



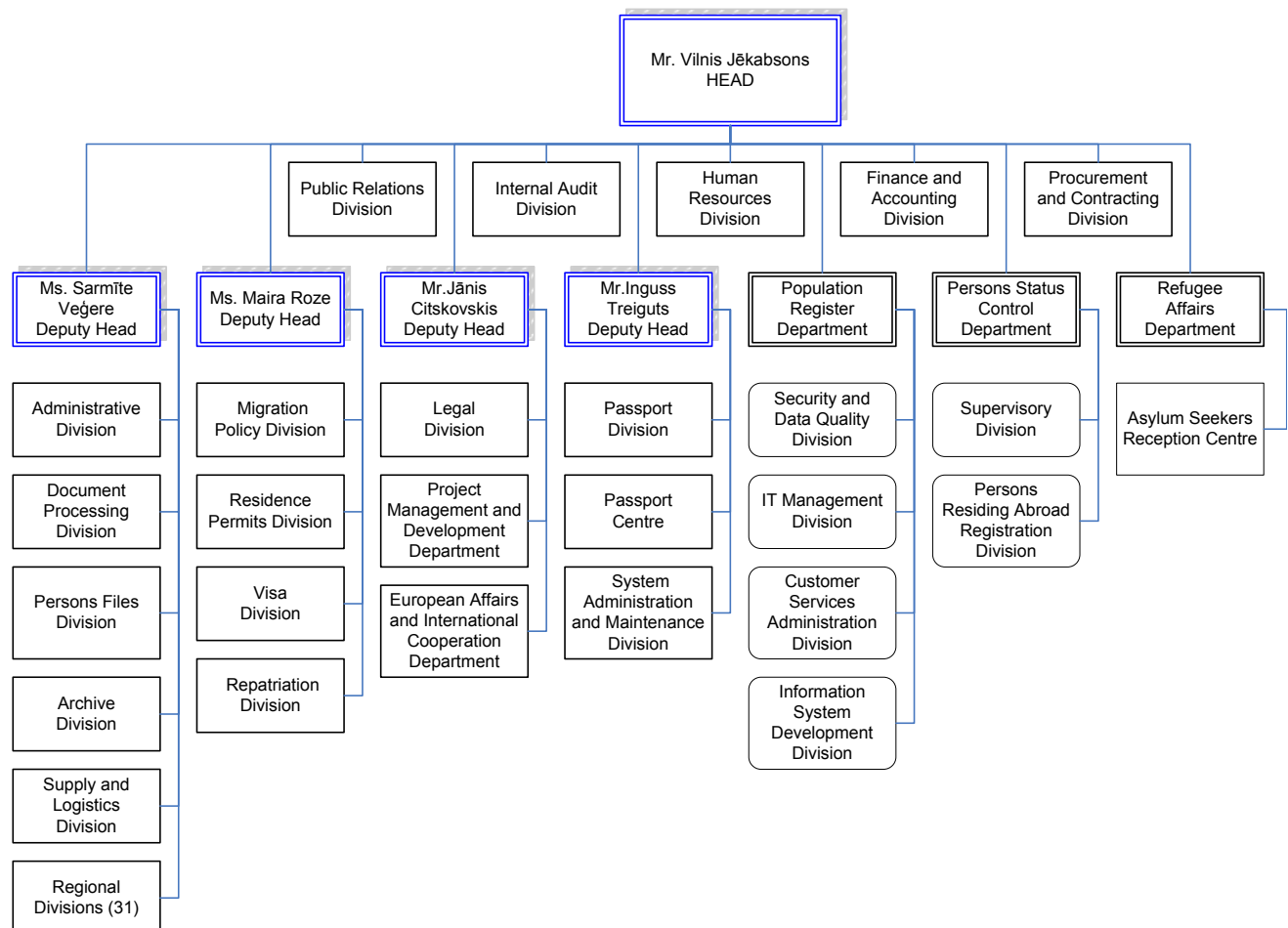
**Office of  
Citizenship and  
Migration Affairs**

**2008**

## GENERAL INFORMATION

The Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs (hereinafter - OCMA) is a state institution under the supervision of the Minister of the Interior; the OCMA's tasks are to implement the government's migration policies, to determine the legal status of individuals in the country, to keep registers of residents and to issue personal identification and travel documents.

### Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs



### Policy Areas and Activities

Pursuant to the legislation, the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs has the following functions:

- to implement the state policy on migration and asylum;
- to ensure the maintenance of the Population Register and registration of residents;
- to determine the legal status of individuals in the country;
- to issue personal identification and travel documents;

In 2008, the OCMA implemented the European Refugee Fund's (ERF) project

- Improvement in Services to Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Persons with Subsidiary Protection Status;

and two Transaction Facility projects:

- 
- Improvement of the Circulation, Processing, and Safekeeping of Documents of the Immigration Register;
  - Strengthening Administrative Capacity in the Areas of Visa Issuing, Immigration and SIS II Implementation.

## RESULTS ACHIEVED

### Major priorities in the survey year and information on the implementation thereof

- To develop and implement the government policy on migration and asylum according to the requirements of the legislation of the European Union.

According to the priorities set by the European Union in the areas of migration and asylum, the OCMA carried out tasks for the implementation of the European Union's legislative acts during the survey year; furthermore, the OCMA continued the implementation of the tasks set out in the Indicative Action Plan for fulfilling the requirements of the Schengen acquis.

In order to ensure the operation of the SIS, the National Visa Information System was improved in 2008 and a national access point for data exchange with the Central Visa Information System of the EU was installed.

Furthermore, the provision of VISION consultations through the National Visa Information System was commenced in 2008. VISION consultations are preliminary consultations by a Schengen Treaty Member State visa issuing authority with the central authority of its country or central authorities of other Schengen Treaty Member States on the issuing of Schengen visas or national long-term visas that also are valid as short-term Schengen visas. Schengen Treaty Member States provide VISION consultations by individual groups of persons (e.g. by visa applicant's citizenship, or by certain categories of persons -by age, profession or certain types of passports). In the consultation process, the authorities responsible for the entry of foreigners in the country and state security authorities are engaged; they evaluate the possible risks, mainly those posed to the state security and immigration risks.

Analysing the migration trends in Latvia and Europe, in 2008 the OCMA drafted the informative report 'On Economic Migration in the Baltic Countries'; the report stipulates the development of a government policy on migration in the employment area that is based on the protection of the domestic labour market. The report contains proposals to delegate to the Cabinet the right to decide on the professions where foreigners could come to work under a simplified procedure and to implement the one-stop agency principle in the work of the Employment State Agency and the OCMA in this area. The report contains proposals on how to reduce the state fee payable for the issuing of residence permits and work permits.

- To ensure functioning of an efficient asylum system and to ensure rights of asylum seekers according to the EU requirements.

Within the framework of the implementation of the European Refugees Fund project 'Improvement in Services to Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Persons with Subsidiary Protection Status', the following measures were implemented:

- an action model that will give the asylum seekers who have come to Latvia to ask for asylum the possibility to receive the primary healthcare and emergency healthcare services was developed;
- the possibility to receive secondary healthcare services and medicine if required in addition to the state-guaranteed healthcare has been provided to asylum seekers, refugees and persons with Subsidiary protection status;
- to provide asylum seekers with the possibility to explain the reasons for leaving their home countries and asking for protection in Latvia, a system for the

provision of interpretations and translations throughout the asylum procedure was developed. The system makes it possible to efficiently interpret the conversations with asylum seekers and translate any documents they provide.

- To implement the requirements of European Council Regulation of 13 December 2004 that stipulates that passports issued by the European Union Member States must contain the individual's biometric information: a digital photo of the face and digital pictures of two fingerprints.

The OCMA commenced issuing passports that comply with the requirements of the European Union and the international standards on 20 November 2007. From 15 September 2008, the issuing of the second generation electronic passports was commenced; the microchips of these passports contain digital pictures of passport holder's fingerprints. The new passports have been developed in accordance with the European Council Regulation (EC) No 2252/2004 of 13 December 2004 on standards for security features and biometrics in passports and travel documents issued by Member States.

The use of modern security features and biometric identifiers on the European Union level is an important step that provides higher security of travel documents and creates a more reliable link between the passport and its holder. Furthermore, the compliance with the international standards (ICAO Doc 9303, Machine Readable Travel Documents) guarantees that the passport can be checked at the border of any country throughout the world.

- To improve the Single Migration Information System, inter alia the Population Register subsystems, to perform electronic exchange of news and to ensure the protection of personal data.

To this end, the Population Register was audited in the survey period; in the result of the audit, the informative report 'On the Results of the Security and Data Quality Audit of the Information to be Included in the Population Register' was drafted and submitted to the Cabinet. The report states that considering the overall significance of the Population Register and that the OCMA monitors the data of the secure electronic signature users in the Population Register, further development of the Population Register has been set a medium-term (2009-2011) priority of the Ministry of Interior. The Ministry of Interior has filed to the Ministry of Finance a budget priorities application for the medium-term (2009-2011), which also includes the new policy's initiative 'Adaptation and Expanded Functionality of the Single Migration Information System'.

To prepare the Electors Register for the European Parliament and local government elections in 2009, the Electors Register Software Requirement Specifications were developed and the software development was commenced in 2008. Furthermore, the information systems Population Register and Electors Register were supplemented, adding to them the Address Classifier of the Address Register.

Within the framework of the operation of the Latvian Focal Point in the European Migration Network, the OCMA drafted several surveys and reports in 2008:

- Statistical Report on Migration and Asylum in Latvia in 2006

The report reflects statistical trends of asylum seeking, migration, illegal entry, residence and expulsion in Latvia. The report analyses the said trends; consequently, comparing and interpreting them with the same trends in the European and global context has been facilitated.

- Policy Report on Migration and Asylum in Latvia in 2007

The report reflects the major changes in the policy and legislation in the area of migration and asylum in Latvia in 2007. The report documents on a comparative basis the position of European legislation and the influence of political events in Europe in Latvia, describes the development of the national legislation and the administrative practice, and the political and public debates in the area of migration and asylum.

- Report on the Structure of Asylum and Migration Policy in Latvia

This report was drafted to make it easier for the new European Migration Network Focal Points (which accessed to the Network after the approval of the legal basis on 14.05.2008) to integrate in the tasks of the Network. The survey will make it possible for all 26 European Union Member States (except Denmark) to gather the latest information on the institutions involved in asylum and migration areas, relevant legislation in these areas etc. Furthermore, the task of every Member State will be to update the survey from time to time, in this way reporting on any changes in the areas of asylum and migration.

- To improve the quality and efficiency of public services and to ensure the availability of services

In the survey period, the OCMA continued its work to achieve a service level that complies with the highest standards and to facilitate the availability of its services to people.

In 2008, modern customer service halls were created in seven regional divisions of the OCMA. Queuing management systems were installed in six regional divisions.

For the convenience of visitors, a visit booking system for receiving services was implemented in the survey period.

The transition to a high-level quality client service system in our regional divisions was commenced in 2000, and currently 27 regional divisions are working in modern and refurbished premises. It was planned to open modern client service halls in all regional divisions, but further modernisation of regional divisions has been suspended due to the restricted budget.

In cooperation with the Secretariat of the Special Assignments Minister for Electronic Government Affairs, a services electronisation project was carried out in the survey period; 11 paid and free electronic services have been implemented, and they are available to the clients by way of authentication with their electronic signature or through internet banking facilities.

Services available using an Internet banking facility or a secure electronic signature:

- Information on persons who have declared their residence at my property

This service enables private individuals to find out information about their properties registered in the Land Register and the people who have declared their place of residence at the addresses of these properties.

- Data in the Population Register on me or the persons I represent

This service can be used to find out what information on the person, their underage children or persons in their custody or dependent persons are included in the Population Register.

- Verification whether the person is listed in the Population Register and that there is no information on the death of the person

---

This service enables checking whether the person is listed in the Population Register, and if they are that there is no information on the death of the person.

- Verification whether the person has a valid registration of residence at a particular address

This service enables checking whether a person has a valid registration of the place of residence at a particular address.

Services available using a secure electronic signature:

- Submission of declaration of residence

This service can be used to declare the residence of the person, their underage children or persons in their custody or dependent persons in Latvia.

- Letter of Invitation (Ielūgums in Latvian) Approval Application

This service enables the submission for approval of letters of invitation that are required for foreigners in order to apply for a visa to Latvia.

- Letter of Invitation (Izsaukums in Latvian) Approval Application

This service enables the submission for approval of letters of invitations that are required for foreigners in order to apply for a residence permit in Latvia.

- Application for permission to use person's body, tissues and organs after their death

With this service, persons can notify to the OCMA their permission to use their body, tissues and organs after their death.

- Request for information from the Population Register on oneself or the represented person

This service can be used by persons to request information that is included in the Population Register on oneself, their underage children or persons in their custody or dependent persons.

- Request for information from the Population Register on a third person

This service can be used by persons to request information that is included in the Population Register on third persons.

- Submission of declaration of residence abroad

This service can be used to declare the residence address abroad of the person, their underage children or persons in their custody or dependent persons to the OCMA.

According to the statistics, the e-services of the OCMA are one of the most popular on the e-services portal [www.latvija.lv](http://www.latvija.lv). The most popular services among the people are 'Information on persons who have declared their residence at my property', 'Verification whether the person has a valid registration of residence at a particular address' and 'Data in the Population Register on me or the persons I represent'.

Within the ERF project 'Improvement of Services to Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Persons with Subsidiary Status', the possibilities to receive medical and psychological assistance, interpretation services in the Latvian asylum system and living conditions for asylum seekers in the asylum seekers reception centre Mucenieki were improved in the survey period. The budget of the project was EUR 239,421 (inter alia EUR 179,566 from the ERF and EUR 59,855 national co-finance from the OCMA).

---

Transition Facility project ‘Improvement of the Circulation, Processing and Safekeeping of Documents of the Immigration Register’ was implemented from 9 November 2007 till 8 December 2008; its objective was to ensure efficient protection of personal data and circulation of immigration documents and processing and keeping thereof at the OCMA.

In the result of the project, an Action Plan was drafted; it contains 45 proposals on how to improve the protection of personal data and the management of IT security risks at the OCMA. Furthermore, 85 employees of the OCMA were trained on data protection; proposals were developed on amendments to the data protection legislation in order to achieve compliance with the latest legislation trends in Europe; the knowledge of the OCMA personnel on the technical requirements for personal data protection in the processes of circulation, processing and keeping of immigration documents was expanded.

The total finance was LVL 233,077, including foreign financial assistance (EU funding) of LVL 210,841, and the co-finance provided by Latvia was LVL 22,236.

Transition Facility project ‘Increasing Administrative Capacity in the Areas of Visa Issuing, Immigration and SIS II Implementation’ was implemented in cooperation with the Immigration and Naturalisation Service of the Ministry of Justice of the Netherlands from June 2007 to July 2008. The goal of the project was to improve the compliance of Latvian legislation to the Schengen acquis requirements in the areas of visa issuing, migration and SIS II. Under the project, experts from the Netherlands shared their experience and provided training to specialists from the OCMA and other Latvian authorities and organisations on the legislation and administrative organisation issues. During the project, a handbook on the process management and analysis was written and training courses were developed. Furthermore, the cooperation among the Baltic countries was improved during the project.

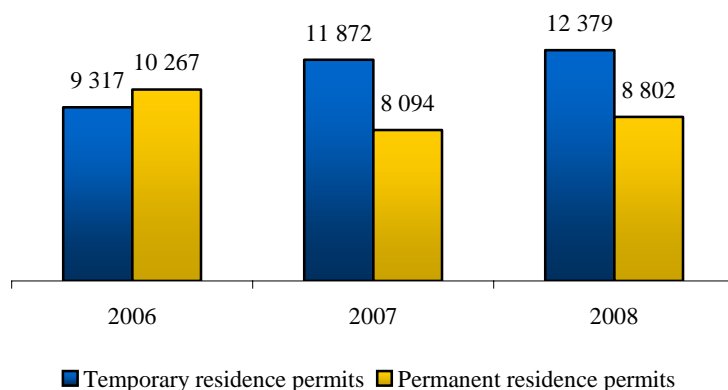
The total budget of the project was EUR 343,078 (inter alia EUR 40,361 national co-finance).



## 2008 IN FIGURES

### Residence Permits

#### Residence Permits Issued



The main tasks of the OCMA in the areas of residence and work permit issuing are connected with the issuing, registering and cancelling of residence permits and the issuing and cancelling of work permits.

To perform the said tasks efficiently, the OCMA cooperates with other involved government authorities -the State Border Guard, the Consular Department of the Ministry of Foreign

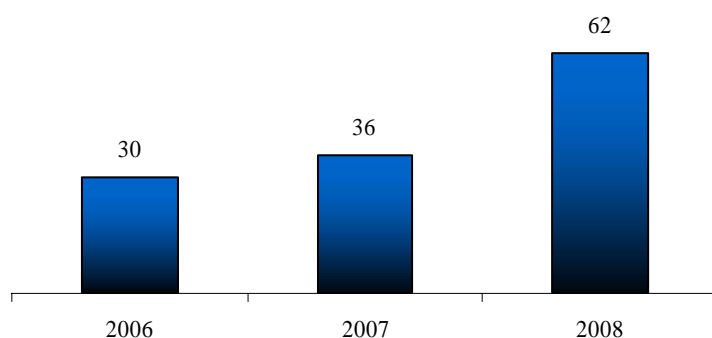
Affairs, diplomatic and consular representation offices of Latvia abroad, the Ministry of Welfare and the Employment State Agency.

In 2008, a rise in the number of issued permanent residence permits (PRP) and temporary residence permits (TRP) was seen. The increasing number of issued TRPs is the result of the rapid economic development in the first half of 2008, the fact that Latvia is an EU Member State, and the strained situation in Latvian labour market because of which Latvian businesses were employing foreign labour force.

However, in the second half of the year, as the economy receded at a very fast pace, the trend changed and the demand for foreign labour force fell.

### Status of Long-Term Resident of the EC

#### EC Status of Long-Term Resident Granted



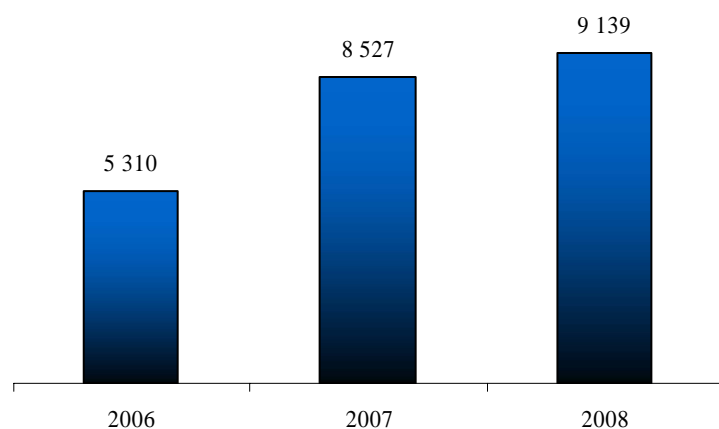
As from 21 July 2006, when the Law on the Status of a Long-Term Resident of the European Community in the Republic of Latvia entered into force, the OCMA takes decisions on granting the status of European Community long-term resident status in the Republic of Latvia. The said status can be granted to the foreigners who have been residing legally, holding a temporary residence

permit, in Latvia for five years and non-citizens of Latvia. To obtain the status, the person has to prove that they have sufficient and regular means of subsistence and the knowledge of the official language, i.e. Latvian. In 2008, this status was granted to 62 persons, of which 28 were Russian citizens, 9 -Ukrainian, 4 -Belarusian, 4 -non-citizens of Latvia.

The statistics show that this status is not popular in Latvia, and the majority of foreigners apply for the national permanent residence permits.

## Work Permits

### Work Permits Issued

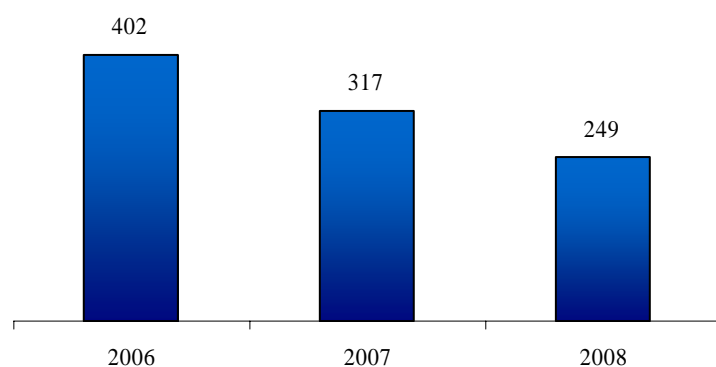


Because of the economic situation, the number of work permits issued continued to grow in the beginning of the survey year, but than it dropped in the end of the year.

The number of foreign employers decreased significantly on the construction sector, where it fell by 47%. In other major sectors, the number of work permits issued even increased compared to 2007: in the processing industry -by 48%, in the transport industry -by 39%, in the retail sector -by 12%.

## Visas and Letters of Invitation

### Visas Issued



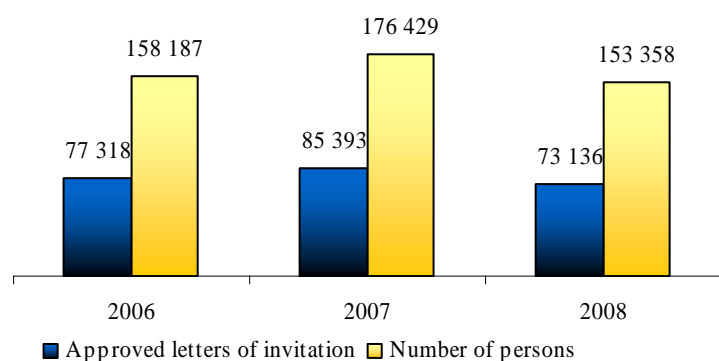
Foreigners who need visa in order to enter Latvia must obtain it prior to entering Latvia; they have to apply for the visa and receive it from any diplomatic or consular authorities of the Republic of Latvia. In exceptional cases, the visa can be issued at border crossing points: if it is in accordance with the international legal norms, in the interests of the Latvian state or if it is connected with Force Majeure or

humanitarian considerations.

The OCMA is one of visa issuing authorities; it only issues visas if it is required for a foreigner to extend the period of residence in Latvia due to unforeseen circumstances and if they are unable to leave Latvia within the period specified in the visa. The number of visas issued by the OCMA is very low compared to that issued by diplomatic and consular authorities of the Republic of Latvia. For example, in 2008 the

representation offices issued in total 135,793 visas, whereas the OCMA issued only 249 visas.

### Approved Letters of Invitation



Regarding the numbers of visas issued by Latvian diplomatic and consular authorities by home countries of visa holders, the majority of visas, about 66%, were issued to citizens of the Russian Federation, followed by citizens of Belarus -about 18%, and Ukrainian citizens -about 9%. Regarding the numbers of visas issued by the

OCMA by home countries of visa holders, the percentage was a little bit different: the majority of visas, about 50%, were issued to citizens of the Russian Federation, followed by citizens of Georgia and the Ukraine -over 9% both countries, followed by Ukrainian citizens -about 8%.

If the visa applicant is unable to provide proofs of extraordinary circumstances why they are unable to leave the country within the period specified in the visa, the OCMA refuses to issue the visa. In 2008, visas were refused in 18 cases, which is 6.7% of the total number of visa applications submitted to the OCMA.

In 2008, a decrease in the number of visas issued by all visa issuing authorities of Latvia - diplomatic and consular authorities of the Republic of Latvia, border crossing points and the OCMA -was seen. The decrease in the number of visas issued was due to the fact that the Schengen acquis requirements that stipulate that visas can be issued inside the country only in special cases were complied with more strictly. The decrease was also a result of the accession of Latvia to the Schengen Area in late 2007; consequently, foreigners may enter Latvia and reside temporary here if they hold a visa issued by another Schengen Area Member State.

The accession of Latvia to the Schengen Treaty affected also the number of letters of invitation approved during the survey period.

According to the Immigration Law, both types of letters of invitations (*ielūgums* and *izsaukums*) is a document in which the inviting person assumes the liabilities under the law in relation to the foreigner they have invited to Latvia. *Ielūgums* is used when applying for a visa, *izsaukums* is used when applying for a residence permit.

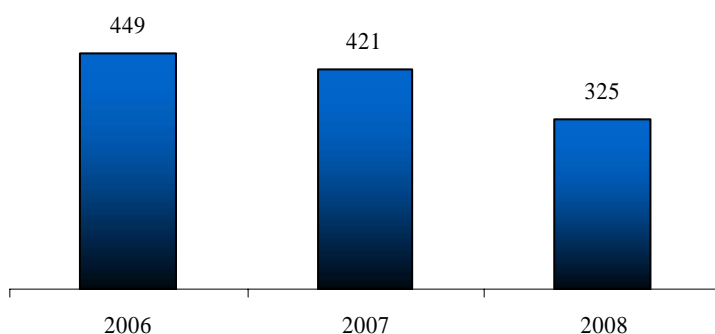
In 2008, the OCMA approved 63,738 letters of invitation that covered 143,124 persons. Compared to 2007, the number of approved letters of invitation decreased by 16%, and the number of invited persons decreased by 19%.

Essential changes have taken place in relation to the supporting documents to be provided when applying for a visa; in January 2008, the agreements on simplified visa issuing procedure between the European Community and the Ukraine, Moldova and five West Balkan countries entered into force. This agreement *inter alia* stipulates preferences and exceptions regarding letters of invitation to be applied to several people categories. A similar agreement with Russia entered into force in June 2007.

To simplify and make easier the visa obtaining procedure and to facilitate the inflow of tourists to Latvia, in the second half of 2008 and early 2009 both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the OCMA promoted information to the public on the possibilities to receive visas, stressing that a letter of invitation is not a mandatory document for receiving the visa.

## Repatriation

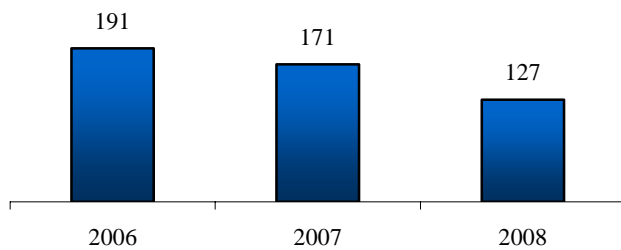
Repatriation Cases Viewed



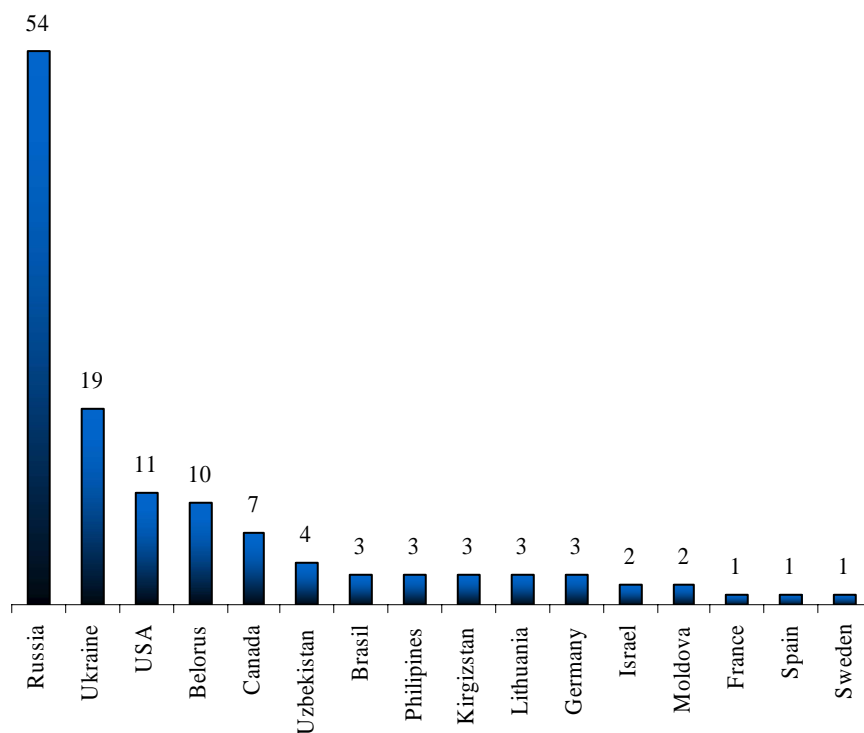
Pursuant to the Repatriation Law, the OCMA takes decisions on granting or cancelling the status of repatriate, issues documents to repatriates, informs repatriates on their social rights and guaranties available to them and, in cooperation with local governments, helps repatriate

families to solve adaptation and integration issues.

### Repatriant Status Granted



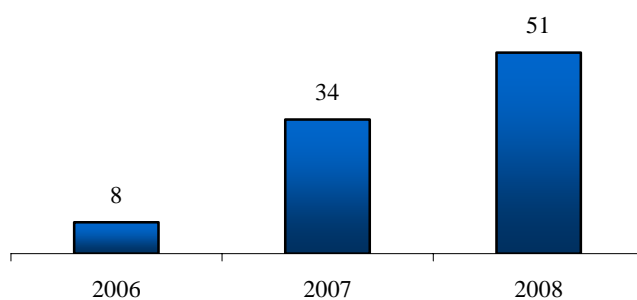
### Repatriate Source Countries in 2008



etc) was higher -92 persons, whereas 35 persons moved from the West (USA, Canada).

## Asylum

### Asylum Seekers in Latvia



military actions came to Latvia from Georgia.

Compared to previous years, the number of viewed repatriation cases decreased in 2008. Having assessed the current economic situation, repatriates are not sure about the possibilities to find a job after moving to Latvia for permanent residence, therefore they suspend repatriation.

In 2008, 100 repatriates and 27 members of their families moved to Latvia. The material assistance to the repatriates (travel expenses, unemployment benefits or language training courses) in the survey year comprised 482 allowances for the total amount of LVL 56,278.

The largest number of repatriates in the survey year came from Russia (54 persons), followed by Ukraine (19 persons), the USA (11 persons) and Belarus (10 persons). Similarly to previous years, the number of repatriates from the East (Russia, Ukraine

Compared to 2006 and 2007, the number of asylum seekers decreased sharply in 2008 -51 persons applied for asylum. This trend was due to the accession of Latvia to the Schengen Area that made the country more attractive as a transit country for third-country residents for going to the European Union Member States and the military conflict between Georgia and Russia in the result of which many civil residents who had suffered from the

In 2008, asylum in Latvia was sought by three persons from African countries. Eighteen persons were from Asian countries, two persons from Cuba, and twenty-seven persons from former USSR republics, including Georgia.

#### Source Countries of Asylum Seekers in 2008

Source country	Asylum seekers	
	Adults	Children
Afghanistan	2	8
Azerbaijan	1	
Belarus	1	
Bangladesh	2	
Georgia	10	7
Cameroon	1	
Kirghizstan	1	
Russia	4	1
Cuba	2	
Nigeria	1	
Pakistan	1	
Senegal	1	
Syria	3	
Sri Lanka	2	
Tajikistan	1	
Turkey	1	
Ukraine	1	
<b>Total:</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>16</b>

In 2008, one person was granted the Subsidiary protection status and two persons were granted the refugee status. In 21 cases the OCMA decided no to grant any status, five asylum seekers withdraw their applications, and two applications were not viewed.

#### Asylum Seekers Reception Centre Mucenieki

In accordance with the international practice, in 1997 Latvia commenced the work on creating the Asylum Seekers Reception Centre Mucenieki. The centre is located in Ropaži civil parish in Mucenieki, 17 kilometres from Rīga, in a former Soviet Army military base. The centre's creation was supported by the US Government, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Swedish Government. The total costs for refurbishing the buildings and constructing the utilities networks were about LVL 840,000. The centre has been financed from the state budget since its opening.

The centre can accommodate 200 people; its main task is to provide accommodation to asylum seekers while their cases are being viewed and decided on and to facilitate their adaptation in the society of Latvia.

In 2008, 24 persons lived in Mucenieki (14 persons in 2007). On average one asylum seeker spent 85 days in the centre Mucenieki.

In Mucenieki, asylum seekers not only get accommodation but also healthcare and social services. In the centre its inhabitants have access to a kitchen, a laundry room, TV, a study room with Internet access, and a children room. The centre offers Latvian language courses for adults and children and manual training, drawing and mathematics

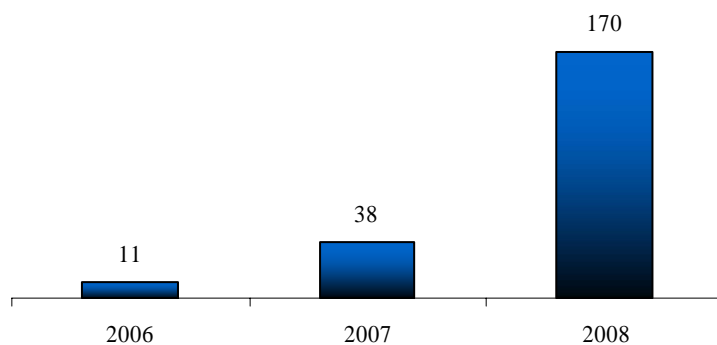
lessons for children in order to prepare them for school. In these lessons, the centre's inhabitants get general information about the society of Latvia, its history and traditions.

Asylum seekers are entitled to per diem for the acquisition of food, hygiene items and essential goods if required. In 2008, LVL 3,052 was paid in this type of allowances.

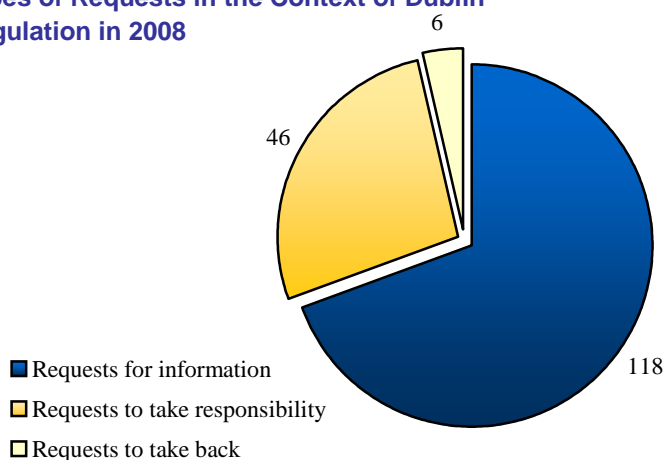
The work with asylum seekers and the conditions of their accommodation are being improved constantly, inter alia under various EU Funding projects.

### Requests Viewed in the Context of the Dublin Regulation

Applications to be Viewed in Dublin Regulation Context



Types of Requests in the Context of Dublin Regulation in 2008



In 2008, Latvia received 170 requests to be viewed in the context of the Dublin Regulation. The main objective of the Dublin Regulation is to ensure that the application of an asylum seeker is only viewed in one EU Member State to prevent cases where an asylum seekers and/or their family file asylum requests in several EU Member States simultaneously, in this way

abusing the asylum procedure.

The Dublin Regulation sets out the criteria which are used by the Member State to assess whether another EU Member State is responsible for viewing a particular asylum application.

In the survey period, 118 information requests were received. In 39 cases Latvia agreed to take responsibility in viewing the asylum application and to take back the asylum seeker, but in 13 cases the

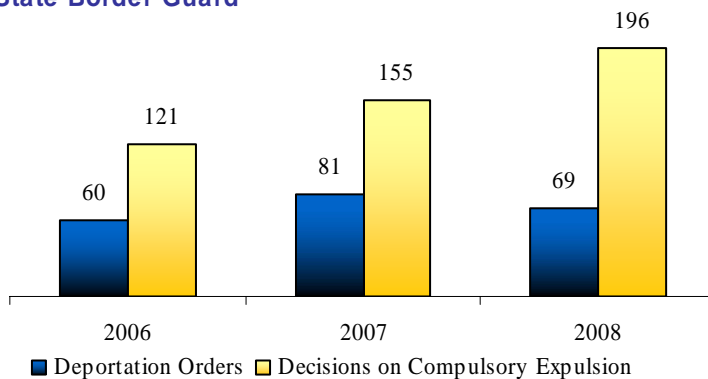
application was rejected.

The requests were received from Sweden (117), the Czech Republic (21), Norway (9), Lithuania (7), Germany (4), Austria (4), Slovakia (3), Finland (2), Denmark (1), Italy (1) and Estonia (1).

The increase in the number of requests received in the context of the Dublin Regulation is connected with the trend referred to earlier, that after the accession of Latvia to the Schengen Area more and more asylum seekers use Latvia as a transit country for going to other EU Member States. Since pursuant to the Dublin Regulation the asylum application is to be viewed by the country through which the person enters the EU, the number of persons returned to Latvia increases.

## Deportation Orders

### Deportation Orders and Decisions on Compulsory Expulsion by the OCMA and the State Border Guard



The OCMA issues deportation orders or takes decisions on compulsory expulsion if the foreigner being in Latvia violates the entry or residence procedure for foreigners, e.g. violates the visa period, resides without a valid visa or residence permit, violates the visa-free regime conditions and in other cases.

The deportation order gives the foreigner a possibility to leave Latvia within seven days of receiving the order. If a

deportation order is issued, a prohibition to enter the Republic of Latvia for a period of up to 3 years may be applied.

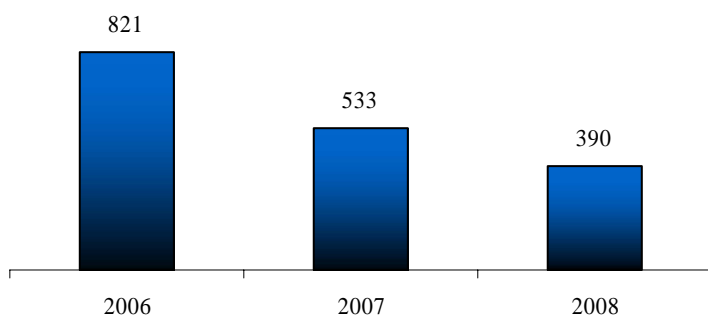
If a decision on compulsory expulsion is taken, a prohibition to enter the Republic of Latvia for a period from three to five years is applied. The compulsory expulsion of foreigners is performed by the State Border Guard.

The number of deportation orders and decisions on compulsory expulsion decreased somewhat in 2008, but generally the situation was similar to previous years. Deportation orders are mainly issued to persons who have exceeded the permitted residence period in the country.

Decisions on compulsory expulsion are mainly issued to third-country citizens who have exceeded the permitted period of residence in the country or have used counterfeit travel documents, visas or residence permits. In exceptional cases decisions on compulsory expulsion may be applied to persons who have crossed the border illegally.

## Emigration

### Number of Emigrants



Pursuant to the Repatriation Law, the OCMA maintains records on people who emigrate from Latvia. The OCMA updates the data on emigration in the Population Register on the basis of documents provided by the persons.

On the basis of information provided by the competent institutions, the OCMA takes a decision that there are no obstacles for the person to

emigrate from Latvia and provides the statements to be submitted to the relevant foreign authorities.

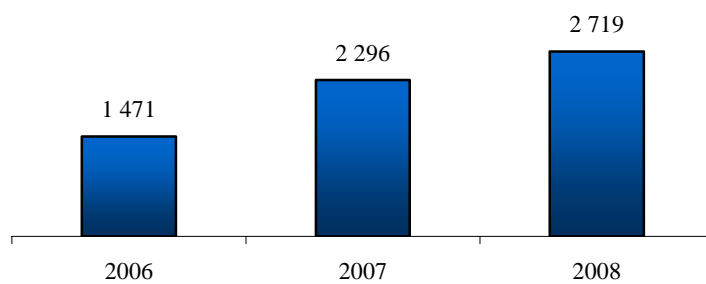
Despite the massive outflow of labour force from Latvia to abroad, according to the statistics it can be seen that the number of persons who have turned to the OCMA and applied for emigration from Latvia has decreased sharply. In the survey year the number of emigration applications viewed was 210, or 35% less than estimated.

This trend is there in the result of the accession of Latvia to the Schengen Area and the lifting of internal border controls that makes the movement of persons from country to country easier. Furthermore, also the travelling preferences that the non-citizens of Latvia are entitled to for travels to the Russian Federation and European Union countries have to be considered. These preferences make people misbelieve that they do not need to clear the formalities in accordance with the law if they emigrate abroad.

Most often applications for emigration are submitted by persons who immigrate to the Russian Federation. This can be explained with the Agreement of 2 June 1993 between the Government of the Republic of Latvia and the Government of the Russian Federation on the regulation of migration processes and the legal protection of migrants, according to which persons who want to emigrate to Russia have to turn to the OCMA, file the application for emigration and receive a statement from it that there are no obstacles for the person to emigrate from Latvia, and this statement must be presented to the competent Russian Federation authorities in order to receive the status of immigrant.

### Determination of Legal Status of Persons

**Cases of Determination of Person's Legal Status**



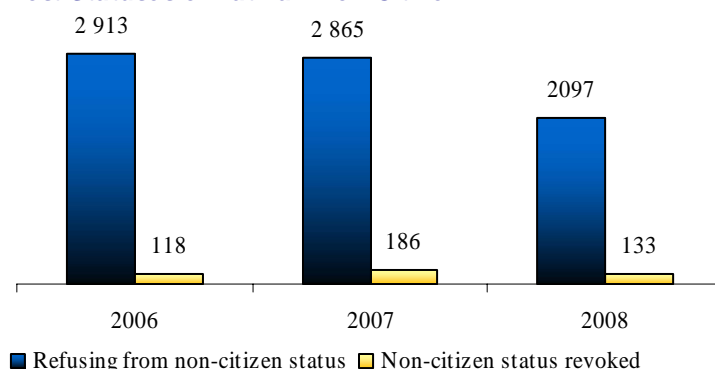
If data of the person are not included in the Population Register and no identity number has been assigned to the person, the legal status of the person in the country has to be determined. Without the status and the identity number, persons cannot receive personal identification documents, work legally, receive allowances and other services.

The OCMA determines the

belonging of persons to:

- the totality of Latvian citizens according to Articles 2.1, 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, and 3 of the Citizenship Law;
- the totality of Latvian non-citizens according to the conditions set out in the Law on the Status of the Former USSR Citizens who do not Have Latvian or Another Country's Citizenship;
- the totality of stateless persons according to the conditions set out in the Stateless Persons Law.

**Lost Statuses of Latvian Non-Citizen**



Documents for determining the legal status are accepted by regional divisions of the OCMA, but the cases are viewed by the Persons' Status Control Department.

In the survey period, the number of cases of determination of legal status increased. The majority of them were the legal status determination cases for children of Latvian nationals born outside



Latvia, as well as children who are born in Latvia and one parent of whom is a citizen of another country.

The OCMA also deals with cases of losing the status of Latvian non-citizen, which comprise refusing from the non-citizen status and revoking the non-citizen status.

Unlike previous years, when the OCMA paid more attention to the status of non-citizens residing in Latvia, in the survey year the OCMA worked more intensively with non-citizens residing abroad in order to identify the persons who do not fall under the criteria of this status, -i.e. they have been residing outside Latvia for a longer time and have obtained the citizenship of another country and due to the said they are not entitled to keep the status of Latvian non-citizen.

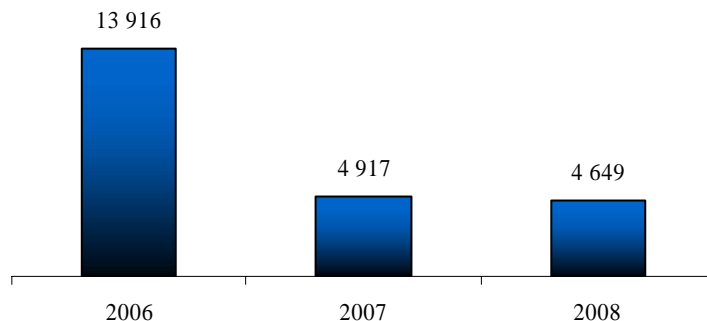
In this process, successful cooperation with Latvian diplomatic and consular representation offices and foreign migration services is of vital importance.

The work with persons residing abroad is more difficult and more time consuming due to slower circulation of information; accordingly, the number of cases viewed in the survey period decreased.

The data show that persons who refuse from the non-citizen status are those non-citizens who have emigrated and obtained the citizenship of another country and non-citizens who reside in Latvia and choose to obtain the citizenship of, for example, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus or Lithuania and continue residing in Latvia with permanent residence permits.

## Opinions on Latvian Citizenship Applicants

### Opinions Provided to the Naturalization Board



In providing opinions to the Naturalisation Board on persons to be naturalised, the OCMA verifies the legal status of the persons (e.g. whether a Latvian non-citizen complies with the criteria for the status of non-citizen set out in the legal acts or whether a foreigner complies with the residence requirements set out in the legal acts), the truthfulness of the information provided by them

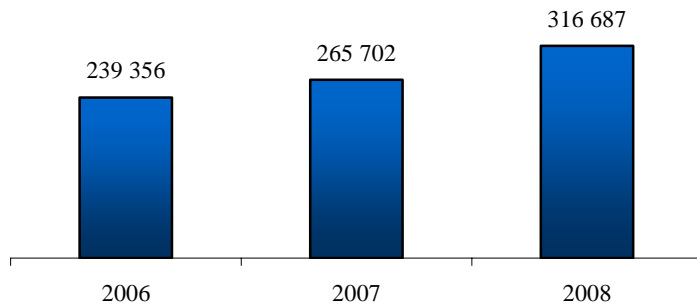
and compliance with the data recorded by the Population Register, and whether the naturalisation restriction does not apply to them: the Latvian citizenship is not granted to persons who after 17 June 1941 have chosen the Republic of Latvia as their place of residence directly after demobilisation from the armed forces of the USSR (Russia) or the internal armed forces of the USSR (Russia) and who have not been residing permanently in Latvia as of the day of joining the army.

The need for opinions on citizenship candidates is decreasing because the pace of naturalisation volumes have decreased rapidly since 2006; if 10.6 thousand naturalisation applications were received in 2006, then in 2007 this number sank to 3.3 thousand and to only 2.6 thousand applications in 2008.

According to the Naturalisation Board, this trend is due to the social and economic situation in Latvia and the split society that does not motivate the non-citizens to obtain the citizenship of Latvia, as well as the travel preferences for Latvian non-citizens for travels to EU Member States and the Russian Federation implemented in recent years.

## Personal Identification and Travel Documents

### Latvian Citizen Passports Issued



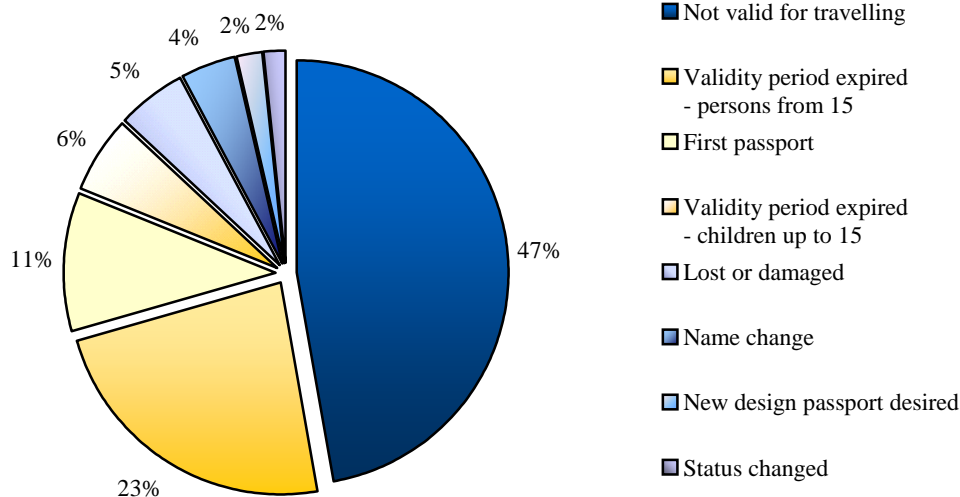
In 2008, the number of issued personal identification documents increased sharply - 123,079 more personal identification documents were issued compared to 2007. Consequently, the workload of regional divisions of the OCMA grew considerably in the survey period.

was the fact that the OCMA commenced issuing passports of the new type that includes the biometric data of the person from 20 November 2007. Initially the microchip contained only the biometric picture of face, but from 15 September 2008 the issuing of the second generation electronic passports was commenced, and the microchips of these

The reason for the rapid increase in the number of passports issued

passports contain digital pictures of its holder's two fingerprints.

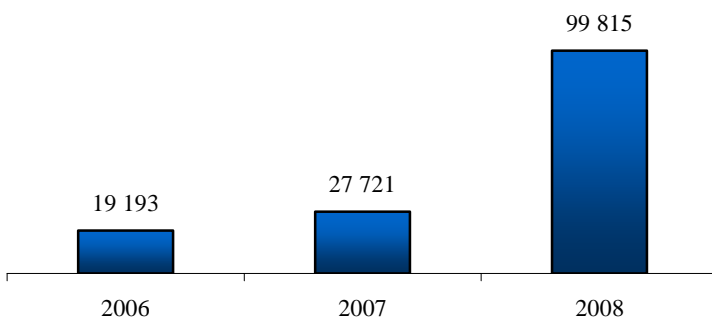
### Reasons for Issuing Latvian Citizen Passports in 2008



Furthermore, the Latvian citizen passports issued till June 30 2002 became invalid for travelling outside Latvia from 1 July 2008.

The interest of people in the new design passports was greater than

### Latvian Non-Citizen Passports Issued



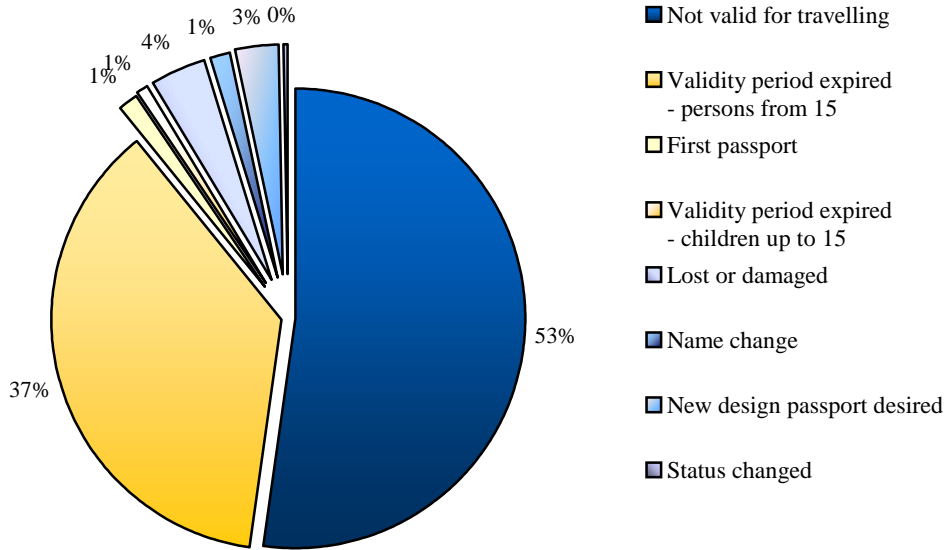
expected; many people wanted to receive the new design passports instead of valid old passports, specifying 'passport not valid for travelling' as the reason for replacing the passport.

Consequently, 26,687 more Latvian citizen passports were issued than estimated in the survey period. Compared to 2007, the number of issued Latvian citizen passports

increased by more than 50,000 in 2008.

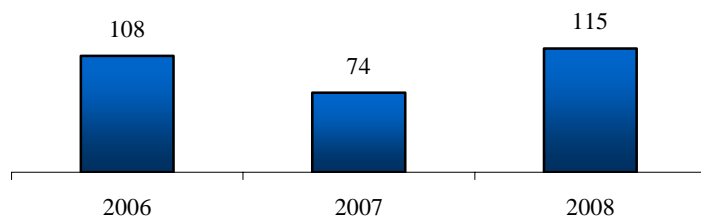
Even more rapidly (by more than 72 thousand), increased the number of issued non-citizen passports in the survey period compared to previous year.

**Reasons for Issuing Latvian Non-Citizen Pasports in 2008**



The reason for the rapid increase in the number of Latvian non-citizen passports issued was the fact that in 2008 a considerable number of Latvian non-citizen passports that had been issued in 1998 with a validity period of 10 years expired in 2008. Also,

**Issued Travel Documents to Stateless Persons**

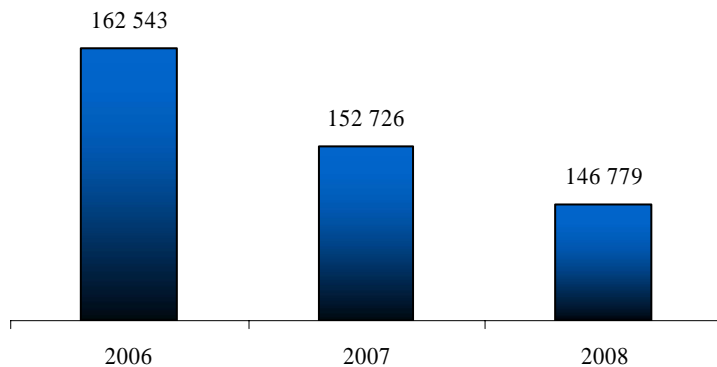


many non-citizens wanted to receive the new design passports although their old personal identification documents were still valid.

The issuing of new design passports caused an increase in the number of issued travel documents for stateless persons too.

**Declaration of Residence**

**Declared Residences**

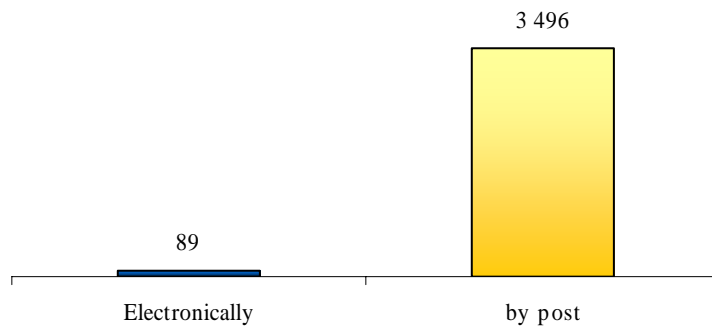


The place of residence can be declared to the relevant authority of the local government where the new place of residence of the person is located or to the OCMA. The OCMA accepts declarations of residence electronically or by post.

Compared to previous years, the total volume of declarations of residence decreased somewhat in 2008.

Most often people turned to the local government authority to declare their place of residence, but the services of the OCMA were quite popular too.

### Residences Declared Electronically and by Post in 2008



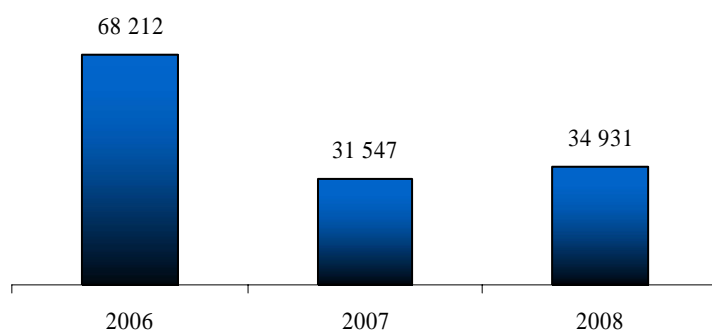
The low number of declarations submitted electronically can be explained with the fact that a secure e-signature is required to do that and the use of it among people is very low so far.

To make declaring the residence more convenient, a new electronic service called 'Submission of Declaration of Residence' was developed in the survey period in cooperation with the Secretariat of the Special Assignments

Minister for Electronic Government Affairs. The OCMA is continuing its work to make the electronic declaration of residence more accessible to the people.

### Work of the Population Register

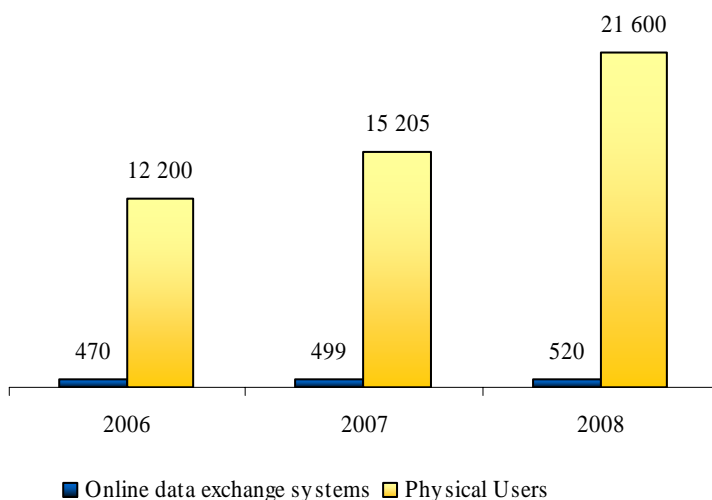
#### Statements Issued



The Population Register is one of the most significant databases of the national level; it contains information on more than three million persons. The Population Register is a single country's population registration system where information is gathered on names, changes of names, places of residence, personal identification documents etc. The information is used for statistical

surveys, tax estimates and calculation, organisation of elections and other processes of national scale.

#### Online Data Exchange Systems Provided and the Number of Physical Users



One of the services provided by the OCMA is the provision of information from the Population Register to individuals and state administration and other authorities.

In the survey year, the OCMA issued 34,931 statements.

Compared to 2007, the number of issued statements increased slightly, not reaching however the levels we saw in 2006. This is because the information circulation in electronic format in Latvia is becoming more and more developed, and consequently

government authorities and businesses request statements from people much rarer.

Furthermore, the number of issued statements decreased because people can receive statements on residence from their local governments, and legal entities can obtain this information online.

In the survey period, the number of physical users of the information systems maintained by the OCMA grew.

The Population Register is the only national-level register where information online is used by all other state registers. The Population register is used to ensure the operation of e-administration and e-services too.

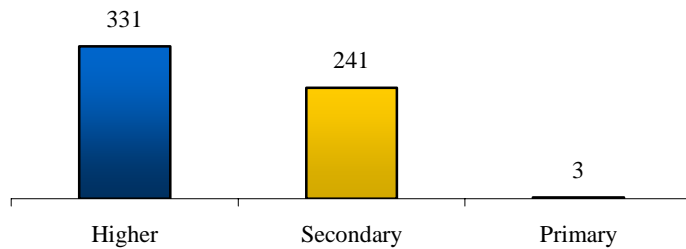
The number of agreements concluded increased by 47.6% in 2008; 768 agreements on online exchange of Population Register's data were concluded.

### **Results of Government Core Budget Programs and Sub-Programs in 2008**

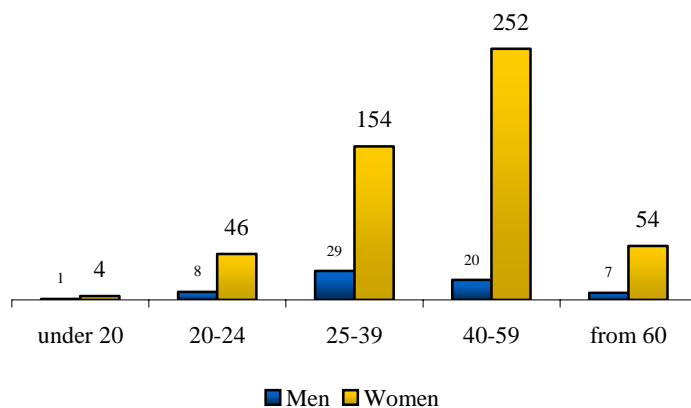
Results of sub-program	Estimated 2008	Actual
Latvian citizen passports issued	290,000	316,687
Latvian non-citizen passports issued	100,000	99,815
Visas issued	450	249
Residence (temporary and permanent) permits issued	21,500	21,275
Opinions provided to the Naturalisation Board	5,300	4,649
Emigration applications viewed	600	390
Repatriation cases viewed	450	325

## PERSONNEL

Education of OCMA Personnel in 2008



Distribution of OCMA Personnel by Age in 2008



With every year and in particular after the accession of Latvia to the Schengen Area, the requirements for personnel qualification have increased since professional approach is needed for the implementation of the expanded functions of the authorities under the Ministry of Interior in the field of migration and asylum within the framework of the EU, as well as in the fields of IT and electronic services.

In the survey period, the turnover of OCMA employees was significant. The main reason for that was the low payment to the employees and officials of the OCMA. Employment relations were terminated with 84 employees of the OCMA in 2008, and 104 new employees were employed.

In the survey year, the OCMA employed 377 employees and 198 general civil service servants.

Of 575 employees at the OCMA, 331 had higher education, 241 -

secondary education, and only 3 employees -primary education.

The majority of the OCMA personnel is in the age group 40-59, followed by the age group 25-39. The number of OCMA employees in the age group 30-24 is comparatively low - 36 people only.

There is an overweight of women in the personnel of the OCMA: of the total personnel 510 employees are women and only 65 employees are men.