Friendly Municipality" competition in order to evaluate the local governments of Latvia, determine those municipalities that provide the most support, the most diverse and accessible services for families with children,²¹ and in the long term, a compilation of information about the support provided by the municipality for the creation of families with children on the website www.vietagimenei.lv, providing information to parents about their ability to receive support in their municipality, thus improving access to services for citizens.

Since 2015, more than 10,749 families have provided housing support within the framework of the national housing support program, providing more than 15.5 thousand children with housing. In turn, more than 850 security guarantees have been granted to young professionals. In total the amount of the issued security guarantees constitute 76 mln. EUR.

In order to improve the availability of care services for older family members, several support services aimed at improving the standard of living of people with disabilities, have been developed and improved over the period from 2014 - 2018.

²⁰ In the Polish city of Szczecin, the main prize was awarded in the category of national government nomination "For Contribution to Family Support".

²¹ The winning municipality receives a funding for development of a family-friendly infrastructure, or for related services. The total competition budget between years 2017 and 2018 reached EUR 160,000.

In order to support those unemployed whose knowledge, motivation and willingness is to start a business, SEA offers a measure to start a business or self-employment, which helps unemployed people with pre-training and orientation to start a business or self-employment in a business, and successfully work in the chosen field for at least two years. The number of women participating in the event is considerably higher than that of men (ref. to Table No. 5). Every year, on average, 50 developed business plans receive positive expert appraisals and are directed towards implementation.

Table No. 5

Number of participants involved in the SEA active employment measure “Measures for the Initiation of Commercial Activities or Self-Employment”

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
In total	129	157	164	211	213
Women	90	127	118	146	154
Men	39	30	46	65	59

Source: the State Employment Agency (SEA)

Within the framework of "Latvian Rural Development Program for the period from 2014 – 2020" and its "Support for LEADER for Local Development (CDLD – community-driven local development)", support for local economic development and local potential development initiatives is being ensured. This is done by improving the social situation in the countryside, encouraging the start-up and development of entrepreneurship, creating a favourable and attractive environment for living. Local initiatives are most often developed by active rural women. Women are also the ones that make up about 80% of rural NGOs. There are currently 35 local action groups (partnerships between local governments, non-governmental organizations, entrepreneurs and active rural residents) in the whole territory of Latvia, which have prepared community-led local development strategies for their territories. Within decision-making of the said groups, representation of rural women, young people and farmers is ensured.

WOMEN IN POWER AND DECISION-MAKING

The involvement of both genders in decision-making at different levels of the company is one of the most important elements of good governance, as it ensures diversity of views and takes into account interests and needs of both women and men. In addition, gender balance in companies and their top management makes the social environment of companies more flexible and improves the quality of the decisions taken.

Data compiled by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) show that there is a relatively balanced gender representation in business in Latvia compared to the other EU countries. In general, among the companies listed on the stock exchange, the proportion of women on boards in 2018 was 29%, which is above the EU-28 average (26.2%).²²

According to information provided by Lursoft – website collecting data basis of enterprises - for 2015²³, a third (or 32.9%) of all Latvian entrepreneurs are women. In addition, overall trends have not changed significantly compared to previous years (33.01% in 2014). According to Lursoft data, women are mainly running small and micro enterprises, while large companies are under the management of mostly men. This study concludes that the best financial results of companies appear when both men and women are in the board. The proportion of women in the boards of large companies in Latvia is smaller, whereas in the category of small/medium enterprises it is considerably higher. Among top-level managers (among executive directors), 27.3% are women and 72.7% are men. In turn, females are 29% of the branch managers and executive directors, while 71% are men.²⁴

The lack of women in senior management seems unfounded for a number of reasons. The female employment rate is relatively high, and the proportion of women among higher education graduates is higher than that of men, but the figures for female representation in power and decision-making are lower than for men. On the one hand, public opinion on the opportunities for women and men to start their own business is supportive, pointing out that gender is not important in starting a business.²⁵ This is also evidenced by the findings of the seventh Amway Global Business Survey AGER 2016, namely that in Latvia, 87% of women and 82% of men have a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship, but only 40% of women and 60% of men can imagine themselves as entrepreneurs.

In 2014, a research was carried out called "Study of the Situation of Women and Men in Large Companies in Latvia", which concluded that there might be "glass ceilings" or structural/cultural/social restrictions on women's career development in the business environment of Latvia, in particular in respect to representation within company boards. The fact itself that there is no gender disproportion in middle management, leads to the conclusion that women in Latvia are leaders, but not top-level managers.²⁶ The survey of companies has revealed that the typical profile of the board of large Latvian companies is one woman and four men, of whom the chairman of the board is male.

In Latvia, women in political representation and civil service have already taken the highest public positions. In the 13th election of parliament (Saeima), 31% of women were elected, which is higher than in the previous Saeima. In February 2019, the Cabinet of Ministers consisted of 14

²² EC, DG Justice, section Gender balance in decision-making positions; available at http://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/wmidm_bus_bus_wmid_comp_compbm

²³ <http://blog.lursoft.lv/2016/03/15/no-visiem-latvijas-uznemejiem-tresa-dala-ir-sievietes/>

²⁴ EIGE Gender statistics database, ref. to. https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/wmidm_bus_bus_wmid_comp_compex/bar/chart/year:2018-B2/geo:EU28,BE,BG,CZ,DK,DE,EE,IE,EL,ES,FR,HR,IT,CY,LV,LT,LU,HU,MT,NL,AT,PL,PT,RO,SI,SK,FI,SE,UK,IS,NO,ME,MK,RS,TR,BA/EGROUP:COMP/sex:M,W/UNIT:PC/POSITION:CEO/NACE:TOT

²⁵ Latvian Facts. Attitudes towards gender equality. September, 2014

²⁶ Report on the "Study of the Situation of Women and Men in Large Companies in Latvia", SIF, 2014

ministers, and 4 women, respectively, 71% men and 29% women. Over the last five years, the number of women in the Cabinet has been changing. The proportion of women elected in local elections in the elections of 2017 was 33.7%.²⁷

With regard to the proportion of women in senior civil servants positions in Latvia, there is stable vertical gender segregation – the higher the position, the smaller the proportion of women. The highest proportion of women exists in the lowest groups of positions (specialists, unit managers and deputies), which is gradually decreasing, while the lowest proportion exists in the highest level of position – state secretaries (ref. to Table 6).

Table No. 6

Gender distribution of officials in the establishments, where the national civil service has been introduced, in 2018.²⁸

Group of posts	Women	Share of women %	Men	Share of men %	Total
State Secretaries	4	31	9	69	13
Deputy State Secretaries	24	55	20	45	44
Heads of the Institutions	31	51	30	49	61
Deputy Heads of the Institutions	49	60	33	40	82
Department managers and alternates	1790	75	599	25	2389
Specialists	6778	77	2058	23	8836
Total					11425

Source: State Chancellery

There are also relatively high gender balance values of indicators in the judiciary system. At different levels of the judiciary system in Latvia, there is almost equal, or greater, representation of women than men. There are three women among the seven Judges of the Constitutional Court, and a woman is elected as the President of the Court. In turn, in 2018, 65.7% of the Supreme Court judges are women.²⁹

In Latvian courts of all instances, the proportion of women is higher than that of men, and there is a tendency that since 2013, the number and percentage of women in courts of all instances has increased compared to the number and proportion of men (ref. to Table No. 7).

²⁷ CSB data base, thematic area "Political life and religion", ref. to <http://data.csb.gov.lv/sq/19910>

²⁸ Source: The system of accounting for the remuneration of officials and employees of State and local government institutions, State Chancellery, November 30, 2018

²⁹ https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/wmidm_jud_natcrt_wmid_natcrt_supcrt/bar

Table No. 7

Number of judges at the end of the year

		In total (number)	Women, %
Court of First Instance	2013	256	80
	2014	266	80
	2015	271	80
	2016	274	82
	2017	275	82
Regional courts	2013	113	77
	2014	113	76
	2015	119	75
	2016	116	74
	2017	119	75
Supreme Court	2013	50	54
	2014	47	62
	2015	45	69
	2016	36	64
	2017	35	66

Source: CSB

With regard to the proportion of women in economic positions, since the Bank of Latvia was founded in 1992, only men have been presidents of the Bank. In the Council and Board of Latvian Bank, the proportion of women from 21% in 2014 has fallen to 20% in 2019³⁰.

After analysing the gender representation in power positions, one can see that Latvia has good results compared to other EU countries. Taking into account that specific measures for balancing the number of women and men in decision-making positions have not been implemented so far, the comparatively good indicators of Latvia have been influenced by cultural and historical factors, as well as there are no regulatory obstacles that would hinder women's participation in decision-making.

³⁰ Website of the Bank of Latvia, <https://www.bank.lv/par-mums/struktura/valde>

WOMEN AND POVERTY

Policy/Legislative Framework

In accordance with the European Social Charter, Latvia is bound by articles on the right of citizens to protection against poverty, deprivation and social inequality. Reducing the income inequality has been identified as one of the government's budget priorities in the medium-term budget framework throughout the reporting period. Latvia's targets for poverty reduction are set out in the National Development Plan for years 2014 to 2020³¹, and in the National Reform Programme "Europe 2020" for implementation of the strategy³².

The social security system in Latvia provides for diverse support for a person/family in order to ensure income or its replacement in certain situations, thus reducing the risk of poverty. Socially insured persons (persons who have made compulsory state social insurance contributions) are being provided with appropriate support in case of occurrence of certain social risks – unemployment, illness, maternity, family growth, retirement, work accidents, disability. State social benefits, on the other hand, are paid to certain groups of people, such as families with children, people with disabilities, survivors after having lost a support/care-giver person, and to other groups of the population. Since 2014, the existing policy measures have been improved, and a number of new policy measures have been implemented aimed at increasing support for families with children and support for out-of-home care.

Within the Inclusive Employment Guidelines for years 2015 - 2020³³, in addition to implementation of the existing active employment measures, implementation of several targeted activation measures co-financed by the European Social Fund (support for long-term unemployed, support for social entrepreneurship, promotion and maintaining of employment of senior workers, integration of persons with disabilities or mental disabilities into the employment and into society, motivation program for job search and mentor services for people with disabilities, subsidized jobs for the unemployed)) is envisaged. Their aim is to promote activation and inclusion of disadvantaged unemployed and job-seekers in the labour market, as well as to provide support to groups at higher risk of unemployment.

On April 1, 2018, the Social Enterprise Act [*Sociālā uzņēmuma likums*] comes into force, which aims to promote the improvement of the quality of life and promotion of the employment of groups at risk of social exclusion, creating a favourable social business environment.

In 2014, the concept "Determination of the Minimum Income Level" was approved, the aim of which is to establish a methodologically justified minimum income level corresponding to the socio-economic situation, which would serve as a reference point within the scope of the fields in social security system (state social benefits, social insurance, social assistance) and the support measures stipulated therein. Unfortunately, due to the lack of state and municipal budget resources, only certain measures planned in the concept aimed at reducing the risk of poverty and social exclusion for families with children and people of retirement age have been introduced.

Given the high risk of poverty and social exclusion for retired people, as well as the pronounced increase in the risk of poverty for women in retirement age, a significant contribution to reducing poverty among women is provided by means of measures to increase the pensioners' incomes. In 2016 - 2018, a review of pensions for persons who, from January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2015, were granted or recalculated their age, retirement or supporter's/care-givers survivor's pension, and for which the negative pension capital indices have been taken into account. Since 2014, changes in pension indexation for age pensions have been made in order to promote the adequacy of pension growth for wage increases with a high insurance period, as well as to provide greater support to persons with a long insurance record. As of 2017, according to the amendments

³¹http://www.pkc.gov.lv/images/NAP2020%20dokumenti/20121220_NAP2020_Saeim%C4%81_apstiprin%C4%81ts.pdf

³²<http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/view.do?id=3517>

³³http://www.lm.gov.lv/upload/darba_tirgus/pamatnostadnes_latvijas_vestnesis.pdf

to the National Social Benefit Act [*Valsts sociālā pabalsta likums*], a person who was not entitled to a state-provided age pension has the right to receive state social security benefit from the date he or she has reached the prescribed retirement age (previously the benefit was granted if the person was over 5 years of age).

In order to support single parent families (mostly children living with their mother), the amount of child support for fathers or mothers avoiding maintenance payments is gradually being increased from the Maintenance Guarantee Fund. With the aim of reducing the poverty of parted families, and with the aim of offering all children equivalent social security, from April 1, 2017, the minimum amount of state support for the care-giver's death surviving children has been increased. This amount is being approximated to the minimum amount of maintenance that the state guarantees when one of the parents of the child fails to perform his or her duties, and does not provide the child with the necessary maintenance. Also, the minimum amount for children under 7 years of age has been set at EUR 92.5 (for a disabled child since childhood, the level is set at EUR 106.72, whereas after reaching the full age of 7, the level of support has been set at EUR 111). From year 2018, the minimum amount of maintenance is set at 25% of the minimum monthly wage for each child under 7 years of age (EUR 107.50 per month) and 30% for each child between 7 and 18 years of age (EUR 129.00 per month). 95% of the non-payers of maintenance payments are men. Since year 2018, the legal framework has been expanded to punish parents avoiding their maintenance payments by criminal punishment as a short-term imprisonment or forced labour or fines.

If the family or person's financial resources are insufficient to meet the daily needs, and the income is lower than the country's determined level of poor family income level (EUR 128 per person per household), the family/person can apply for social assistance in the municipality.

In order to improve the coverage of social assistance recipients, on February 9, 2017 amendments to the Law on Social Services and Social Assistance [*Sociālo pakalpojumu un sociālās palīdzības likums*], which foresee improved access to social assistance for families with children, entered into force, without taking into account family state benefit in the assessment of income. As a result, more families with low income will qualify for the status of a poor family. These families will thus be able to receive social services and social assistance benefits from municipalities. In addition, these families will also be able to receive state-guaranteed services and support for poor people. Taking into account the increase of the family state benefit for the fourth and subsequent children from January 1, 2017, the financial situation of families with several children will improve.

In year 2018, the guaranteed minimum income level was raised from EUR 49.80 to EUR 53 per person per month in order to expand the range of recipients of municipal social assistance. A circle of persons who are entitled to receive local government assistance in solving housing issues, and the procedures for providing assistance to residents in solving apartment issues shall be determined by the "Law on Assistance in Resolving Housing Issues" [*Par palīdzību dzīvokļa jautājumū risināšanā*]³⁴. According to the law, among persons who are primarily provided with living quarters, certain groups of low-income persons (for example, those who live together and have at least one under-age child, or who have reached retirement age, or who have a disability), children left without parental care – after the child has reached the full age, and his/her out-of-family care has ended – are included. Likewise, persons deemed poor are entitled to local government housing benefit, which is defined as one of the compulsory municipal social support benefits.

In order to improve efficiency of municipal social services and improve the social support provided to local municipalities, since year 2015, the Ministry of Welfare [*Labklājības ministrija*] has implemented the project "Development of Professional Social Work in Local Municipalities" [*Profesionāla sociālā darba attīstība pašvaldībās*], co-financed by the European Social Fund.

³⁴ <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=56812>

Within the framework of the project, training and supervision of social work specialists are being implemented, as well as methodologies are being developed for work with different client groups, including social work with victims of violence, social work with persons with mental disabilities, social work with families with children, etc.

In addition to social assistance provided by municipalities, poor and low-income people, including women at risk of poverty, and women with children, support can be received under the measures co-financed by the European Support Fund for the Most Deprived Persons (hereinafter referred to as the ESFMDP). ESFMDP support reduces food and basic material deprivation, while reducing the social exclusion of the most deprived. In Latvia, with the support of ESFMDP, the most deprived persons are being provided with food sets, kits of hygiene and household items, individual training kits for families with primary and secondary school children are being provided (school and stationary equipment, school bags, etc.), additional baby food sets for families with small children aged 7 to 24 months, additional sets of hygiene products for families with young children up to two years of age (diapers, etc.). In year 2018, the range of beneficiaries of the ESFMDP was expanded in order to provide more support to low-income citizens. As of January 2019, people with low-income and families with average monthly earnings of less than EUR 242 per month can also receive support, instead of the previous level of EUR 188.

In year 2015, amendments were made to the Social Services and Social Assistance Law [*Sociālo pakalpojumu un sociālās palīdzības likums*] in order to improve the social situation of refugees and persons of alternative status, including women, by providing for the right to social services and social assistance. Persons with alternative status were granted the right to receive a guaranteed minimum income, counselling by social worker, as well as shelter and night shelter services. Children, who have been granted alternative status, have received access to social care and social rehabilitation services. However, persons who have been granted refugee status, have social services and social assistance available at the same extent as other independent and permanent residents of Latvia. In turn, asylum seekers have access to a service centre for asylum seekers.

Tax policy is one of the means of reducing income inequality and income support. Since year 2014, several measures have been taken in order to increase the non-taxable minimum of personal income tax, and in order to increase the personal income tax relief for dependent persons (persons in someone's care). Particularly ambitious changes took place in year 2018 as part of the tax reform, highlighting the prospects for the coming years. Since year 2014, there has been an increase in the personal income tax relief for dependents (persons in someone's care), which in year 2014 was EUR 75, while in 2019 the sum reached whole EUR 230. As of January 1, 2019, the maximum non-taxable minimum of personal income tax has been increased to EUR 230, and it is a differentiated non-taxable minimum, which depends on the taxable person's annual income. It is being applied to a certain level of income. In year 2019, there is an increased monthly income of EUR 1,100, for which a differentiated non-taxable minimum is being applied. The maximum non-taxable minimum of EUR 230 applies to income of up to EUR 440 per month, while if income exceeds EUR 1,100 per month, the non-taxable minimum are not applied at all. The differentiated non-taxable minimum is applied (adjusted) for the tax year, by submitting the annual income declaration.

As of January 1, 2017, PIT relief for a dependent person has been extended also to a non-working spouse, whom a minor child is dependent upon, provided if the said child has been recognized as a person with a disability in accordance with regulatory enactments, and if the non-working spouse does not receive taxable income or a state pension. As of July 1, 2018, on the other hand, a non-working spouse who has a child under 3 years of age under his/her care, or who has three or more children under the age of 18, or under 24 years of age, provided that at least one of them is younger than the age of 7, will be eligible for allowance benefits/support, until the child continues to receive general, vocational, higher or special education, or if the spouse has 5 children

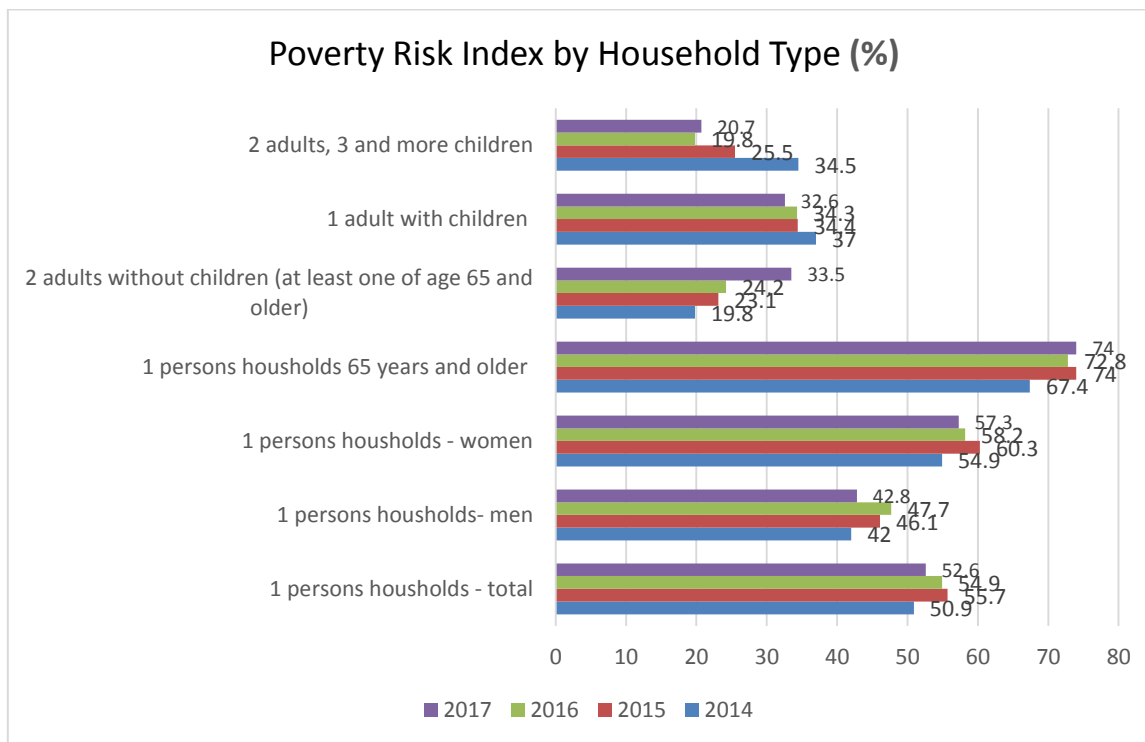
under 18 years of age or up to 24 years of age until the child continues to receive general, vocational, higher or special education.

Between years 2013 and 2018, the national minimum monthly wage (for normal working hours of 8 hours a day and 40 hours a week), has increased. In year 2014, the national minimum wage was set at EUR 320, with a minimum wage of EUR 430 as of January 1, 2018.

Situation Description

In year 2017, 23.3% of households, *i. e.*, 1.8 percentage points more than in 2014, were subject to the risk of poverty. In year 2017, single-person households, especially those of retired people, two adult households with at least one person after the retirement age, and one-parent families were most at the risk of poverty. Considering the situation in the period from 2014 to 2017, significant changes can be observed in large families, whose risk of poverty has decreased particularly (Figure No. 1). This is due to the increased state financial support for families with children in particularly the recent years.

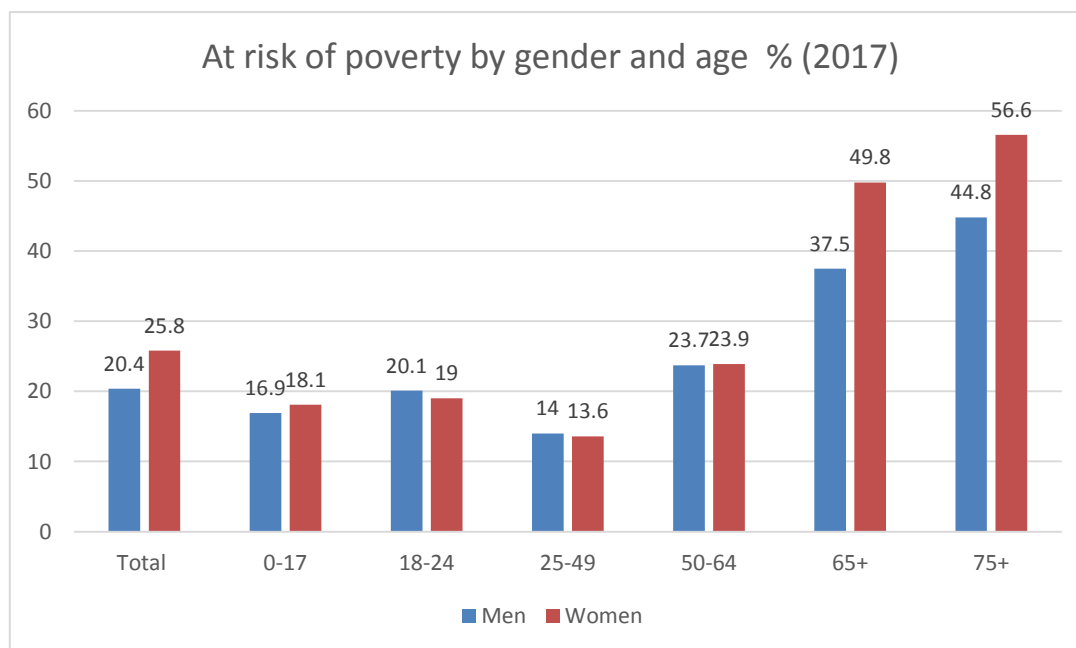
Figure No.1



Data source: CSB

The risk of poverty among women remains higher than that among men, and in years 2014 to 2017 the situation has not changed significantly over the period. Analysing the situation by age group and gender, significant increase in the risk of poverty is observed after reaching the retirement age for both genders, but to a much greater extent for women (Figure No. 2). This can be explained by both the higher proportion of women in this age group, as well as the impact of economic activity and earned income during the working age on the social security at retirement age.

Figure No. 2



Data source: CSB

Impact of the social transfers³⁵ to the poverty risk index in years 2014 - 2017 has slightly decreased. Both before and after the social transfers, the risk of poverty is higher for women – and the trend has not changed during this period. In year 2017, 35.4% of men and 42.2% of women were at risk of poverty before social transfers, but 19.7% and 24.8%, respectively, after the social transfers.

The gender pay gap, differences in labour market participation, and the division of care responsibilities are a set of reasons that also distinguish between women's and men's pensions. Not only do children care responsibilities, but also those in respect to other family members, continue to affect women's working lives more than men's working lives. That is why women, more often than men, face interruptions in their professional activity, their career and income growth opportunities are more limited, and they are engaged more than men in part-time employment. Difference in the amount of old-age pensions between women and men was 12.9% in 2017, and 12.6% in 2018. In year 2016, the difference in pensions between women and men was 12.7%, whereas in year 2015 it was 12.3%. At the same time, it should be noted that the amount of newly granted old-age pensions, as shown by the data of recent years, is equalized between the sexes – the amount of the pension is almost similar (difference in years 2018 and 2017 constituted 3.8%, in year 2016 – 6.7%, in 2015 – 2.9%, and in 2014 – only 0.6%).

According to the data of the State Employment Agency [*Nodarbinātības valsts aģentūra*] (SEA), the number of registered unemployed persons has gradually decreased in the period 2014 to 2018. If the total number of registered unemployed persons in year 2014 was 82 027, of which 55.2% were women and 44.7% were men, then in year 2018, the total number of registered unemployed persons had decreased by 27% (to 59 588), the proportion of women from which was 56%, while that of men was 44%. The proportion of women in the total number of long-term unemployment in year 2018 constitutes 57.7%.

The SEA offers support measures to the unemployed persons, taking into account the profiling results and individual wishes of the unemployed. The SEA also offers career guidance services, with slightly more active counselling among the women (on average 7% more than men).

³⁵ CSB data base, thematic area "Monetary poverty and inequality of income", ref. to <http://data.csb.gov.lv/sq/19912>

SEA's career services are free of charge; career guidance can also be obtained without registering as an unemployed person. Almost 40% of the unemployed persons from all the persons registered with SEA, utilise the opportunity to achieve the right skills and qualifications for the labour market. Women's participation in training is on average 14% higher than that of men. The proportion of women involved in the support measures for the long-term unemployed persons is higher than proportion of men (on average within 15%).

Since year 2016, the SEA has implemented a number of measures in order to promote integration of asylum-seekers and persons with refugee or alternative status, into the labour market. Asylum-seekers have access to the introductory course "Labour Market in Latvia" [*"Darba tirgus Latvijā"*], and individual consultations at the "Mucenieki" Asylum Seekers' Centre, as well as visits of asylum seekers to employers, are being organised. In addition to that, the e-booklet issued by SEA "First Steps on the Road to Employment" [*"Pirmie soļi ceļā uz darbu"*] in five languages on work, education, housing, social services and other important issues is available from the SEA homepage (available from <https://begluintegracija.nva.gov.lv/>). Persons with refugee or alternative status have the right to receive the same SEA services that are available to Latvian nationals, including exploration of a person's skills and motivation, drawing up an individual job search plan, career counselling and job search assistance. Between January 2016 and the end of 2018, 156 persons with refugee or alternative status have been registered with the SEA. In year 2018, 39 persons were registered with the SEA with refugee or alternative status (mainly citizens of Syria, Eritrea, Russia, Afghanistan, etc.). Since year 2016, SEA has established cooperation with 118 employers who are ready to employ refugees and persons with alternative status (data as of 31.12.2018). At the end of year 2018, there were 40 refugees and persons with alternative status (including 34 men and 6 women) who had found work with the SEA.

Since year 2016, asylum seekers, refugees and persons with alternative status, have been provided with a social worker and social mentor services. The services are provided for 15 months (3 months before the status is obtained, and 12 months after the status is obtained). Between April 2016 and the end of year 2018, the social worker and social mentor services were provided to 786 asylum seekers, refugees and persons of alternative status.

Among the beneficiaries of social assistance, the proportion of women is higher than that of men (ref. to Table No. 8). This is partly due to the fact that women are more active in applying for social assistance. The differences in the number of recipients of social services by gender show both the topicality of the services, and the objectively distinguished differences in demand. For example, the proportion of women using shelter services among the total number of persons is around 20%. This illustrates that the number of homeless women is lower, and that women are able to solve their social problems without having to face extreme social risk. In addition to that, also addiction problems for women are less common and pronounced than for men. Within the service Group housing or group apartments for use by persons with mental disabilities, during the period 2014 - 2017, the proportion of women in the total number of recipients decreased. In turn, 75% - 77% of the total number recipients of home care are women. This can be explained by the fact that the average life expectancy of women significantly exceeds the average life expectancy of men.

Table No. 8**Number of recipients of municipal social assistance benefits, proportion of women and men in total**

	2014	2015	2016	2017
In total	216 365	186 525	158 310	145 585
Men	87 546	75 792	65 297	59 819
Women	128 819	110 733	93 013	85 766
Men %	40,46	40,63	41,25	41,09
Women %	59,54	59,37	58,75	58,91

Source: MoW

It is planned to use EUR 48.2 mln. For support of the most deprived persons in the period 2014 - 2020, incl. EUR 41 mln. from the finances granted by ESFMDP. In year 2018, with the support of the ESFMDP, 68.5 thousands poor and low-income persons have received food sets, 17.4 thousand have received hygiene and household items for families with children, 9.7 thousand pupils in deprived and low-income families have school item and training kits, while 4.8 thousand persons were given prepared meals for individuals. In year 2018 there were 1 137 additional measures taking place (informative events, individual and group work, informal educational activities, socialization activities, etc.). 6.3 thousand persons participated in them. Additional food sets for families with infants and young children under 2 years of age have been received by 1 thousand. families and 1.6 thousand additional families received hygiene packages for families with infants and young children up to 2 years of age.

A major challenge in Latvia is the availability of housing, especially for those in a disadvantaged position (disability, one-parent family, deprivation, etc.). An economic report published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (hereinafter referred to as OECD) in September 2017 shows that Latvia's public spending on social housing and housing benefits for low-income households are among the lowest in the OECD countries. According to a survey conducted by the Ministry of Economics [*Ekonomikas ministrija*] and performed calculations, in order for a household to be able to afford to rent an apartment that complies with the requirements of construction and energy efficiency, taking into account the proportion of these expenses on housing from the existing income, the household income should be from EUR 1,600. As a result, 80%³⁶ of households are deprived of the opportunity to rent housing that meets today's building standards and energy efficiency requirements, as their income is less than EUR 1,600 per month. In addition, monthly income of 50% of households does not exceed EUR 700. Consequently, half of Latvian households should double their monthly income in order to be able to afford to rent housing that meets today's building standards and energy efficiency requirements. In the OECD Economic report of Latvia, population welfare indicators are among the lowest in the categories of income and housing availability in comparison to the OECD average. Latvia has the highest proportion of the population whose net income is below the poverty line, which leads to many low-income households being underfunded³⁷.

³⁶ Central Statistical Bureau data for year 2016 and calculations of the Ministry of Economics.

³⁷ OECD report on Latvia (2017) <http://www.oecd.org/economy/surveys/Latvia-2017-OECD-economic-survey-overview.pdf>

According to the Ombudsman's [*Tiesībsargs*] survey of local municipalities on housing assistance distributed to residents, the line for the apartments in municipalities in the period from 01.04.2014. till 01.04.2018 has decreased (from 10,258 persons to 7,215 persons). Despite the overall improvement in the situation, the number of residents in need of assistance in solving housing issues has increased in some municipalities. According to the survey data, the free housing stock of Latvian local municipalities is 3,286 residential premises, but only 1,046 are suitable for living – those meet the requirements of the Law on Assistance in Resolving Housing Issues [*Likums par palīdzību dzīvokļa jautājumu risināšanā*]. Thus, two thirds of that stock are unfit for living, and cannot be used for provision of the autonomous function. Similarly, the responses received show that there is no replenishment of the housing stock in the local municipalities, nor an active improvement of their technical conditions, with the exception of some cities. In addition, according to the Ombudsman's [*Tiesībsargs*] data, waiting times in the lines for apartments are considered to be disproportionately long – people have been waiting for housing for 5, 10 and even 25 years³⁸.

In year 2018, only 24.4% of households had no difficulty in covering housing costs (14.5% in year 2014). Covering of housing costs was somewhat difficult for 47.6% of households (45.5% in year 2014). Covering of these costs was very difficult for 28.0% of households (40% in year 2014). Households with one person aged 65 and above (one adult with children) had the greatest difficulty in covering the housing costs. Covering the housing costs was very difficult for almost half (46.0%) of seniors aged 65, and 35.6% of single parent families. Among large families (a couple with three and more children), 24.0% had very high level of difficulty covering their housing costs, which is significantly more than among couples with two children (16.7%) and couples with one child (13,4%). In year 2018 (during the last 12 months), 11.1% of households have had debts for utilities bills due to lack of funds. Most number of the debtors for utilities bills were among single parent households (20.3%), couples having three and more children (19.7%), and households with one person up to 64 years of age as its member (16.2%). At the same time, the lowest number of debtors for utility bills was among couples without children (6.3%) among households with a single senior (65 years) (constituting 6.5%).

³⁸ Ombudsman [*Tiesībsargs*], Report on the situation of municipal assistance in housing and implementation of recommendations, in the control verification case No. 2014-35-18AC; date August 28, 2018; available from http://www.tiesibsargs.lv/uploads/content/lapas/zinojums_pasvaldibu_majokli_1535636795.pdf.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Policy/Legislative Framework

Domestic violence has a significant impact on individuals and society as a whole. It also has a negative impact on the economy. The issues of domestic violence at the political level are highlighted in the Family State Policy Guidelines [*Gimenes valsts politikas pamatnostādnes*] for period of 2011 to 2017, which also include tasks that would reduce the impact of domestic violence and diminish the negative impact of painful violence -caused experiences on creation of non-violent relations in the future.

In year 2014 and the subsequent years, work on the improvement of regulatory enactments continued to ensure the protection and assistance of female victims of violence, as well as to punish the perpetrators of violence.

Since year 2014, mechanisms have been put in place in order to separate the perpetrator of violence by introducing temporary protection against violence. Under the current framework, there are three options for those at risk. (1) Police officers have the right to make an immediate enforceable decision on separation of a person. Such decision is made in cases where there is an immediate threat that a person in, or near, the dwelling, may harm another person living in the said dwelling. (2) In order to ensure the continuity of protection in the event of a separation decision by the police, the protected person may submit an application to the court through the police, requiring for temporary protection against violence. (3) In accordance with legal provision of the civil law, the protected person may independently apply to the court and require a decision on temporary protection against violence. The court may apply a single or several temporary protective remedies to be imposed on the person who committed the violence: obligation to leave the dwelling in which the protected person resides, and prohibition on returning and staying there; prohibition to be close (distance determined by the court) to the dwelling in which the protected person resides; prohibition to remain or stay in certain places; prohibition to meet and maintain physical or visual contact with the protected person; prohibition of any form of contact with the protected person; prohibition of organising a meeting, or any form of contact, with the protected person among the other persons; prohibition to use personal data of the protected person. Temporary protection against violence is possible at any stage of the proceedings, even before a court action is brought.

Violent crimes and crimes against morality and sexual integrity committed against a relative, spouse/partner, or against a former spouse/former partner, were stipulated to be an aggravating circumstance within the scope of the Criminal Law [*Krimināllikums*]. Likewise, an aggravating circumstance was stipulated in cases when the offence was committed against a minor person, and when a criminal offence related to violence or a criminal offence against a person's health was carried out, or acts against morality and sexual integrity were committed in presence of a minor.

The definition of rape and sexual violence was expanded. In year 2014, amendments to the Criminal Law [*Krimināllikums*] came into force, stating that rape and sexual abuse are punishable not only in cases of violence or threat, but also in cases of misused trust, power and other misused influence on the victim. Such changes would now include cases of sexual harassment and violence at the workplace, when trust, power or other influence on the employee is being misused.

In addition to that, more severe penalties for sexual violence were set in legislation. In the case of convicted offenders for moral and sexual offences, an additional punishment is also mandatory – probation supervision.

Amendments to the Criminal Procedure Law [*Kriminālprocesa likums*] were implemented in order to provide greater protection for victims of sexual violence, especially minors. For example, a sentenced person may not be subjected to conditional custodial sentences or conditional

release in certain cases, criminal proceedings for crimes against morality and sexual integrity are to be tried in a closed court session. The rules on the limitation period were reviewed, and in cases where a juvenile has suffered from a crime against morality and sexual integrity, female genital mutilation, human trafficking or coercion to commit abortion, legal proceedings can be commenced within 20 years (in some cases 30 years) from the moment the victim has reached legal age.

Criminal liability for the exploitation of a minor and a human trafficking victim for the provision of sexual services (prostitution) have been stipulated. Stalking has been defined as a criminal offence. Criminal liability for violation of prohibition of discrimination has been introduced, in cases if it has caused significant harm, as well as for causing social hatred and violence.

Since January 1, 2018, a regulation has been introduced that allows punishment of perpetrators of crime, if the crime has resulted as a psychiatric disorder or trauma of victim. Amendments to the Criminal Procedure Law [*Kriminālprocesa likums*] have been introduced so that criminal proceedings for rape, sexual abuse and deliberate bodily injury can be initiated without an application from the person against whom the offence had been committed. The amended Criminal Procedure Law [*Papildināts Kriminālprocesa likums*] has been introduced, distinguishing the category of "specially protected victim". This category includes minors, victims of sexual violence, victims of domestic violence or intimate partner violence, victims of trafficking, and some other groups of victims. In order to reduce repeated victimization of these victims, the Criminal Procedure Law [*Kriminālprocesa likums*] stipulates specific conditions. These include, for example, compulsory interrogation in a separate room or without the presence of other persons, additionally, the possibility of participating of a trustee person in all procedural activities, interrogation by a person of the same sex, etc.

In year 2014, the "Guidelines for Preventing Trafficking in Human Beings [*Cilvēku tirdzniecības novēršanas pamatnostādnes*] for period 2014 to 2020" were developed with the aim of preventing and combating trafficking in human beings, protecting and assisting victims of trafficking, in full respect of their human rights. The said guidelines are aligned with the EU's "Strategy for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings for years 2012 - 2016", as well as with the European Parliament's „Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings" and UN's "Protocol on Trafficking in Human Beings to the Convention on Transnational Organized Crime". The guidelines are based on four internationally recognized guiding principles for the fight against trafficking in human beings: 1) prevention; 2) protection of victims; 3) investigation, prosecution and trial; 4) cooperation between competent institutions and organizations at national and international level.

Situation Description

According to the latest statistics provided by law enforcement and healthcare institutions, the number of domestic violence victims remains significant. According to the Ministry of the Interior [*Iekšlietu ministrija*] data, in year 2018, of the number of adult persons killed, or violated by personal threats to their health and freedom, in year 2018 (in total 1068), 382 were women (almost one third), of whom 42 were victims of sexual violence. Of the 242 people who suffered from relatives, 154 were women (13 of them – victims of sexual violence), accounting for more than half. Of the 62 people killed, 35 are women, 16 have been killed by the relatives and among them, 8 were women. In year 2018, the number of women victims of violence reached 476, of whom 108 were victims of domestic violence, and in 34 cases, the abuser was the spouse, while in 27 cases it was another relative. According to CDPC data, the number of adult victims of violence provided with medical assistance at a hospital was 781 in 2017, of which 629 were men and 152 were women. 71 women, or almost half, have suffered from domestic violence, while men were 42 or 14% of victims. The highest number of women victims of domestic violence was seen in the age group 45 - 64. Accordingly, 52 women have suffered from spouse or partners violence. In other cases, other relatives, including parents, were the abusers.

Analysing the police decisions on separation adopted by the State Police [*Valsts policija*], it can be stated that the average age of the perpetrators in 2018 was 43 years, while the average age of the protected persons was 46 years. There are many young-aged people and old-aged people in the groups of victims and abusers. Of all the decisions taken by the State police [*Valsts policija*] on separation, the protected person was a woman - in 746 cases, while the protected person was a man in only 42 cases. Between March 31, 2014 and December 31, 2018, the State Police [*Valsts policija*] has adopted 1,830 separation decisions. The number of State police [*Valsts policija*] decisions on separation has increased by about 90% in the recent years. The State police [*Valsts policija*] actively respond to the court's decisions on temporary protection against violence, and in cases of breaches, initiate criminal proceedings.

From year 2015, the state finances two new services for reducing the consequences of violence – social rehabilitation of victims of violence, and for reduction of repeated violence – social rehabilitation of persons who have committed violence. Services are provided in the form of a social rehabilitation course of up to 30 days in a social rehabilitation institution (with accommodation) or up to ten 45-minute counselling session of a psychologist, social worker and lawyer at the place of residence. Compared to 2015, when the service was introduced, the number of persons receiving the service increased in 2018. In 2015, respectively, 114 individuals received the service, of which 109 were women, while in 2018 527 individuals were provided with service, 510 of whom were women. The service to the victims of violence shall be voluntary and available both individually and in groups, depending on the needs of the individual. In 2015, 99 individuals, 59 of whom were women and 40 men, received the service, while 448 persons received the service in 2018, of whom 235 were women and 213 were men.

In addition to that, the Legal Aid Administration [*Juridiskās palīdzības administrācija*] provides informational support to victims of crime – by calling the phone-line 116006, victims of crime, including victims of violence, have access to emotional and psychological support, information on procedural rights of victims, and to support measures.

In the last five years, the State police [*Valsts policija*] has focused its attention and work on prevention of domestic violence, sexual violence, physical violence among peers and emotional violence on the Internet³⁹. Informative educational activities are carried out systematically, among them:

- media publications and videos produced by the Council of Europe;
- Awareness raising events organised by minorage inspectors in education institutions in order to reduce violence (lectures are being delivered on the subjects of "Violence", "Violence at School", "Mobbing", "Mutual Relations") and on the potential threats in the virtual environment (amount of personal information provided, correspondence) with unfamiliar people, signs of potential abuser, sexting, etc.). Presentations "Internet Security" and "Your Safety on the Internet" were organised to cover the themes of internet interaction and on providing information in social networks;
- In the autumn of 2018, training of national police station inspectors on various themes, including sexual violence and domestic violence, was held. 46 inspectors from the respective country regions of Kurzeme, 42 from Zemgale, 49 from Vidzeme and 47 from Latgale participated in the training. A total of 184 district inspectors participated in the training.

In order to reduce the manifestations of violence, the professional development courses for educators "Special Knowledge in the Field of Protecting Children's Rights" [*Speciālās zināšanas bērnu tiesību aizsardzības jomā*] were carried out, where the issue "Development of Inclusive, Safe and Non-Offensive Education for Girls" [*Iekļaujošas, drošas un no aizskārumiem brīvas izglītības vides meitenēm veidošana*] was topical. 2,908 teachers participated in these courses in

³⁹ Publications available, with a more detailed description of preventive measures and topics in schools, from year 2010 onwards. (Available from: <http://www.vp.gov.lv/?id=305&said=305&rsd=1>).

year 2015 (including 2,050 women), and 1,477 teachers participated in year 2016 (including 1,000 women).

In order to reduce public tolerance towards violence against women and domestic violence, measures aimed at raising public awareness, as well as enhancing prevention, are being implemented.

During the period 2017 to 2018, The Ministry of Welfare [*"Labklājības ministrija"*] implemented two projects - the project "One Step closer: Unified Community Response to Cases of Violence Against Women" [*"Soli tuvāk: Kopienas vienotā atbilde uz vardarbības pret sievietēm gadījumiem"*] and the project "Awareness Campaign on Zero Tolerance for Violence Against Women "Violence Thrives in Silence" [*"Izpratnes veidošanas kampaņa par nulles toleranci attiecībā uz vardarbību pret sievieti "Vardarbībai patīk klusums"*].⁴⁰ The project "One Step closer: Unified Community Response to Cases of Violence Against Women" [*"Soli tuvāk: Kopienas vienotā atbilde uz vardarbības pret sievietēm gadījumiem"*] implementation ensured development of professional competencies of specialists (officers of the State police [*Valsts policija*] and local government employees, social workers, children's rights protection specialists, health care and NGO experts) who face daily, or might face persons, who have suffered from domestic violence or other persons in close relationships with them. In turn, the project "Awareness Campaign on Zero Tolerance for Violence Against Women "Violence Thrives in silence" [*"Izpratnes veidošanas kampaņa par nulles toleranci attiecībā uz vardarbību pret sievieti "Vardarbībai patīk klusums"*]" contained activities aimed at raising public awareness and understanding of violence against women, as well as was aimed to prevent or avert violence in mutual relations between women and men. Special attention was therefore given to young people in the project to promote respectful and equal relationships between boys and girls.

According to a public survey, in year 2018, respondents more often than in year 2016 indicated that violence against women (in year 2016 - 64%, in year 2018 - 75%) and against men (in year 2016 - 55%; in year 2018- 67%) in the family is unacceptable and should always be punishable by law. Only 2% of respondents (2018 data) believe that domestic violence against women is generally acceptable.

As of October 29, 2014, with regard to the trafficking of human beings, no person has been identified who would have been sent for sexual exploitation, but persons have ascertained, apprehended and recognized as suspects for looking for commercial sex providers in Latvia. Between years 2011 and 2016, 9 criminal proceedings were initiated for sexual exploitation with misuse, violence, coercion to provide services or to commit a crime, including 8 criminal proceedings in an organized group.

During the reporting period (from 2014 to 2018), a professional inter- institutional cooperation mechanism was established, which ensures the coordinated implementation of the state policy for the prevention of human trafficking; national legislation has been improved by providing more favourable conditions for victims of human trafficking in relation to state compensation, health services, state-funded social rehabilitation services for victims of trafficking; the national legal framework on the rights of the victim has been significantly improved by introducing measures in order to prevent victims of trafficking being repeatedly traumatized during prosecution and litigation; state-funded social rehabilitation services and support services in criminal proceedings are provided by two NGOs to victims of human trafficking. The international project HESTIA "Preventing Trafficking in Human Beings and Fictitious Marriages: a Multidisciplinary Solution", within which a wide public awareness work was carried out over two years, resulted in a significant decrease in the number of women involved in bogus marriages as a result of trafficking in human beings (in year 2015 - 5 women, in year 2016 - 1 woman). The said project should be noted as an especially successful one. The HESTIA project team defined a new concept of exploitative bogus marriages and concluded that this phenomenon is closely related to trafficking in

⁴⁰ <http://www.lm.gov.lv/text/3169>

human beings for the purpose of forced marriages. This phenomenon was determined to be very gender-based in its nature, mainly women from European Union countries are the potential victims, while the majority of third-country nationals involved are men.

Table No. 9

Identified victims of trafficking – women

(Older than 18)

Year	Number (women)	Number (in total)	Forms of Exploitation	Exploitation sites (countries)
2014	26 (Latvian nationals)	34	forced marriages (22), bogus labour exploitation (4)	United Kingdom, Ireland, Greece, Cyprus, United States of America
2015	6 (Latvian nationals)	11	forced marriages (5), bogus crime (1)	United Kingdom, Ireland, Cyprus, United States of America
2016	9 (Latvian nationals)	19	forced marriages (1), bogus sexual exploitation (8)	Ireland, Germany, Spain, Latvia
2017	15 (Latvian nationals and one citizen of Tajikistan (<i>identified in the asylum procedure</i>))	20	forced marriages (7), bogus labour exploitation (3), sexual exploitation (5)	United Kingdom, Netherlands, Cyprus, Germany, Belgium, Ireland, Latvia, Tajikistan
2018	12 (Latvian nationals)	23	sexual exploitation (5), labour exploitation (2), forced bogus marriages (5)	United Kingdom, Latvia, Cyprus, Italy, Ireland
Total:	68	107		

Source: MoI

WOMEN AND ARMED CONFLICTS

Policy/Legislative Framework

A uniform military service in the National Armed Forces [*Nacionālie bruņotie spēki*] is governed by the Military Service Act [*Militārā dienesta likums*], which establishes a prohibition of differential treatment. Women perform professional service and are assigned grades of military service on general terms. The National Armed Forces [*Nacionālie bruņotie spēki*] have no restrictions on the ability of women to perform these duties in any unit, specialty or position.

The 1949 Geneva Conventions "On the protection of persons who are not participating or do not directly participate in warfare (wounded, sick and victims of shipwreck, prisoners and civilians)" are binding and operational in Latvia. Besides, the Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions, adopted in 1997, are in place in Latvia, which determine the legal protection of victims in international armed conflicts and internal (local) armed conflicts. In addition to the aforementioned international documents, Latvia is also bound by other international laws aimed at prohibiting discrimination against women and ensuring respect for human rights.

Latvia also supports the effective implementation of UN Security Council resolution No. 1325 on "Women, Peace and Security". The said resolutions call for women's rights in situations of armed conflict to be respected, as well as refers to women's role in resolving armed conflicts and ensuring stable peace.

In order to promote understanding of gender equality aspects of the National Armed Forces [*Nacionālie bruņotie spēki*] staff, the Minister of Defence approved the Guidance on Gender Equality Policy, which is included in National Armed Forces Human Resources Guidelines [*Nacionālo bruņoto spēku cilvēkresursu vadības pamatnostādnes*] for the period 2015 - 2018 (approval date February 24, 2015). Gender issues are included in the training of National Armed Forces [*Nacionālie bruņotie spēki*] soldiers and in the pre-mission training program of participants in international missions.

Situation Description

Latvia has one of the largest proportions of women in the armed forces (around 16%), which is considerably more than the average for NATO countries (around 10%). The number of women in the National Armed Forces [*Nacionālie bruņotie spēki*] personnel on December 31, 2018 amounted to 1,310, accounting for approximately 20.2% of the total number of armed forces personnel, which has not changed significantly compared to year 2013 (21%). Meanwhile, the number of women in international operations has decreased from 61 to 5 since year 2013, which has fallen from about 10% to about 8.2% in percentage, of the total number of staff. The reason for this is the reduced size of the Latvian contingent in international operations since year 2015.

In June 2018, Latvia joined the global initiative "Call for Action on Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies" (also, "Call for Action"). By joining the initiative, Latvia has expressed its commitment to train and inform personnel involved in prevention of the emergencies and provision of humanitarian aid about gender-related violence, and to integrate these issues into training materials.

In turn, from August 24, 2018 to August 24, 2019, Latvia is the presiding country of the Arms Trade Treaty. The Arms Trade Treaty, based on Article 26 of the UN Charter, advocates for the maintenance of international peace and security and the reduction of uncontrolled proliferation. As a special priority of the Latvian Presidency, it is to minimise the impact of illegal conventional arms movements on the spread of gender-based violence.

INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISM FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

In July 2018, the Cabinet of Ministers [*Ministry kabinets*] adopted the 'Plan for the Promotion of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men for 2018–2020' [*Plāns sieviešu un vīriešu vienlīdzīgu tiesību un iespēju veicināšanai 2018-2020.gadam*].⁴¹ The plan continues the policy orientations launched in previous gender equality policy planning documents, with a particular focus on ensuring equality between women and men in the labour market, and in lifelong and adult learning, as well as on reducing gender-based violence and promoting gender equality among professionals and society. Range of measures is aimed at promotion of comprehensive understanding of the fundamental principles of equality between women and men among experts of authorities involved in education, labour and economic policy. A number of measures have also been identified through which it is planned to investigate, in depth, and link these sectors up with gender equality issues existent within them. In order to raise public awareness of gender issues, work on public awareness of policy outcomes will be stepped up, while simultaneously raising the profile of gender equality in daily life.

In year 2016, the Cabinet of Ministers [*Ministru kabinets*] approved the "Guidelines for Latvian Development Cooperation Policy [*Latvijas Attīstības sadarbības politikas pamatnostādnes*] for period from 2016 to 2020" The aim of Latvia's cooperation development policy is to contribute to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 in developing countries, especially in the priority partner countries of Latvia, promoting sustainable development and poverty eradication, the rule of law and good governance. The guidelines stipulate that Latvia, in implementing development cooperation – both bilaterally and multilaterally – shall follow the following principles: the main responsibility of the partner countries over their national development; coordination and partnership; sustainability of results and predictability of aid; transparency and policy-coherence for sustainable development. One of the principles is the implementation of horizontal issues (good governance, democracy, and respect for human rights, gender equality and environmental sustainability) in all the development cooperation activities.

Latvia has chosen an integrated approach to ensure gender equality, which means that gender equality should be seen as a horizontal principle that fits into all sectorial policies defined in the country at all stages of their development and implementation, involving all stakeholders and partners.

Coordination of equal opportunities and rights policies for women and men is the responsibility of the Ministry of Welfare [*Labklājības ministrija*]⁴², which include the following: 1) clarification of gender equality principles for other public administration institutions; 2) involvement in the development of policy planning documents of other public administration institutions; 3) identification of the areas where different treatment on the basis of gender is observed; 4) developing a comprehensive vision of equal opportunities and rights for women and men. In addition, the Ministry of Welfare [*Labklājības ministrija*] regularly monitors that sectorial ministries, when planning inter-ministry policies and policies in their areas of responsibility, take into account the different situations and circumstances, needs and equal opportunities of women and men (within the initial impact assessments, within planning documents). The Ministry of Welfare [*Labklājības ministrija*] monitors the observance of the horizontal principle of the EU Funds "Equal Opportunities" in the planning, implementation and monitoring of EU projects, including ensuring that, during the preparation and implementation of the fund programmes,

⁴¹ The July 4, 2018 Cabinet of Ministers [*Ministru kabinets*] Order No. 298 'On the Plan for the Promotion of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men for 2018–2020' [*"Par Sieviešu un vīriešu vienlīdzīgu tiesību un iespēju veicināšanas plānu 2018-2020.gadam"*]. <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/300170-par-sieviesu-un-viriesu-vienlidzigu-tiesibu-un-iespeju-veicinasanas-planu-2018-2020-gadam>

⁴² The January 27, 2004 Cabinet of Ministers [*Ministru kabinets*] Regulations No. 49 "Regulations of the Ministry of Welfare" [*"Labklājības ministrijas nolikums"*], Article 5.3.

including in relation to monitoring, reporting and evaluation, equality between men and women, and mainstreaming of gender equality, are taken into account and promoted.⁴³

A Gender Equality committee has been set up to promote cooperation and participation of ministries, NGOs, social partners, municipalities and other stakeholders, as well as to promote the implementation, monitoring and development of gender equality policies.⁴⁴ The said committee has a key role to play in defining gender equality policy priorities and action lines, as well as in monitoring the implementation of gender equality policies in other sectorial policies.

Other institutions and organizations also play an important role in promoting equal opportunities and rights for women and men. For example, the State Labour Inspectorate [*Valsts darba inspekcija*] (SLI) implements state supervision and control in the field of labour relations and labour protection⁴⁵, the Ombudsman [*Tiesībsargs*] monitors compliance with the principle of equal treatment and promotes the elimination of all forms of discrimination and promotes public awareness of human rights and their protection⁴⁶, CSB collects, processes and analyses statistical information on the economy and processes in the social and economic sphere⁴⁷, Society Integration Foundation [*Sabiedrības integrācijas fonds*] (SIF) financially supports and promotes social integration⁴⁸. The non-governmental sector, which promotes public awareness of gender equality issues, also plays an important role in policy planning and monitoring and in the provision of services.

According to the EC recommendations, gender mainstreaming should be carried out at every stage of the budget process⁴⁹. In order to implement gender mainstreaming approach in budget processes in Latvia, a study "Analysis of gender impact in state and local government budget processes" [*"Dzimuma aspekta ietekmes analīze valsts un pašvaldības budžeta procesos"*] was carried out in 2017, within the framework of which SEA and Aizkraukle Municipality budget sub-programs are analysed, in order to determine whether, and to what extent, budget processes are being implemented with regard to principles of gender equality in mind. The study concludes that, so far, gender budgeting has not been included in budget planning processes, budget impact analysis is often lacking in quality data disaggregated by gender, employee knowledge and interest is relatively limited. As the first step in the implementation of the research recommendations in practice, amendments were made to the Cabinet of Ministers [*Ministru kabinets*] instructions on the analysis of the state budget. These changes require that ministries and other central state institutions in the annual report on the results of the state budget and the performance of their performance indicators will also have to provide information on the performance of the performance indicators by gender. Such information will need to be provided for performance indicators that are to be measured in terms of numbers of individuals, if such information is available in the institutions' internal records.

⁴³ Regulation (EU) of the European Parliament and the Council (EC) No. 1303/2013 of 17 December 2013 laying down common rules for the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and the general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, The European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No. 1083/2006, Article 7.

⁴⁴ The committee was established on the basis of the Advisory Council on Gender Equality Policy, established in 2002.

⁴⁵ Act on the SLI [*"VDI likums"*] (in force since July 10, 2008), Article 3, and Section 1.

⁴⁶ Act on the Ombudsman [*Tiesībsarga likums*] (in force since January 1, 2007), Article 11, Sections 1 and 5.

⁴⁷ November 30, 2004 Cabinet of Ministers [*Ministru kabinets*] Regulations No. 994 "Regulations of the Central Statistical Bureau" [*"Centrālās statistikas pārvaldes nolikums"*], Article 4.2.

⁴⁸ Act on the SIF [*"SIF likums"*] (in force since September 1, 2001), Article 3, Section 1.

⁴⁹ <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/tools-and-methods/gender-budgeting>

WOMEN AND THE MEDIA

Policy/Legislative Framework

The mass media, by disseminating information, take part in creation of people's identity and become the contributors or hinders of social change, for example, they can hinder or promote structural changes aimed at gender equality. National Media policy is determined by the Media Policy Guidelines [*Mediju politikas pamatnostādnes*] for period from 2016 to 2020⁵⁰. Gender issues have been addressed in a number of measures of the guidelines, such as the creation of a common code of conduct for the media industry, the work of the media ombudsman, and the education of media professionals.

The Electronic Media Act [*Elektronisko plašsaziņas līdzekļu likums*] states that electronic media, while respecting diversity of views, upholds the idea of an independent, democratic and law-governed state, respects human rights and acts in the public interest.

Situation Description

For the development of media literacy among the inhabitants of Latvia, the Ministry of Culture [*Kultūras ministrija*] implements various activities in different directions – conducts research and analysis, provides support to educators and librarians, supports the development of media literacy training materials, supports measures aimed to promote media literacy among young people, as well as implements other measures to strengthen media literacy. One recent example is the social campaign for media literacy and child safety for children aged 5 to 8 years "Superheroes on the Internet!" [*Supervaroņi internetā!*] (Initiated in cooperation with the State police [*Valsts policija*], Ministry of Culture [*Kultūras ministrija*], Centre for Safer Internet [*Drošāka interneta centrs*], companies "Rimi", "White" and "Deep White"). The campaign was launched on September 27, 2018 with the aim of promoting children's media literacy and internet safety by informing both children and adults about the risks and opportunities of the Internet. Within the campaign, there are five videos created that teach children to understand the different situations they might face on the Internet. Campaign images – children SuperAnna and SuperTom encourage children to learn and remember simple basic rules of security and media literacy: What should not be said to a stranger on the Internet? When to call for help from an adult you trust? What can be deceptive on the Internet? How to behave on the Internet? How can the Internet help? Within the framework of the campaign, methodological recommendations for pre-school and primary school have been developed (available to all interested persons free of charge <http://vp.gov.lv/supervaronis/>). Information on campaign materials and a call to use them in lessons were sent to schools and kindergartens in Latvia and to diaspora weekend schools. Campaign videos were broadcast on public television, in cinemas before film screenings, campaign posters were placed on outdoor advertising stands.

In October 2018, however, the communication campaign "Public Media is not a Comedy" [*Medijs nav komēdijs*] organised by the State Chancellery [*Valsts kanceleja*], the Ministry of Culture [*Kultūras ministrija*] and the Ministry of the Interior [*Iekšlietu ministrija*] has been launched, the aim of which is to inspire the credibility of the information transmitted in social media. It addressed mainly young people, as well as seniors, who, according to the results of the study, are less critical in evaluating information in the media, including social media. The site ej.uz/taure provides tips on how to distinguish reliable information from misinformation. In order to

⁵⁰ Media Policy Guidelines [*Mediju politikas pamatnostādnes*] for period from 2016 to 2020, ref. to <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=286455>

raise interest in the campaign, and at the same time to convey a message about the need for a critical attitude towards false messages, two short videos were created to reach the audience in social media.⁵¹

The Ministry of Culture [*Kultūras ministrija*] gathered information on the number of women and men in media and journalism study programs at Bachelor and Master Level in major Latvian universities.⁵² The gender ratio of prospective communication (including journalists) specialists was 862 women and 226 men in year 2016, which accounted for 79% and 21% of the students in these programs, respectively. In contrast, the gender ratio of the teaching staff was more proportional – 108 women and 82 men (57% and 43%).

A survey conducted in Latvia in year 2009 on the proportion of genders in print media shows that women in Latvian national newspapers (52%) and especially regional newspapers (72%) are more likely to be journalists. Truth is told, in Latvia, as well as in other countries, there are more men among media managers and owners (52%). The newer study published in year 2016 also confirms the historically established situation in which women dominate in the Latvian journalism. Latvian media lack editorial policies for gender equality. Such a policy would be important to ensure equal pay for equal work.

In year 2016, materials on serious economic and political issues, as well as on corruption, unofficial "envelope" wages, and other topics brought up by research journalism, are composed by, or respective sections in media, are headed by both the genders.⁵³

Media Policy Guidelines for the period 2016-2020, and their implementation plan on gender equality, focus on media literacy seminars and presentations, where one example is the criticism of the existing dissemination of stereotypes and the creation of artificial beauty (with image processing programs), showing what type of the outer appearance and character characteristics should be attained by each of the genders, what roles they should have in the society, etc.

⁵¹ More information and videos can be viewed here: <https://www.km.gov.lv/lv/ministrija/jaunumi/ar-aicinajumu-nepiedalities-komedija-uzsakta-kampana-iedzivotaju-medijpratibas-veicinasanai-2827>

⁵² Information summarized at the beginning of 2016 on the following: 1) University of Latvia study program "Communication Science", 2) Riga Stradins University study programs "Journalism", "Multimedia Communication", "Communication and Media Studies", 3) Business university "Turība" and its study program "Media and journalism", 4) Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences study programs "Communication and Public Relations", "Media Studies and Journalism", "Management and Journalism". When collecting the number of lecturers, both elected lecturers and guest lecturers were taken into account in the academic year 2015/2016. It should be noted that a more precise separation of students from journalism and other communication specialties would require a more detailed study. Public relations study programs are not included in this study (except in cases where other denominations related to communication sciences are included in the program title), and there are study programs in which students may specialize in one of the modules in later study years.

⁵³ Zelce, V. [*Zelče, V.*] (Ed.). (2018). *Diversity of Latvian Media Environment*. Riga: University of Latvia printing house. Pages 96 to 97. Available from: https://www.km.gov.lv/uploads/ckeditor/files/mediju_politika/petijumi/Latvijas-mediju-vides-daudzveidiba-small.pdf

HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN

Policy/Legislative Framework

During the period from 2014 to 2018, the Criminal Law [*Krimināllikums*], the Civil Procedure Law [*Civilprocesa likums*], the Law on the Protection of Children's Rights [*Bērnu tiesību aizsardzības likums*], the Law On Orphan's Courts [*Bāriņtiesu likums*] and other related legal acts have made a number of substantive amendments regarding the elimination of violence against women and the prohibition of discrimination based on gender. A number of policy planning documents have been developed over the specific period in order to strengthen the implementation of human rights in the field of gender equality and in order to inform the public about the importance of women's rights, such as the Plan for the Promotion of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men for 2018–2020 [*Plāns sieviešu un vīriešu vienlīdzīgu tiesību un iespēju veicināšanai 2018 – 2020.gadam*] and the Inclusive Employment Guidelines [*Iekļaujošas nodarbinātības pamatnostādnes*] for period 2015 to 2020, the Guidelines on preventing trafficking in human beings [*Cilvēku tirdzniecības novēršanas pamatnostādnes*] for period from 2014 to 2020, Latvian Media Policy Guidelines [*Latvijas mediju politikas pamatnostādnes*] for period from 2016 to 2020.

Public awareness measures on various risks of discrimination (including gender), promoting tolerance and social cohesion, are implemented through the ESF co-financed project "Promotion of Diversity (Prevention of Discrimination)" [*Dažādības veicināšana (diskriminācijas novēršana)*].

The promotion of gender equality is one of the basic principles of Latvia's development cooperation policy, and it remains one of Latvia's priorities in foreign policy. In the framework of development co-operation, by year 2020, 8% of bilateral official development assistance in Latvia is targeted to direct support for gender equality in development cooperation partner countries.⁵⁴ Women's rights and gender equality were the priorities of the Latvian human rights area within the EU Presidency in the first half of year 2015, when EU Member States agreed within joint Council conclusions on gender equality in development cooperation and on the Council Conclusions on reducing the gap between men and women in pensions. Similarly, women's rights and gender equality were among the priorities of Latvia when it was a member of the UN Human Rights Council from 2015 to 2017.

Latvia's participation in UN Women (UN Agency for Gender Equality and Women's Opportunities), and especially Latvia's election to the Agency's Executive Board for period 2013 to 2015, as well as participation in the Equal Futures Partnership, participation in the International Partnership for Equal Future Partnerships, has enabled the promotion of women's rights at international level, and provided an additional incentive to review and develop national policies in this area. Latvia has also provided financial support to UN Women. In year 2016, Latvia made a voluntary contribution to its budget in the amount of USD 10,000, while in 2018 Latvia made a voluntary contribution of EUR 20,000.

Latvia continues to be actively involved in international projects aimed at promoting women's rights. A project was implemented to support NGOs in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and in order to enhance the capacity of public administration, which has led to the activation of the local community for women's rights and domestic violence. In Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, support units have been set up which include operational support hotlines. In 2016, the project "Let not the Girls Leave the School" [*"Lai meitenes nepamet skolu"*] aimed to expand economic opportunities for women and girls in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan by providing access to education and educating about the early negative effects of marriages on girls' potential and early marriage practices as

⁵⁴ "Guidelines for Development Cooperation Policy [*Attīstības sadarbības politikas pamatnostādnes*] for period from 2016 to 2020", <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/284775-par-attistibas-sadarbibas-politikas-pamatnostadnem-2016-2020-gadam>

violation of girls' rights. During the project, 40 educators, parents and representatives of civil society organizations were trained, as well as handbook for local communities, education authorities and schools and parents in Kyrgyz and Tajik languages was released. Also in year 2017, 24 local government representatives, school principals and NGO representatives were trained in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in order to provide girls with access to education and prevent early marriages, as well as on the reducing the risk of social exclusion and radicalism in schools. Similarly, 40 youth leaders in the Karasu district of Kyrgyzstan and Ashta district in Tajikistan were trained, in order to prevent violence and increase mutual understanding. In year 2018, an international conference "Dignified Life – Choice in the Baltics and the Nordic Countries was organized and had a great success. Effective action in order to eradicate sexual exploitation" [*"Cienpīlna dzīve – izvēle Baltijā un Ziemeļvalstīs. Efektīva rīcība seksuālās ekspluatācijas izskaušanai"*] was organised, providing the transfer of experience from Latvia and other OECD countries to experts from Central Asia and the EU Eastern Partnership countries.

The contribution of NGOs, and the activities undertaken to educate different groups of society and raise awareness of gender issues, has been crucial. Cooperation with NGOs, which are considered to be the most active organizations in this field at national level, has also been established, among them - "Latvian Network of Women's Non-Governmental Organizations" [*"Latvijas Sieviešu nevalstisko organizāciju sadarbības tīkls"*], association "Centre Marta" [*Centrs "Marta"*], and "Institute for Women's Rights" [*"Sieviešu tiesību institūts"*]. These organizations as umbrella structures bring together about 70 different associations and informal interest groups whose focus is directly on the implementation of gender equality, the protection of women's rights, the elimination of gender stereotypes, public education. Since year 2016, the state budget program "NGO Fund" [*"NVO fonds"*] has been available, which provides support to NGOs in order to promote the sustainable development of civil society, allows associations and foundations to encourage and develop democratic processes, in order to provide services aimed at improving the quality of life, organizing measures in order to inform and educate the public about social processes. With the support of the "NGO Fund" [*"NVO fonds"*], in year 2016, NGOs have been supported in order to promote equality between women and men, enabling more effective representation of different groups and interests in the process of drafting and discussing policy documents, as well as information and education activities.

Promotion of equal treatment and the elimination of all forms of discrimination is an important activity of the Ombudsman's Office [*Tiesībsarga birojs*]. The Ombudsman's [*Tiesībsargs*] functions include monitoring compliance with the principle of equal treatment and preventing discrimination, as well as promoting public awareness and understanding of human rights and the mechanisms for protecting such rights. The Ombudsman [*Tiesībsargs*] helps victims of discrimination by reviewing individual complaints about discrimination by public authorities, natural and legal persons, or violation of equal treatment by providing legal advice, as well as by promoting reconciliation between the parties to the dispute.

In the area of public information, Latvia facilitated access to information on women's rights and the prohibition of discrimination based on gender in period from 2014 to 2018. Latvia has taken note of both the concerted conclusions on the eradication and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls adopted by the 57th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women on March 15, 2013, as well as the Political Declaration adopted on March 9, 2015 by the Commission on the Status of Women, by which UN member states commit themselves to full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Action Program by year 2030, and calls for women and girls to be able to fully and equally implement all human rights and fundamental freedoms, to achieve gender equality and to ensure equal opportunities for women and girls throughout their whole life cycle.

In year 2014, 6 regional (in cities of Jelgava, Valmiera, Jurmala, Ogre, Liepāja and Rezekne) two-day interdisciplinary workshops for judges, prosecutors and lawyers "I and the

society – our opportunities and rights" [*"Es un sabiedrība – mūsu iespējas un tiesības"*] were held. The participants learned about connection between public welfare and principles of equality, as well as on non-discrimination in the context of international and national law. At the same time, participants acquired the knowledge required to recognize stereotypes that promote discrimination, as well as were given opportunity to complement their personal competencies in communicating with a foreign and culturally diverse stakeholders in order to improve one's professional skills. In total, 48 judges were trained at the said workshops.⁵⁵ The Latvian Judicial Training Centre [*Latvijas tiesnešu mācību centrs*] provides further training and professional development measures for judges and other court personnel, as well as ensures the participation of judges in international seminars on human rights and gender issues (e. g., prohibition of discrimination on grounds of gender in labour relations).

⁵⁵ Consolidated Fourth, Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Reports of the Republic of Latvia on the Implementation of the 1979 United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women for the Period from January 1, 2005 to December 31, 2017. Article 8. <http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/documents/6308>

THE GIRL-CHILD

During the reporting period, significant investments have been made in order to financially support families with children. The support system for adoption and out-of-family care has also been improved in order to develop out-of-family care services similar to family environment (guardians, foster families), and in order to ensure that children live in a family or favourable family – like environment. During the report period, the number of children in out-of-home care has gradually decreased (ref. to Table No. 10), which is the result of targeted measures aimed at reducing the number of children living in institutions. Starting in July 2018, two types of specialized foster families are being introduced – crisis foster families who are ready to accommodate a child at any time of the day, and specialized foster families, meant for children with severe functional disorders who need special care. In parallel, support centres for out-of-family care have been set up in order to provide psychosocial and practical assistance not only to foster families, but also to present and future guardians, host families and adopters. Families who acquire the status of a specialized foster family, in addition to the state-guaranteed compensation for the duties of a specialized foster family, the municipal allowance for a child's minimum amount of double the amount of maintenance, and a lump-sum allowance for clothing and soft inventory, also receive a one-off reimbursement of housing refurbishing costs. In addition, the year 2019 budget provides for a new form of support for persons who have adopted a child before the child has reached the age of 18. Monthly maintenance allowance is scheduled to be started after the July 1, 2019.

Table No. 10

Number of children in out-of – family /foster care

	Total	<i>Incl. girls</i>	Incl. Foster family	<i>Incl. girls</i>	Incl. in the family of the guardian	<i>Incl. girls</i>	Incl. in institution	<i>Incl. girls</i>
2014	7606	3737	1224	601	4831	2447	1551	689
2015	7281	3533	1232	606	4620	2312	1429	615
2016	6957	3379	1193	578	4548	2294	1216	507
2017	6669	3208	1173	556	4459	2235	1037	417
2018	6438	3025	1246	562	4398	2144	794	319

Source: MoW

A family with a child with severe disability needs to reorganize its life in order to take care and provide the support child needs. In turn, the child itself often has little chance of trying to learn to integrate into society. There are 8262 children with disabilities in Latvia by the beginning of 2018 (ref. to Table No. 11). In order to provide support to families with a disabled child, the ESF has made available provision of a day-off service of 30 days a year when the child is taken care of completely, and free of charge, by appropriate specialists. For the children involved, at that time, the service provides self-care, specialist counselling, catering, walks and efficient leisure and free-time activities. Every child under the age of 17, who has been granted a disability status group, has the opportunity to receive free social rehabilitation services – such as provided by psychologist, speech therapist and other specialist services, animal therapy, as well as counselling. Each child's

needs are specifically assessed and appropriate services are chosen accordingly. Every family who has children with disabilities, and who, according to the decision taken by the "National Commission for Medical Expertise on Health and Work Ability" [*"Veselības un darbspēju ekspertīzes ārstu Valsts komisija"*], need special care, and whose parents study or work, is provided with a care service that provides care and supervision of the child, development of abilities, and meaningful spending of leisure time. Parents with child with disabilities up to the age of four (including) may receive this service up to 50 hours of care per week. A day-care centre service is available for all children with functional disabilities, which provides supervision and individual support. In this way, legal representatives representing a child with functional disabilities, or their foster families, can continue their work or going about in their daily routines. In year 2018, 844 children with functional disabilities were provided with social care, respite (day-off service) and social rehabilitation services. With the support of the ESF until year 2021, the system of support for social services will be improved, within which mechanisms for financing of community-based social services will be developed and tested.

Table No. 11

Number of children (0-17) with disabilities, beginning of year

year	girls	boys	Total
2014	3534	4777	8311
2015	3544	4822	8366
2016	3551	4812	8363
2017	3551	4782	8293
2018	3487	4775	8262

Source: MoW

As for non-financial support of the most deprived persons in Latvia in the planning period 2014 to 2020, 17.4 thousand people were supported by the European Support Fund for the Most Deprived Persons (hereinafter referred to as the ESFMDP), within the framework of which, hygiene and household goods for families with children were issued, and 9.7 thousand pupils in needy and low-income families received study kits. Additional food sets for families with infants and young children under 2 years of age have been received by 1 thousand families, and 1.6 thousand families additionally received hygiene packages for infants and young children up to 2 years of age.

The obligation of the municipalities shall be to cover the costs of a private pre-school educational institution in case the child who has reached the age of one and a half, and whose place of residence is declared in the administrative territory of the respective municipality, is not provided with a place in the municipal kindergarten. Since year 2016, a common methodology and procedure for determining costs has been established in order to provide a transparent and unified approach to local government budget calculations. Municipalities annually recalculate the amount of support and the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development [*Vides aizsardzības un reģionālās attīstības ministrija*] monitors, whether the local government has made correct calculations. 20 municipalities, according to their budget possibilities, have determined the amount of support for children using childcare services (babysitters). In year 2018, the average monthly support for one child was EUR 142.10.

The transition to a competence-based curriculum in general education will begin with the pre-primary educational stage on September 1, 2019. Providing the transition to competence – based approach, in autumn of year 2018, the Cabinet of Ministers [*Ministru kabinets*] has approved

new guidelines for pre-school education and examples of pre-school education programmes⁵⁶. The content of pre-school education is focused on expanding and training the individual, as well as social skills of children.

There are 12 centres for special education development in Latvia⁵⁷, which ensure smooth placement of special education institution-development centres in all territories of Latvian planning regions. Thus, children with special needs, which have been integrated into general education institutions, as well as their parents and educators, are given equal opportunities in order to receive consultative and learning instruction support for the implementation of quality inclusive education.

Regarding primary education, the competence of Latvian primary school pupils in mathematics, natural sciences and reading corresponds to the average level of the European Union and OECD member states. In the gender perspective, the tendency is that girls in Latvia show better achievements in PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) studies than boys, especially in rural schools⁵⁸.

Evaluating the willingness of Latvian students to work in professions related to natural sciences, there are significant gender differences – 2 times more boys than girls would like to become science professionals and technicians (9.6% and 4.8%, respectively); 5 times more girls than boys (15.8% and 3.0%, respectively) would like to work in the field of health and medicine, professions of natural sciences (physicists, chemists, biologists, etc.) would like to be acquired by 1.1% boys and 0.4% girls, while information and communication technology specialists would like to be 7.3% boys and only 0.4% girls.

In order to improve the educational achievements of Latvian pupils and in order to promote access to education, as well as in order to create a support system for the development of their individual abilities, in year 2016, work on the implementation of various activities aimed to develop the competence – based curriculum, including in STEM subjects, was started with the co-financing of the EU funds⁵⁹. This was carried out in order to improve teachers' professional competencies and to develop individual competences of learners.

After a study of pupils' health habits⁶⁰ in the academic year 2013/2014, and the resulting findings, 21.0% of pupils rated their health as excellent, 60.1% rated their health as good, and 17.6% and 1.3%, respectively, rated their health as medium and poor. Compared to boys, girls give worse rating about their health. 23.6% of girls assess their health as mediocre and bad, while only 13.7% of boys rate their health at this level. With increasing age, the proportion of pupils who consider their health to be mediocre/bad is increasing, especially among 15-year-old girls. For girls of all ages, the prevalence of poor/mediocre health self-esteem is significantly higher than for boys, especially among 15-year-olds.

Since year 2011, the proportion of boys and girls which smoke, has decreased significantly. In Latvia, according to the year 2014 survey, 24.7 of pupils in the age group 13-15 have used any

⁵⁶ The November 21, 2018 Cabinet of Ministers [*Ministru kabinets*] Regulations No 716 "Regulations on National Pre-school Education Guidelines and Pre-school Education Programs" [*Noteikumi par valsts pirmsskolas izglītības vadlīnijām un pirmsskolas izglītības programmu paraugiem*] <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/303371>

⁵⁷ Data as per September 1, 2017

⁵⁸ Andrejs Geske [*Andrejs Geske*], Andris Grīnfelds [*Andris Grīnfelds*], Andris Kangro [*Andris Kangro*], Rita Kiselova [*Rita Kiseļova*], Latvia in the OECD International Student Assessment Program 2012 - First Conclusions, ref. to http://sf.viaa.gov.lv/library/files/original/Latvija_SSNP_2012_pirmie_rezultati_un_secinajumi.pdf and Kangro, A. [*Kangro, A.*], (2016). Latvia in the OECD International Student Assessment Program 2015 - First Results and Conclusions, ref. to http://www.izm.gov.lv/images/aktualitates/2016/PISA_2015_06122016.pdf

⁵⁹ Specific support target [*Specifiskais atbalsta mērķis*] (SST) 8.3.1. "Development of the curriculum for general education based on the competence approach", SST 8.3.2. "Increase of support for general education institutions for development of individual competences of learners".

⁶⁰ Center for Disease Prevention and Control [*Slimību profilakses un kontroles centrs*], "[Study of the health habits of Latvian students](http://www.spkc.gov.lv/veselibu-ietekmejos-paradumu-petijumi/)" [*"Latvijas skolēnu veselības paradumu pētījums"*] Report results and trends of the academic year 2013/2014, <http://www.spkc.gov.lv/veselibu-ietekmejos-paradumu-petijumi/>

types of tobacco products in the last month, which is 39% less than in year 2011. In year 2014, 17% of pupils smoked cigarettes, which is 46.7% less than in year 2011. The proportion of pupils using electronic cigarettes is increasing. In the last month, 10.7% smoked an electronic cigarette for one or more days.⁶¹ In year 2015, the Ministry of Health [*Veselības ministrija*] and the Centre for Disease Prevention and Control [*Slimību profilakses un kontroles centrs*] continued the campaign against passive smoking "Avoid the Smoker!" [*"Izvairies no smēķētāja!"*] In order to encourage both parents and general public to protect children from passive smoking and exposure to cigarette smoke, this has a significant negative impact on health.

In year 2015, the proportion of 15-year-olds who have used alcohol once in their lifetime, has decreased. In year 2015, 89% of 15-year-olds who were surveyed had tasted alcohol at least once, which is 7% less than in the previous study in year 2011 (when the number was 96%). During the last year (last 12 months), 77.0% of the 15-year-olds who were surveyed have used alcoholic beverages, which is 10.0% less than in year 2011 (87.4%). Over the last 12 months, the proportion of alcohol-consuming girls (79.9%) is significantly higher than that of boys (74.2%). In year 2015, the CDPC implemented an informative campaign "To be clear!" [*"Lai būtu skaidrs!"*] with a view to gradually change the public attitudes towards drinking among minors, and making child/adolescent alcohol use unacceptable in the society.

Between year 2016 and 2023, with the support of the European Social Fund, awareness-raising and educational activities aimed at the promotion of health, mental and emotional health, as well as the importance of disease prevention (healthy diet, sexual and reproductive health, negative impact by addictive behaviour, substance abuse, violence, mockery, mobbing) are targeted at pupils and young people.

Between year 2014 and 2018, the total share of young unemployed registered in SEA (aged 15-24) gradually decreased (from 9.2% to 5.8%).

Table No. 12 Unemployed youth registered in the SEA (15-24)

	Participants in total	Women	Men
2014	7522	4300	3222
2015	6827	3787	3040
2016	6075	3303	2772
2017	4250	2384	1866
2018	3445	1945	1499

Source: SEA

Young people used training measures offered by SEA in order to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for the labour market, and it should be noted that the proportions were similar by gender.

⁶¹ Centre for Disease Prevention and Control [*"Slimību profilakses un kontroles centrs"*], International study on youth smoking [*"Starptautiskais jauniešu smēķēšanas pētījums"*], year 2014 survey in Latvia and trends, https://www.spkc.gov.lv/upload/Petijumi%20un%20zinojumi/GYTS/gyts_2014_zinojums.pdf

Table No. 13

Young people (15-24) have commenced participation in vocational training organised by the SEA, non-formal education programmes and practical training with their employer

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total	2591	2557	1447	1569	1602	1218
Women	1527	1375	787	835	856	618
Men	1064	1182	660	734	746	600
Share of women, % among unemployed	58,9	53,8	54,4	53,2	53,4	50,7

Source: SEA

WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

On March 26, 2014, the Cabinet of Ministers [*Ministru kabinets*] approved the Environmental Policy Guidelines [*Vides politikas pamatnostādnes*] for period 2014 to 2020, where the main areas of activity are soil and subterranean depths, nature protection, air protection, climate change, water resources and the Baltic Sea, environmental pollution and risks, environmental health and horizontal issues in environmental protection as a whole. No policy area includes a gender perspective.

During the reporting period, Latvia has not implemented measures aimed to promote greater involvement of women in decision-making at all levels of decision-making on natural resources and environmental management, environmental protection and restoration. There have also been no activities aimed to promote participation of citizens, especially women, in public services planning, environmental planning, and urban infrastructure development.

SECTION THREE. NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES

Latvia has chosen an integrated approach to ensure gender equality, which means that gender equality should be seen as a horizontal principle that fits into all sectorial policies defined in the country at all stages of their development and implementation, involving all stakeholders and partners. Development and coordination of equal opportunities and rights policies for women and men is the responsibility of the Ministry of Welfare [*Labklājības ministrija*]. The Ministry of Welfare [*Labklājības ministrija*] (MW), as the responsible national regulatory authority, develops national policy to implement an integrated approach to gender equality issues⁶². Since 2010, the Gender Equality Committee has been set up with the order of the Minister of Welfare, whose main task is to make proposals for setting priorities and directions of action for the implementation of gender equality policy, as well as to monitor the implementation of gender equality policies in various sectors. In this consultative body, NGO members are actively involved alongside with members from state agencies and ministries. The institutional mechanism for implementing gender equality policies is described in Part 2 of this report, which provides information on institutional mechanism.

At EU level, Member States, including Latvia, have agreed on qualitative and quantitative indicators for almost all areas of the Platform of Action (except for human rights of women) to regularly assess the progress of implementation of the Platform for Action. Similarly, EIGE, which carries out the evaluation of all EU Member States, and assesses the need to propose new indicators, is an important support for monitoring the implementation of the Platform for Action.⁶³ Every three years, the MW prepares the assessment according to the approved indicators. All documents developed in the field of gender equality, including the situation in the areas of the Platform for Action, and Latvia's progress in implementing gender equality policies, are available online, on the website of the Ministry of Welfare.⁶⁴

As for a UN Member State, the Millennium Development Goals are binding for Latvia and their achievement is an important indicator of ensuring the well-being and social development, including the provision of equal opportunities for women and men.

Latvia implements the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of the UN by incorporating them into its national planning system. Latvia's important SDGs are determined by Latvia's Sustainable Development Strategy for year 2030⁶⁵, and are implemented by the National Development Plan for year 2020⁶⁶, and the sectorial development guidelines and plans whose objectives and deliverables are budget-related. The Plan for the Promotion of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men for 2018–2020 has integrated SDGs for gender equality objectives and sub-objectives for period 2007 - 2010. Latvian municipalities base their development plans on local priorities, taking into account available resources.

According to Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers [*Ministru kabinets*] on the procedure of public participation in the development planning process, civil society has the opportunity to participate in the drafting of any policy planning document, expressing its opinion during the drafting of the document until its approval by the Government or the parliament of The Republic of Latvia – Saeima.

In July 2018, Latvia presented Latvia's Report to the United Nations on the implementation of the SDGs, at the UN High Level Policy Forum. The report summarizes how Latvia's residents, government, municipalities, entrepreneurs and non-governmental organizations work together with the aim to actively implement the 2015 UN-endorsed 17 SDGs by year 2030, show progress made

⁶² The January 27, 2004 Cabinet of Ministers [*Ministru kabinets*] Regulations No. 49 "Regulations of the Ministry of Welfare" [*"Labklājības ministrijas nolikums"*], Article 5.3.

⁶³ <https://eige.europa.eu/beijing-platform-for-action>

⁶⁴ <http://www.lm.gov.lv/lv/nozares-politika/dzimumu-lidztiesiba/2-publikacijas-petijumi-un-statistika/2-publikacijas>

⁶⁵ <http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/documents/3323>

⁶⁶ <https://www.pkc.gov.lv/lv/valsts-attistibas-planosana/nacionalais-attistibas-plans>

and challenges present at the national level, and highlights creative implementation, tools and cooperation practices. The report identifies indicators to measure progress in the implementation of the SDG No. 5 Gender Equality Goal.

SECTION FOUR. STATISTICS AND DATA

Latvia is a member of the European Union, and its statistics are integrated in the European Statistical System. In Latvia, a very wide range of indicators and statistical information is collected and compiled by gender, including data collected in the information systems and databases of state and local government institutions, as well as data from surveys conducted by the CSB. The CSB regularly collects statistical information by gender. Information is available on employment, wages, poverty risk and financial security, education levels, health status assessment, access to information technologies and a range of other indicators. In all random surveys, inclusion of gender variable is mandatory. Survey databases are available for data users. Summary tables by gender are available on the CSB website.

In total, more than 75% of all statistics collected on a person are available by gender. Also, indicators at different levels have been developed in order to assess national achievements and make comparisons between them in the field of gender equality between EU Member States⁶⁷ and also at the global level⁶⁸. The LM, as the body responsible for gender equality policy coordination, has established a list of indicators, broken down by area of the Platform for Action, and more than 300 indicators have been identified overall. A list of key indicators is added to Annex 2. In order to ensure greater publicity of data and access to information on gender equality issues, the MW every three years conducts a review of the situation⁶⁹ on the basis of indicators⁷⁰ endorsed by the EU Council in line with the challenges identified in the Beijing Platform for Action. The CSB has also established a section on gender equality indicators⁷¹. These assessment reports cover areas that clearly illustrate the situation of ensuring equal opportunities and rights for women and men, as well as allow identifying problems and challenges that require utmost attention.

Overall, the monitoring of the implementation of the SDG in Latvia is the responsibility of the Cross - Sectorial Coordination Centre [*Pārresoru koordinācijas centrs*], but the CSB is responsible for listing the total SDG indicators. The indicators for each field shall be recorded and monitored by the bodies responsible for the sector. In order to launch the monitoring of the implementation of the SDGs in Latvia, a list of SDG indicators has been established, including for the monitoring of the SDG 5 target, attached in the Annex 1.

The CSB publishes a special edition - publication "Women and Men in Latvia" on the regular basis (latest issue of year 2016), which provides topical information on the situation of women and men in society: the number of women and men, their distribution by age and nationality, marriage, divorce, birth rate, mortality, morbidity, employment, unemployment, wages, income, poverty risk index, social security, education, tourism, use of information technology, offences, representation in legislative and executive bodies. In Latvia, as in Europe as a whole, the demographic structure of the population reflects the rapid ageing. In year 2018, the publication "Pre-retirement age population in Latvia" [*"Pirmspensijas vecuma iedzīvotāji Latvijā"*] described a group of people who will soon reach or have reached the retirement age, 55 - 64 years. Every year, the publication "Children in Latvia" [*"Bērni Latvijā"*] is released. Several analytical publications have also been prepared. They are dedicated to groups of people of different ages and genders, such as the publication "The Elderly Population in Latvia" [*"Vecāka gadagājuma iedzīvotāji Latvijā"*] of

⁶⁷ In 1995, the UN Fourth World Conference on Women adopted a platform for action in Beijing. This document reflects the views of UN member states on changes in the situation of women and the improvement of the situation in a wide range of areas of life (education, health, economics, participation in decision-making, mass media, environmental protection, etc.). In year 1999, EU Member States agreed that quantitative and qualitative indicators need to be developed to assess the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in various areas. Already since year 1999, the Council of Europe has adopted indicators to compare the situation in all EU Member States in the areas covered by the Beijing Platform for Action.

⁶⁸ Minimum set of gender equality indicators developed by the UN Statistical Commission is available from <http://genderstats.un.org/>; World Gender Equality Index by the World Economic Forum is available from <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2014/>

⁶⁹ <http://www.lm.gov.lv/text/3512>

⁷⁰ <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/browse/bpfa>

⁷¹ <http://www.csb.gov.lv/statistikas-temas/dzimumu-lidztiesibas-raditaji-42754.html>

2017, and the 2014 publication "Youth in Latvia" [*"Jaunieši Latvijā"*]. In year 2017, Statistical bodies of the Baltic States together designed and released the info-graphics material "Power and Decision Making" [*"Vara un lēmumu pieņemšana"*], which reflects the representation of women in decision-making processes and in the judiciary, and in year 2018, a joint Baltic publication "Women and Men in the Baltic States" [*"Sievietes un vīrieši Baltijas valstīs"*], was launched. In order to make it easier and faster for the data users to find statistical data describing gender equality, a separate section has been created on the CSB homepage – "Gender Equality Indicators" (under the section "Population Indicators").

On January 1, 2016, a completely new Statistics Act [*"Statistikas likums"*] came into force, incorporating the principles and norms of the European Statistics Code of Practice, as well as setting more obligations for institutions regarding the collection, publication and dissemination of statistical data.

One of the biggest challenges for the CSB is to prepare for the 2021 Population Census, which must be done by obtaining all the necessary information from administrative data sources. Due to the fact that information on the population of the country will be maintained at the level of individual persons, the data on demographic and migration indicators of the population, the overall level of education, economic activity (including occupation, industry) and the family, will also be available on a gender basis. Work is on-going on developing methodology for developing indicators, identifying data sources.

One of the most important indicators that still lack full data is gender-based violence. In order to ensure that in the future it would be possible to carry out a survey in the European Union Member States, including in Latvia, where it would be possible to collect the necessary data, in year 2018, the CSB conducted a preliminary survey "Survey on gender-based violence" [*"Ar dzimumu saistītas vardarbības apsekojums"*]. The main objective of this survey was to develop a single questionnaire for all EU Member States and to improve the implemented methodology. A pilot questionnaire, data collection, data processing were tested within the pilot survey.

Gender issues, in particular their qualitative aspects; have been studied in separate areas within the framework of research/surveys organized by international organizations and institutions. For example, learning outcomes and differences between boys and girls are assessed by the OECD International Program for Assessment of Pupils, opportunities for reconciling work and family life are partly revealed by Labour Force Survey data on reasons for part-time employment or demographic research, gender issues, discrimination, opinion on Domestic violence and the spread of gender-based violence and societal stereotypes are being studied within the framework of the Eurobarometer surveys organized by the EC.

ANNEX 1 STATISTICAL DATA

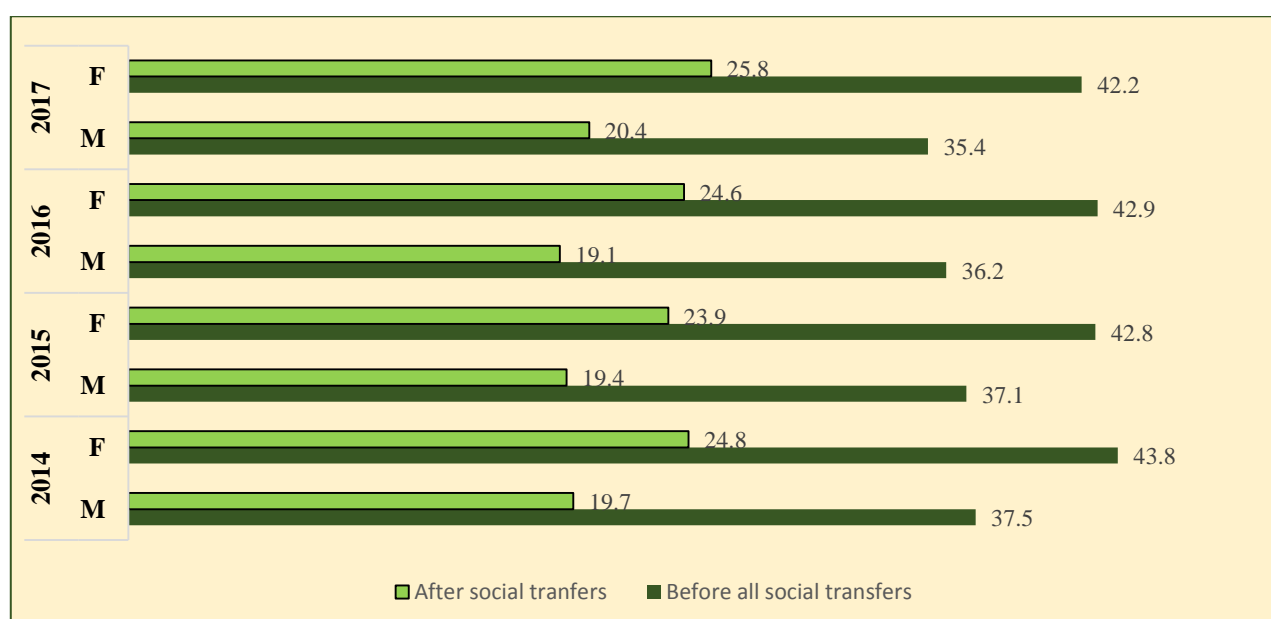
A WOMEN AND POVERTY

AT-RISK-OF-POVERTY RATE BY TYPE OF HOSEHOLD, %

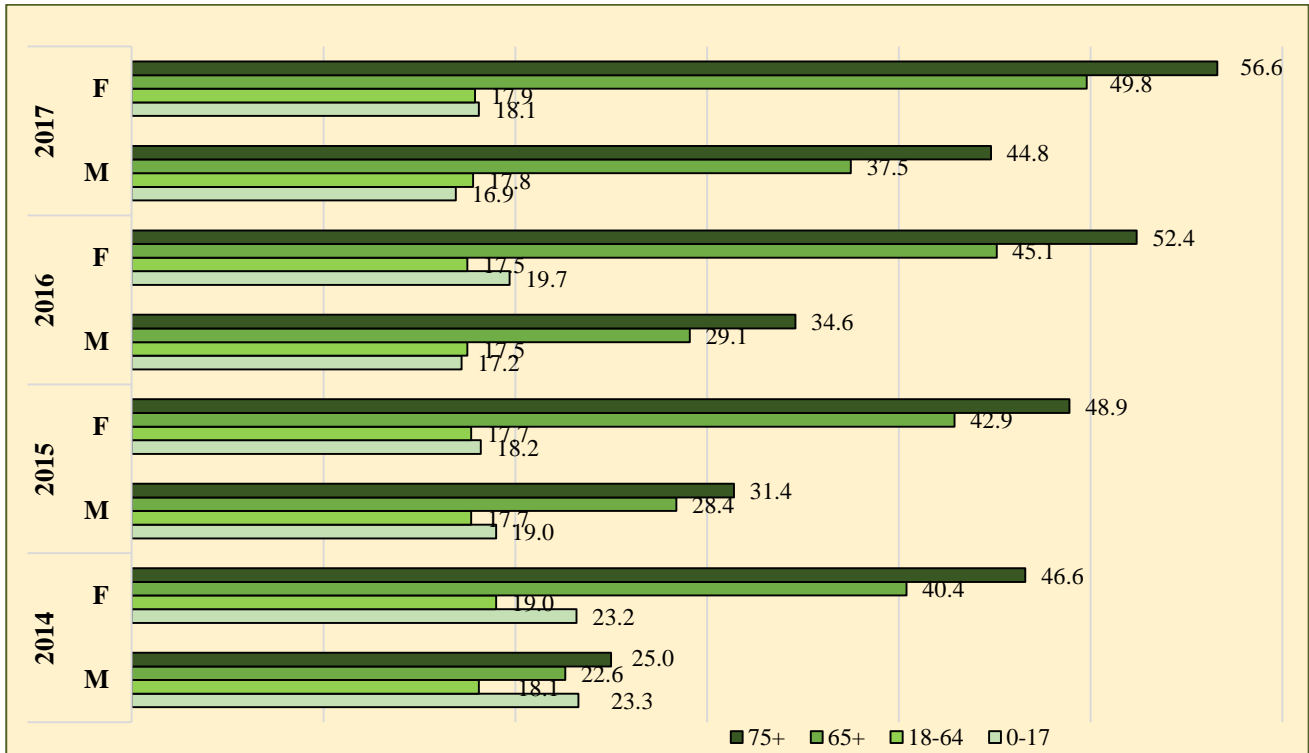
Type of hosehold	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total	22.4	21.8	22.2	23.3
All households without dependent children	25.3	27.7	28.0	30.1
Single person households, total	50.9	55.7	54.9	52.6
Single person households, <u>men</u>	42.0	46.1	47.7	42.8
Single person household, <u>women</u>	54.9	60.3	58.2	57.3
Single person household, up to 64 years of age	32.3	35.2	34.9	31.0
Single person household, 65 years of age and older	67.4	74.0	72.8	74.0
Two person household, adults without dependent children	19.1	21.4	21.3	24.9
Two person household, adults up to 64 years of age without dependent children	18.6	19.9	18.7	17.0
Two person household, at least one of them is 65 years of age or older, without dependent children	19.8	23.1	24.2	33.5
All households with dependent children	19.5	16.0	16.3	16.5
Single parent's family with one or more dependent children	37.0	34.4	34.3	32.6
Two person household, adults with one dependent child	15.1	11.2	13.4	12.1
Two person household, adults with two dependent children	15.9	14.7	14.4	10.2
Two person household, adults with three or more dependent children	34.5	25.5	19.8	20.7
Two or more person household, adults without dependent children	16.3	17.8	17.5	20.2
Two or more person household, adults with dependent children	17.8	14.0	14.2	14.6
Three or more person household, adults without dependent children	11.3	11.6	10.2	11.0
Three or more person household, adults with dependent children	16.6	12.5	12.8	18.2

Source: The Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia

AT-RISK-OF-POVERTY BEFORE AND AFTER SOCIAL TRANSFERES, %



AT-RISK-OF-POVERTY RATE BY AGE GROUPS, %



Source: The Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia

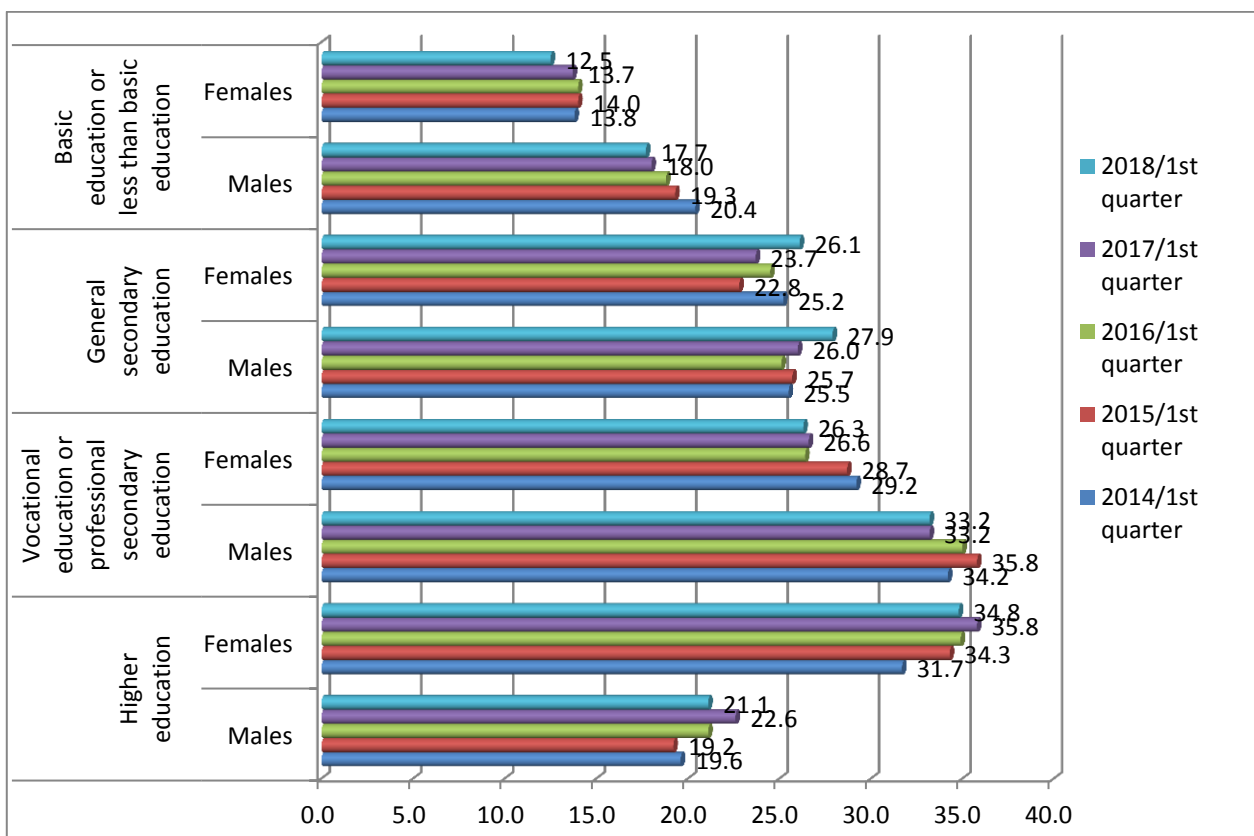
B EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF WOMEN

FEMALE STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION and PROPORTION OF FEMALE STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN STEM FIELDS, %

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Graduates female, %	65.1	65.4	65.6	63.4	65.0
Natural sciences, mathematics, ICT graduates, %	48.8	35.1	37.4	35.8	37.1
Engineering, building, manufacturing, %	23.1	27.3	26.6	26.4	26.2

Source: The Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia

POPULATION BY EDUCATION, SEX (2014-2018), 1ST QUARTER OF THE YEAR



Source: The Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia

C WOMEN AND HEALTH

LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH, YEARS OF AGE

Year	Gender	Women	Men
	2000		75,97	64,81
2014		79.3	69.1
2015		79.3	69.7
2016		79.4	69.8
2017		79.6	69.8

Source: The Central Statistical Bureau

MORTALITY BY MAIN DEATH CAUSE (DEATHS PER 100 000 OF POPULATION)

Year and gender	2014		2015		2016		2017	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Neoplasms	253,8	353,8	264,7	335,3	259,4	349,8	262,6	362,1
Circulatory system diseases	868,1	732,8	893,8	724,1	874,3	731,9	877,0	742,3
External causes	41,8	155,2	40,7	145,4	42,8	136,8	46,9	132,9
In total	1356,4	1483,7	1404,1	1450,6	1408,2	1476,7	1432,6	1502,7

Source: The Centre for Disease Prevention and Control of Latvia

A VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

PROFILE OF PERSON COMMITTED VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

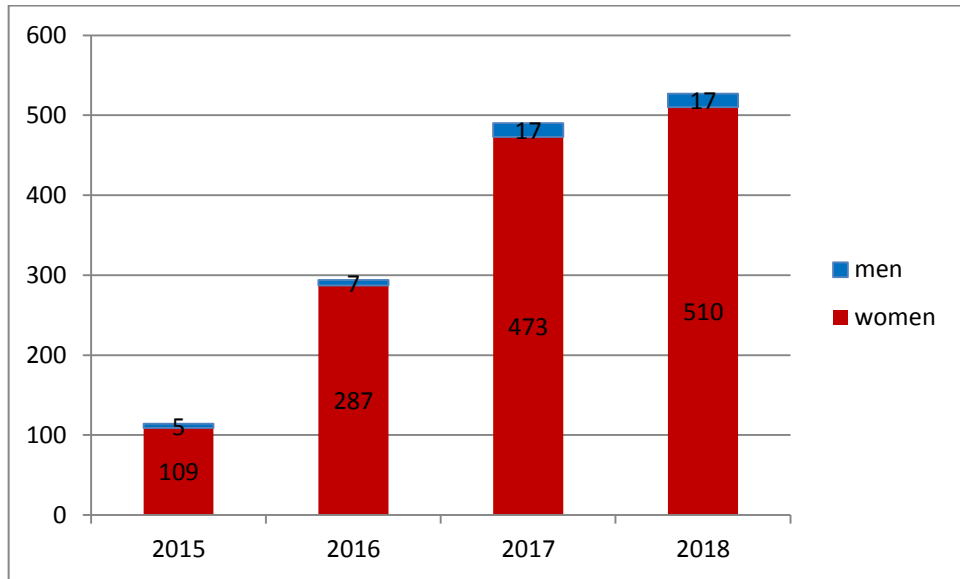
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Number of persons committed violence against women	269	269	281	269	288
incl. number of persons committed violence against women in family	53	50	51	59	61
incl. spouse	16	14	15	23	20
incl. number of persons committed fatal violence against women	2	3	2	1	2

NUMBER OF VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE (WOMEN AND MEN)

	2014			2015			2016			2017			2018		
	TOTAL	Men	Women	TOTAL	Men	Women	TOTAL	Men	Women	TOTAL	Men	Women	TOTAL	Men	Women
Total number of victims of violence (forensics)	1162	794	368	1091	709	382	1196	763	433	1076	706	370	1068	686	382
including murdered	101	37	64	119	68	51	77	69	58	88	47	41	89	38	51
Proportion of cases of domestic violence against women of all violent offences	61	...	...	60.1	...	...	62.7	...	...	65.4	...	...	63.6	...	...
Number of victims of domestic violence seeking assistance in healthcare facilities (hospitals)	116	34	82	113	38	75	100	35	65	113	42	71	...	...	...
Victims of violence who are dead	137	97	40	99	69	30	90	68	22	74	51	23	...	...	...

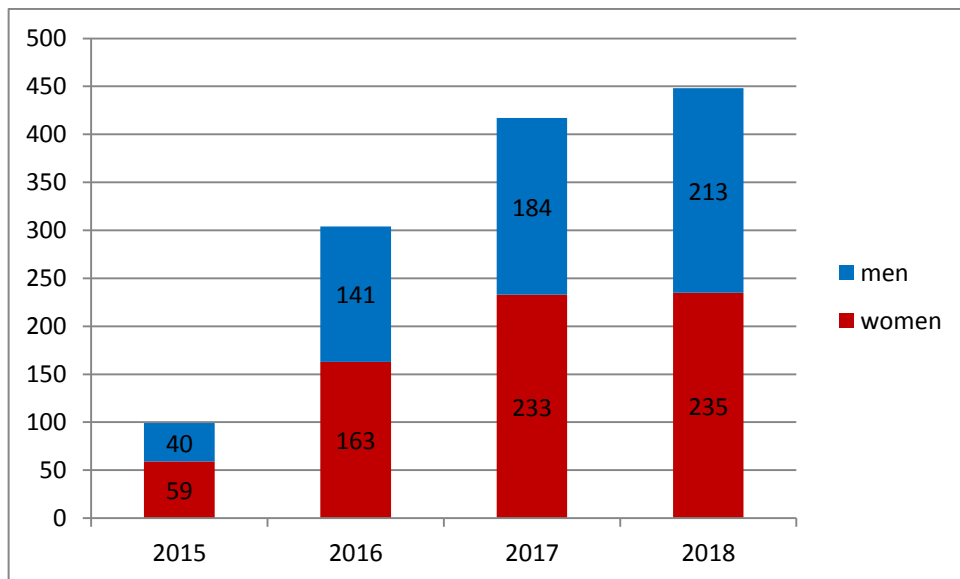
Source: State Police, Ministry of Interiors, The Centre for Disease Prevention and Control of Latvia

NUMBER OF WOMEN AND MEN - VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE WHO HAVE RECEIVED A SOCIAL REHABILITATION SERVICE



Source: Ministry of Welfare

NUMBER OF PERSONS COMMITTED TO VIOLENCE WHO HAVE RECEIVED A SOCIAL REHABILITATION SERVICE



Source: Ministry of Welfare

F WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY

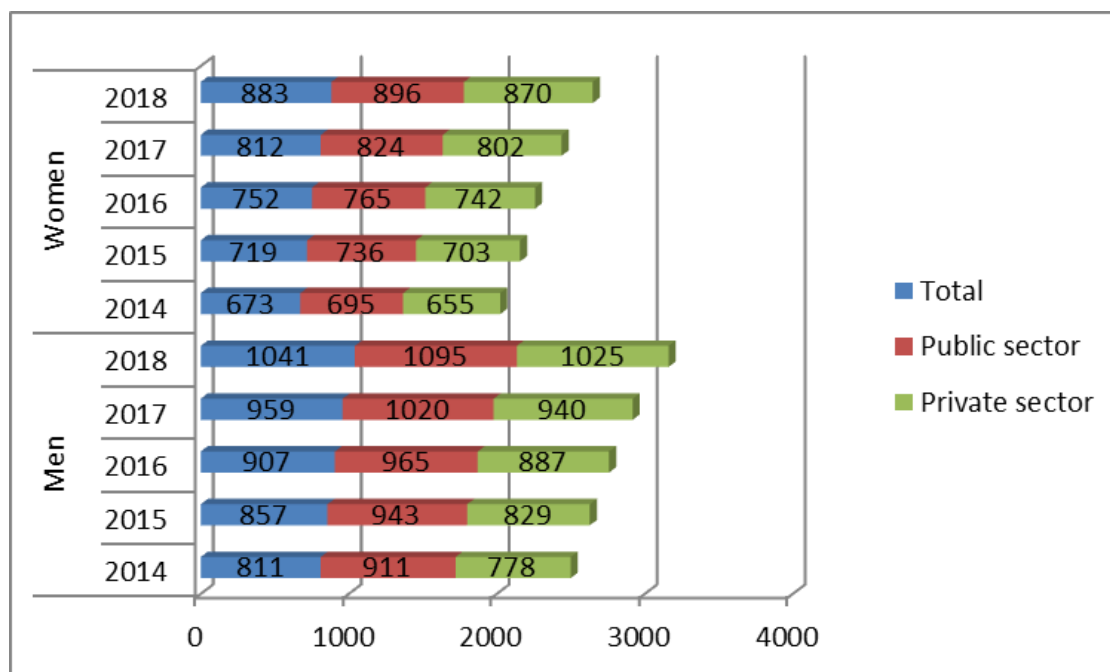
MONTHLY GROSS WAGES AND SALARIES BY SEX AND KIND OF ACTIVITY (IN 1ST QUARTER; IN EURO)

	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
PAVISAM	811	673	857	719	907	752	959	812	1 042	883
(A) Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	731	654	751	698	824	721	878	786	985	841
(B) Mining and quarrying	843	679	862	754	953	752	1 053	845	1 037	1 034
(C) Manufacturing	735	583	788	625	837	666	888	723	984	800
(D) Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	979	898	1 029	950	1 074	984	1 124	1 023	1 220	1 095
(E) Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	706	667	752	694	823	736	869	771	945	835
(F) Construction	702	717	744	760	798	791	812	825	890	896
(G) Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	779	563	840	610	884	646	960	701	1 033	757
(H) Transportation and storage	790	747	811	798	852	815	883	893	936	953
(I) Accommodation and food service activities	546	449	595	500	663	532	646	572	760	634
(J) Information and communication	1 366	1 077	1 451	1 128	1 523	1 120	1 662	1 211	1 776	1 290
(K) Financial and insurance activities	2 451	1 410	2 340	1 456	2 378	1 503	2 542	1 591	2 780	1 704

(L) Real estate activities	681	637	741	689	794	710	772	727	858	794
(M) Professional, scientific and technical activities	920	820	991	884	969	897	1 083	952	1 162	1 022
(N) Administrative and support service activities	671	661	733	697	772	723	790	776	845	797
(O) Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	919	911	941	970	1 028	996	1 090	1 069	1 170	1 155
(P) Education	731	585	782	620	714	651	767	723	823	762
(Q) Human health and social work activities	788	655	840	699	882	738	899	772	1 050	893
(R) Arts, entertainment and recreation	701	583	792	613	822	656	879	700	918	764
(S) Other service activities	679	564	722	590	776	630	759	667	855	731

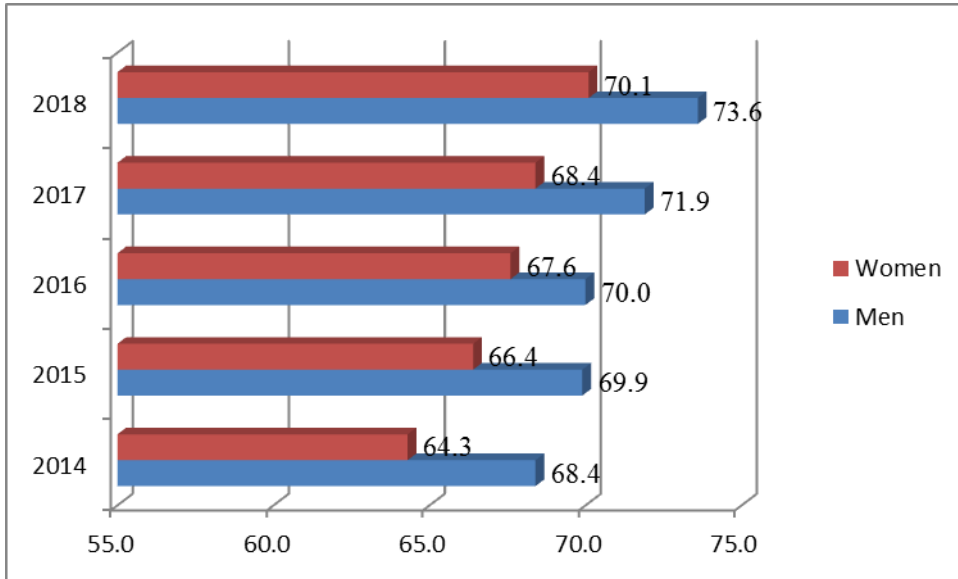
Source: The Central Statistical Bureau

MONTHLY GROSS WAGES AND SALARIES BY SEX AND KIND OF ACTIVITY (IN 1ST QUARTER; IN EURO)



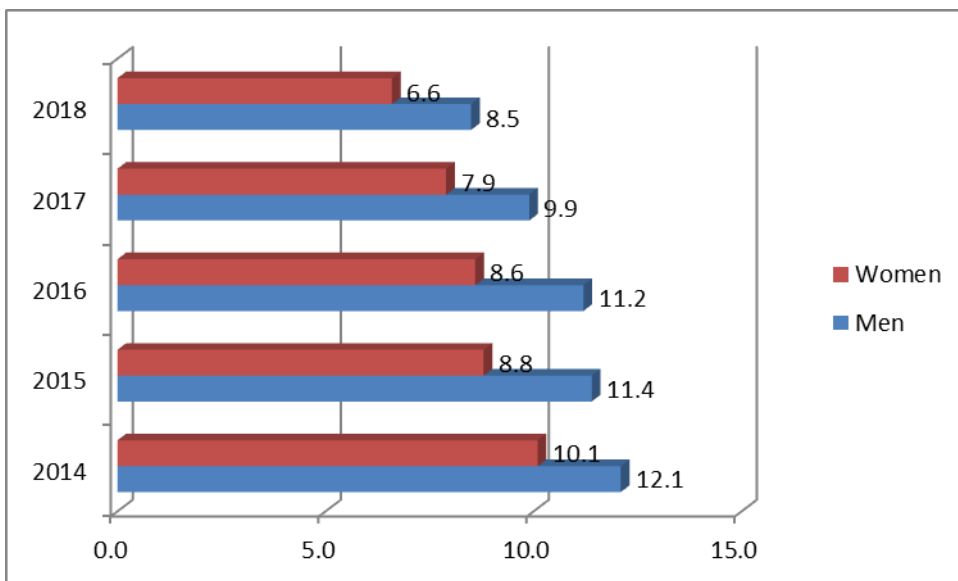
Source: The Central Statistical Bureau

EMPLOYMENT RATE 15-64, %



Source: The Central Statistical Bureau

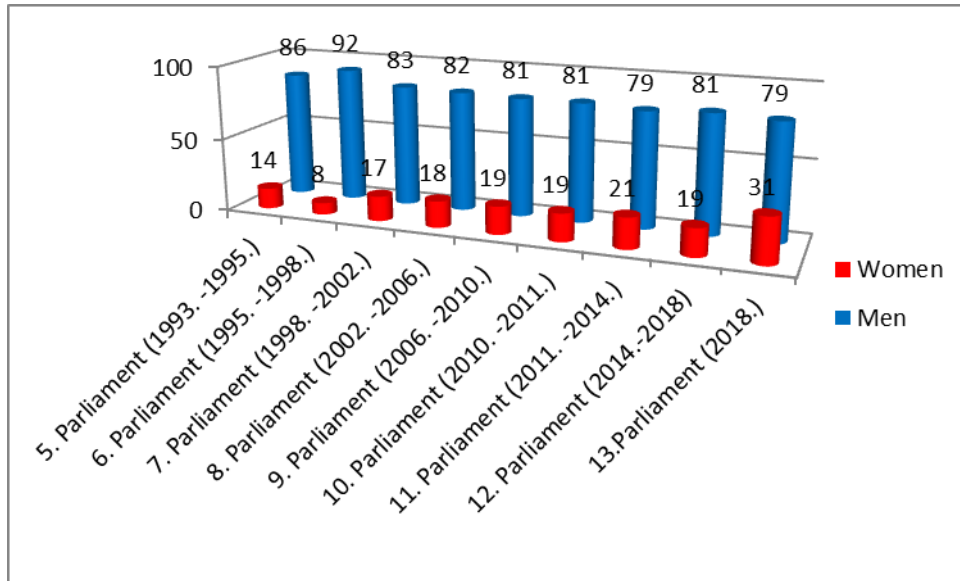
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, 15-64, %



Source: The Central Statistical Bureau

G WOMEN IN POWER AND DECISION-MAKING

MEMBERS ELECTED FROM 1ST – 13TH PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA



Source: The Central Statistical Bureau

ANNEX 2 MINIMUM SET OF GENDER INDICATORS, BY DOMAIN

No	Indicators		Source of data	Comments	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018	
					Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
I Economic structures, participation in productive activities and access to resources														
2.	Average number of hours spent on paid and unpaid work combined (total work burden), by sex		CSB	From 1996	39.3	37.8	39.2	37.4	39.3	37.5	39.2	37.3	39.3	37.4
3.	Labour force participation rates for 15-24 and 15+, by sex	15-24	CSB	From 1996	45.3%	35.3%	45.2%	37.1%	43.3%	35.9%	42.8%	36.5%	40.5%	34.7%
		15-74			71.2%	62.1%	72.4%	63.2%	72.2%	64.6%	73.2%	65.1%	73.8%	65.9%
4.	Proportion of employed who are own-account workers, by sex		CSB	From 1996	7.7%	5.9%	8.7%	6.3%	8.9%	6.7%	7.7%	6.8%	6.9%	6.6%
5.	Proportion of employed who are working as contributing family workers, by sex		CSB	From 1996	1.0%	0.6%	1.0%	0.6%	1.0%	0.7%	1.0%	0.4%	0.6%	0.4%
6.	Proportion of employed who are employer, by sex		CSB	From 1996	5.6%	2.4%	6.1%	2.6%	6.1%	2.5%	6.3%	3.1%	6.0%	2.7%
8.	Percentage distribution of employed population by sector, each sex	Percentage distribution of employed population in agricultural sector, by sex, NACE Rev.2 section A	CSB	From 1996 <i>Persons aged 15-74 years, LFS data</i> <i>Data are calculated from not rounded figures, it is possible that the sum of indicators does not coincide with the total 100%</i>	10.6%	4.5%	10.9%	5.1%	10.4%	5.1%	9.6%	4.2%	10.0%	4.0%
		Percentage distribution of employed population in industrial sector, by sex, NACE Rev.2 section B-F,			35.0%	12.9%	34.7%	12.7%	35.3%	13.3%	34.0%	12.9%	34.5%	13.0%
		Percentage distribution of employed population in service sector, by sex, NACE Rev.2 section G-U			54.4%	82.6%	54.4%	82.1%	54.3%	81.5%	56.3%	82.9%	55.3%	82.8%
10.	Youth unemployment by sex		EUROSTAT	From 1996 <i>Youth unemployment rate for persons aged 15-24 years</i>	19.4%	20.0%	18.0%	14.2%	21.4%	12.1%	18.3%	15.4%	12.5%	11.8%
13.	Gender gap in wages (gross hourly earnings in National Currency)		CSB	From 1998	4.89	4.04	5.23	4.35	5.59	4.64	5.82	4.91	...	...
13.a	Gender pay gap in unadjusted form by NACE Rev. 2 B to S (- O) activity		EUROSTAT	From 2007	17.3%		17.0%		17.0%		15.7%		...	

No	Indicators	Source of data	Comments	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		
				Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	
14.	Proportion of employed working part-time, by sex	CSB	From 1996 <i>Persons who are part-time employed (employees) or usually work less than 40 hours per week. Persons aged 15-74 years, LFS data</i>	5.1%	9.6%	4.9%	10.7%	6.7%	11.7%	5.3%	11.6%	5.3%	10.8%	
15.	Employment rate of persons aged 25-49 with a child under age 3 living in a household and with no children living in the household	CSB	From 1996	With children under age 3	89.2%	59.9%	90.8%	67.1%	91.3%	67.5%	93.1%	69.4%	91.4%	70.3%
				With no children	74.5%	77.3%	76.0%	80.1%	76.4%	79.6%	79.2%	81.4%	81.0%	84.2%
16.	Proportion of children under age 3 in formal care	CSB	1999/2000 academic year	25.7 %	25.9 %	27.0 %	27.6 %	29.2 %	29.1 %	29.4 %	29.9 %	...	...
17.	Proportion of individuals using the Internet, by sex	CSB	Data from 2005 for persons aged 16-74 years	79.1	79.5	82.7	81.0	83.4	81.9	84.3	84.0	85.9	87.4	
18.	Proportion of individuals using mobile/cellular telephones, by sex	CSB	Data available only about 2012 for persons aged 16-74 years											
II. Education														
21.	Adjusted net enrolment ratio in primary education by sex	CSB	From 1999/2000 academic year	95.9 %	97.1 %	96.1 %	97.5 %	96.4 %	97.8 %	96.8 %	98.3 %	...	...
22.	Gross enrolment ratio in secondary education, by Sex (including post-secondary non-tertiary education)	CSB	From 1999/2000 academic year	116.8 %	116.5 %	115.5 %	115.7 %	115.0 %	116.0 %	112.8 %	114.1 %	...	...
23.	Gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education, by sex	CSB	From 1999/2000 academic year	58.4 %	91.1 %	64.1 %	98.1 %	72.0 %	105.1 %	75.4 %	111.8 %	...	...
24.	Gender parity index in enrolment at primary, secondary and tertiary levels	CSB		Primary, w/m 1.2.lim	0.95		0.95		0.95		0.95		...	
				Secondary, w/m 3.lim.	0.96		0.97		0.99		0.99		...	
				Tertiary, w/m 5.6.lim.	1.47		1.45		1.38		1.39		1.29	
25.	Share of female science, engineering, manufacturing and construction graduates at tertiary level	CSB	From 1999/2000	31.6 %		30.1 %		30.6 %		29.8 %		30.0 %		
26.	Proportion of females among tertiary education teachers or professors	CSB	„ academic staff”,	56.0 %		55.4 %		55.8 %		56.0 %		55.4 %		
27.	Net intake in first grade of primary education, by sex	CSB	From 1999/2000	9286 (84.0 %)	9166 (86.3 %)	9616 (84.6 %)	9474 (87.0 %)	8854 (84.7 %)	8763 (87.1 %)	8335 (85.0 %)	7843 (87.4 %)	...	...
29.	Graduation from lower secondary education, by	CSB	From 1999/2000	9639	8620	9716	9013	10345	9462	10183	9424	...	...

No	Indicators		Source of data	Comments	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018	
					Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
	sex													
30.	Transition rate to secondary education, by sex		CSB	From 1999/2000 Not available by sex										
31.	Education attainment of population aged 25 and over, by sex	Population with lower secondary education attainment by sex, <i>ISCED 0-2</i>	CSB	From 1996 <i>Persons aged 25-74 years, LFS data</i> <i>Data are calculated from not rounded figures, it is possible that the sum of indicators does not coincide with the total 100%</i> Data according to <i>ISCED 2011</i> . Tertiary education – <i>ISCED level 5-8</i> .	15.3%	9.9%	14.3%	9.3%	13.1%	9.3%	13.5%	8.8%	12.9%	8.1%
		Population with upper secondary education attainment by sex, <i>ISCED 3-4</i>			62.8%	55.8%	63.7%	54.2%	63.4%	52.3%	62.0%	52.4%	62.5%	52.8%
		Population with tertiary education attainment by sex, <i>ISCED 5-6</i>			21.9%	34.3%	22.0%	36.5%	23.5%	38.4%	24.5%	38.7%	24.6%	39.1%
III. Health and related services														
33.	Under-five mortality rate, by sex		CSB	From 1965	5.4	5.0	6.4	3.8	4.7	5.3	5.4	4.2		
34.	Maternal mortality ratio		SPKC	Data sources – Register of Causes of Death and Medical Birth register	14.0		55.2		23.1		4.9			
35.	Antenatal care coverage		SPKC	Data source –Medical Birth register (information about delivered women who have registered and received antenatal care, % from all deliveries).	99.0%		99.1%		99.3%		99.2%			
36.	Proportion of births attended by skilled health professional		SPKC	Data source –Medical Birth register (information about women who had birth in hospitals or planned home deliveries, % from all deliveries).	99.5%		99.5%		99.6%		99.0%			
37.	Smoking prevalence among persons aged 15 and over, by sex		CSB, SPKC	Persons aged 15-64 years	51.8	21.0			48.4	19.5				
38.	Proportion of adults who are obese, by sex		CSB, SPKC	Persons aged 15-64 years	16.1	25.1			19.1	26.8				
39.	Women's share of population aged 15-49 living		SPKC	Number of new HIV infections	21.3		24.3		25.6		23.1			

No	Indicators	Source of data	Comments	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018	
				Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
	with HIV/AIDS		among females aged 15–49 per 100000 females of the corresponding age										
40.	Access to anti-retroviral drug, by sex	SPKC	Not available.										
41.	Life expectancy at age 60, by sex	CSB	From 1969	16.7	22.8	17.1	22.7	16.9	22.9	17.0	22.9		
42.	Adult mortality by cause and age groups	CSB, SPKC	Mortality rate attributed to (ICD-10): E10-E14, C00-C97, J41-J47, I05-I15, I20-I25, I31, I34-38, I42 by sex, age 30-70 years old, per 100000	757.5	328.8	713.1	336.4	702.3	323.9	726.3	327.4		
IV. Public life and decision-making													
43.	Women's share of government ministerial positions	CSB	From 1997	71%	29%	71%	29%	79%	21%	79%	21%	79%	21%
44.	Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament	CSB	From 1997	12 th Saeima (2014) 19% women		-		-		-		13 th Saeima (2018) 31% women	
45.	Women's share of managerial positions	CSB	2001., 2003., 2005., 2007., 2010. Data are available about women leaders of farms (SES 2014)	52.3%	47.6%	-	-	-	-	-	-		
46.	Percentage of female police officers	CSB	From 2000	35.2%		35.6%		36.8%		36.6%			
47.	Percentage of female judges	CSB	From 1997	76.8%		77.7%		78.4%		78.4%			
V. Human rights of women and girl children													
48.	Proportion of women aged 15-49 subjected to physical or sexual violence in the last 12 months by an intimate partner	SPKC	Data from the Report „The reproductive health. Review of the situation in Latvia” (2003-2011). There are no information about the perpetrator's relationship to victim.					1) physical violence – 30%					
49.	Proportion of women aged 15-49 subjected to physical or sexual violence in the last 12 months by persons other than an intimate partner	SPKC	See No 48					2) sexual violence – 10%					
51.	Percentage of women aged 20-24 years old who were married or in a union before age 18	CSB	From 2013	0.4%		0.3%		0.3%		0.3%		0.4%	
52.	Adolescent fertility rate (15-19)	CSB	From 1971	19.9		18.1		15.5		14.9			

ANNEX 3 SDG 5 GENDER EQUALITY

Indicator	Other related SDGs	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers by sex, females, % ¹	10	24.8	19.4	19.1	20.4	...
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers by sex, males, % ¹	10	19.7	23.9	24.6	25.8	...
Gender average hourly earnings gap, % ²	1, 8, 10	17.3	17.0	17.0	15.7	...
Employment rate, (age 20–64) females, % ²	1, 8, 10	68.5	70.5	71.8	72.7	...
Employment rate, (age 20–64) males, % ²	1, 8, 10	73.1	74.6	74.7	77.0	...
Gender employment gap by age group, (age 20–64), % ²	1, 8, 10	4.6	4.1	2,9	4.3	...
Share of females receiving minimum wage or less in total number of females having income from labour	1, 8, 10					
Share of females receiving minimum wage or less in total population having income from labour	1, 8, 10					
Share of males receiving minimum wage or less in total number of males having income from labour	1, 8, 10					
Seats held by women in national parliament and government	16					
In-work at-risk-of-poverty rate, (age 18-64) males, % ²	1, 8, 10	7.5	9.2	8.5	8.4	7.8
In-work at-risk-of-poverty rate, (age 18-64) females, % ²	1, 8, 10	9.0	9.7	8.5	9.6	8.6
Seats held by women in national parliament and government, %	16			15		31
Positions held by women in senior management positions, % ²	16	31.7	30.4	28.5	28.8	29.0
Early leavers from education and training by sex (population aged 18–24 (incl.)), male, % ³	4	15.7	13.4	13.7	12.0	10.8
Early leavers from education and training by sex (population aged 18–24 (incl.)), female, % ³	4	5.1	6.2	6.2	5.0	4.9

Indicator	Other related SDGs	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Tertiary educational attainment by sex (population aged 30–34 (incl.)), male, % ³	4	27.8	26.8	30.1	32.1	...
Tertiary educational attainment by sex (population aged 30–34 (incl.)), female, % ³	4	52.3	56.6	56.1	56.0	...
Employment rates of tertiary education graduates by sex (population aged 20–49 (incl.)), %, male, % ³	4	91.5	94.5	92.8	91.6	...
Employment rates of tertiary education graduates by sex (population aged 20–34 (incl.)), female, % ³	4	82.8	84.4	88.6	86.3	...
Victims of intentional homicide by sex, male, per 100 000 inhabitants ²	11, 16	2.94	4.06	3.87	...	...
Victims of intentional homicide by sex, female, per 100 000 inhabitants ²	11, 16	3.32	2.70	3.19	...	...
Victims of rape by sex, male, per 100 000 inhabitants ²	11, 16	0.22	0.44	1.44	...	...
Victims of rape by sex, female, per 100 000 inhabitants ²	11, 16	5.07	4.47	7.61	...	...
Victims of sexual assault by sex, male, per 100 000 inhabitants ²	11, 16	3.49	3.40	1.66	...	...
Victims of sexual assault by sex, female, per 100 000 inhabitants ²	11, 16	9.41	8.56	5.07	...	...
Inactive population due to caring responsibilities by sex (population aged 20–64 (incl.)), male, % ²	1, 10,16	9.3	10.6	11.0	7.9	...
Inactive population due to caring responsibilities by sex (population aged 20–64 (incl.)), female, % ²	1, 10,16	29.2	32.2	31.2	34.0	...