

Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs

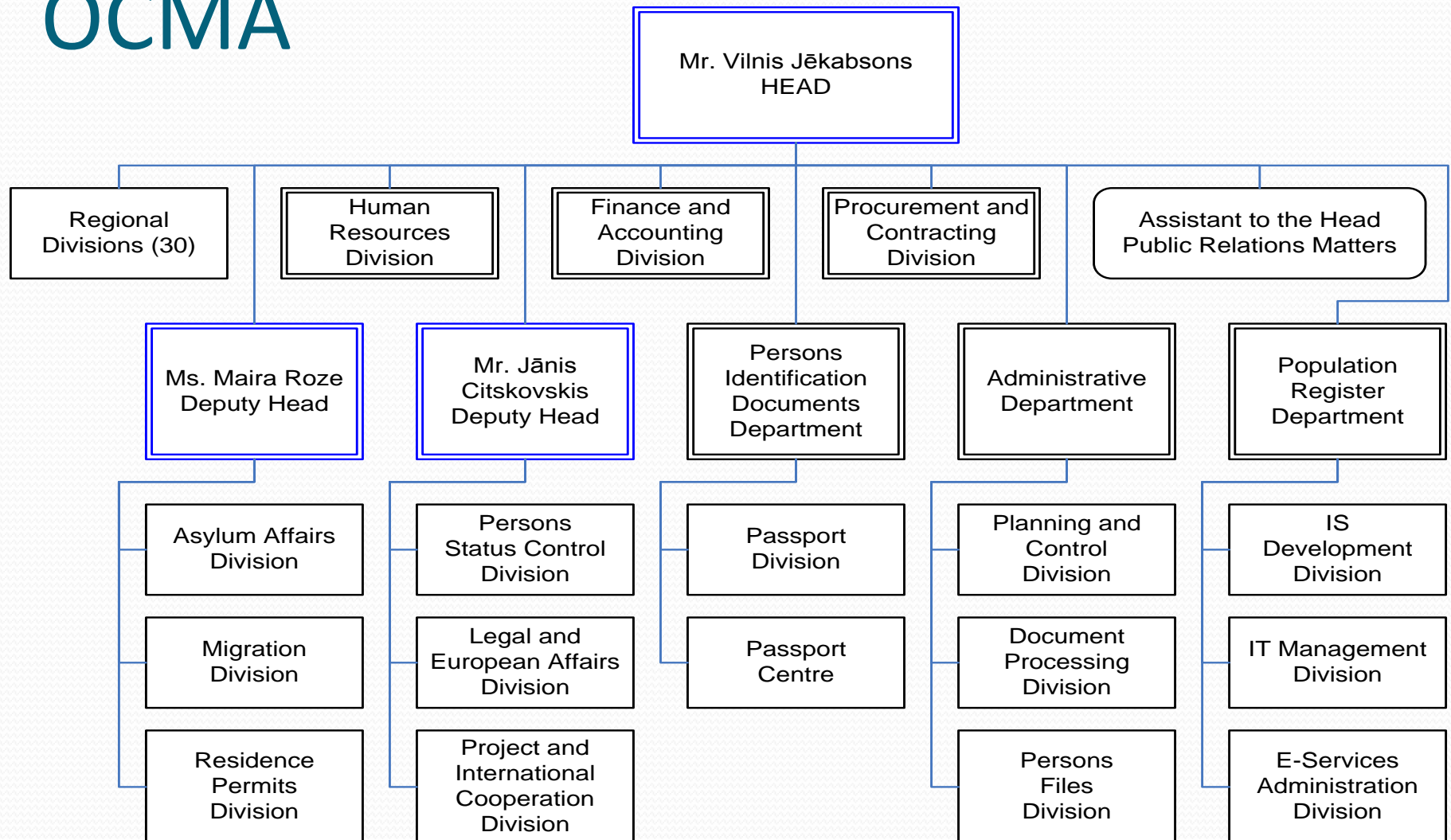
2009

GENERAL INFORMATION

❖ The Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs (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.

❖ In the reference year, there were 521 employees in the OCMA. There are the following structural units in the OCMA: independent central divisions, departments and divisions of departments, as well as regional offices (30).

Organizational structure of the OCMA



Policy Areas and Activities

Pursuant to the legislation, the OCMA has the following functions:

- ❖ to develop and 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.

International projects

❖ The OCMA has commenced the implementation of important EU programme: the framework programme “Solidarity and management of migration flows”. The programme is made of four different funds: the European Refugee Fund, the European Fund for the Integration of Third-country nationals, the European Return Fund, and the External Borders Fund.


❖ In 2009, the OCMA implemented two projects of the **European Refugee Fund** (ERF):

- Project “**Study on optimisation of reception functions, and improvement of the Asylum Seekers Subsystem of the Single Migration Information System**” envisages the optimisation of procedures for reception of asylum seekers and economic efficiency of the asylum seekers reception centre *Muceniki*, as well as the improving of asylum seekers’ personal data processing. As a result of the project implementation in the reference year:
 - Specification of requirements for the Asylum Seekers Subsystem of the Single Migration Information System has been drafted;
 - Technical inspection of the asylum seekers reception centre *Muceniki* was made;
 - Concept has been developed for the economically most efficient model for management of the asylum seekers reception centre *Muceniki*;
 - Healthcare services were provided for asylum seekers in 59 cases, and documents were translated in the scope of asylum procedure in 15 cases.

In general, the amount of LVL 154,411 was acquired in the project in 2009. Completion of the project is planned in 2010.

- Project “**Improvement of the quality of the asylum procedure**” envisages wide scope of activities in order to improve the quality and administrative capacity of the asylum procedure and to improve the qualification of staff involved in the procedure. As a result of the project implementation in the reference year:
 - Commentary to the new Asylum Law have been elaborated;
 - Asylum procedure manual has been developed for the OCMA employees;
 - Employees of those state administration institutions were trained who are involved in the asylum procedure, as well as judges of administrative district courts regarding the procedure of application of the new Asylum Law;
 - Procedure of interviewing asylum seekers has been optimised.

Amount of LVL 37,891 has been acquired during the project implementation.

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- ❖ In 2009, the OCMA implemented three projects of the European **Fund for the Integration of Third-country nationals**:
 - Project “**Improvement of the process for processing of residence permit information system data**” envisages the improvement of the software of subsystem “Residence permit information system” of the Single Migration Information System for aggregating the statistical data that will give an opportunity to ensure obtaining of detailed data on third-country national permanently residing in Latvia. As a result of the project implementation in the reference year:
 - Recommendation has been developed for improvement of the software of subsystem “Residence permit information system” of the Single migration information system.

Amount of LVL 50,801 has been acquired during the project implementation.

- Project “**Evaluation of needs of repatriates – third-country nationals**” envisages development recommendations on necessary adaptation measures for third-country nationals – repatriates, promoting the availability of necessary services. As a result of the project implementation in the reference year:
 - Study has been made on the return of repatriates to the recent provided support and on needs of repatriates;
 - Informative material has been developed and issued on needs of third-country nationals;
 - Recommendation has been developed for implementation of adaptation measures accordingly to needs of third-country nationals – repatriates.

Amount of LVL 38,807 has been acquired during the project implementation.


- Project “**Aid to repatriates –third-country nationals**” envisages giving of practical assistance to low-income repatriates –third-country nationals and their family members who have just arrived to Latvia for permanent residence here, the necessary financial and social support, an opportunity to improve one’s Latvian language skills and knowledge about the Latvian culture and history of Latvia, as well as an opportunity to integrate successfully in the labour market and Latvian society. As a result of the project implementation in the reference year:
 - Summer camp was organised for children of third-country nationals – repatriates and youth;
 - Latvian language courses were organised for third-country nationals – repatriates.

Amount of LVL 44,098 has been acquired during the project implementation in 2009. The project will continue in 2010.

❖ In 2009, the OCMA implemented one project of the **European Return Fund**:

- Project “**Training for employees of the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs**” envisages promotion of co-operation with services of other countries in order to reduce time needed for receipt of information and decision making regarding persons who have violated the entry and residence rules, and to train the OCMA employees who are involved in solving cases of return of illegally travelling persons. As a result of the project implementation in the reference year:
 - Foreign language skills were improved for 41 OCMA employees who are involved in solving cases of return of illegally travelling persons.

Amount of LVL 74,896 has been acquired during the project implementation.

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- ❖ In 2009, the OCMA implemented one project of the **External Borders Fund**:
 - Project “**Ensuring the connection of the National Visa Information System to the Central Visa Information System**” envisages the improvement of migration process control, external security, ensuring data exchange between the National Visa Information System of Latvia and the EU Central Visa Information System, as well as training of users. As a result of the project implementation in the reference year:
 - Linking of the National Visa Information System to the Central Visa Information System has been started.

In 2009, an amount of LVL 349,764 was assigned to the project implementation. Completion of the project is planned in 2010.

RESULTS ACHIEVED

- ❖ Major priorities in the survey year and information on the implementation thereof

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 implemented the EU legislative acts during the reference year and also continued improving the administrative procedures.

In the reference year, experts of the OCMA participated in development of Regulation (EC) No. 810/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 establishing a Community Code on Visas, as well as practical guide (manual) regarding application of the Regulation in member states; elaborated amendments to national legislative acts, and carried out also other measures in order to commence the application of the Regulation from April 5, 2010.

On September 1, 2009, agreement with the Migration Service of the Russian Federation entered into force regarding exchange of information and documents regarding persons who leave for permanent residence in Russia. The agreement provides preferential exchange of documents and information between the Migration Service of the Russian Federation and the OCMA, thus simplifying administrative procedures.

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

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

During the implementation of the European Refugee Fund project “Improvement of the quality of the asylum procedure”, the following activities were made:

- In July and October 2009, employees of those state administration institutions were trained who are involved in the asylum procedure, as well as judges of administrative district courts regarding the procedure of application of the new Asylum Law.
- Book “Commentary to the Asylum Law” (author: J.Gromovs) was published, which has been disseminated for employees of state administration institutions and courts of the Republic of Latvia, as well as for libraries of higher educational establishments of Latvia. The manual contains information about activities to be performed starting from receipt of an asylum application and opening a file to activities to be performed in relation to the person who has been granted a refugee or subsidiary protection status. Standard decision templates have been also developed.
- In co-operation with the State Border Guard, the initial questionnaire for asylum seekers has been revised: scope of its questions has been extended in order the interviewer could prepare him or herself for the big interview. Record of interview with an asylum seeker has been revised.

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

- ❖ 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 image of the face and digital pictures of two fingerprints.

In 2009, the procedure for issuance of passports was improved by ensuring the implementation of Regulation (EC) No. 444/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of May 28, 2009 amending Council Regulation (EC) No. 2252/2004 on standards for securing features and biometrics in passports and travel documents issued by Member States. The following most important changes have been introduced in 2009:

- Procedure for obtaining fingerprints has been updated, which, inter alia, provides that digital images of fingerprints shall be included in chips of passports of persons starting from the age of 12 and not from 10, as it was provided before;
- In order to ensure additional security for children, a condition has been included which regulates the procedure for issuance of passports to children: citizens or non-citizens of Latvia where one of their parents is a third-country national or a stateless person.

The OCMA started issuance of passports that correspond with the European Union requirements and international standards on November 20, 2007, by including in passports a chip with a digital image of person's face, but on September 15, 2008 issuance of the second generation electronic passports was commenced where the chip includes digital images of person's fingerprints.

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

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

By implementing the set priority during the reference year, recommendations have been developed for the improvement of the software of subsystem “Residence Permits Information System” of the Single Migration Information System within the scope of the European Fund for the Integration of Third-country nationals project “Improvement of residence permit information system data processing”. The methods and recommendations have been developed in order to accumulate necessary data volume in the Residence Permits Information System according to the needs for statistical data.

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

- ❖ **To ensure the preparation of the Electoral Register for the elections of the European Parliament and municipal governments in 2009**

The following activities were carried out in 2009:

- Information system of the Electoral Register was improved;
- New e-service was introduced which gives an opportunity to learn about one's polling station, free of charge.

2009 in Figures

VISAS

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.

One of the institutions that issue visas is also the OCMA. The number of visas issued by the OCMA is very small comparing to the number of visas issued by diplomatic and consular representation offices of the Republic of Latvia and border control points. It can be explained by the fact that the OCMA issue visas only in case if a foreigner needs extension of his or her stay in Latvia due to previously unforeseen circumstances and he or she is unable to leave the country by a date indicated in the visa.

In 2009, the OCMA issued 189 visas, representation offices of Latvia issued totally 122,100 visas, and border control points issued 4,185.

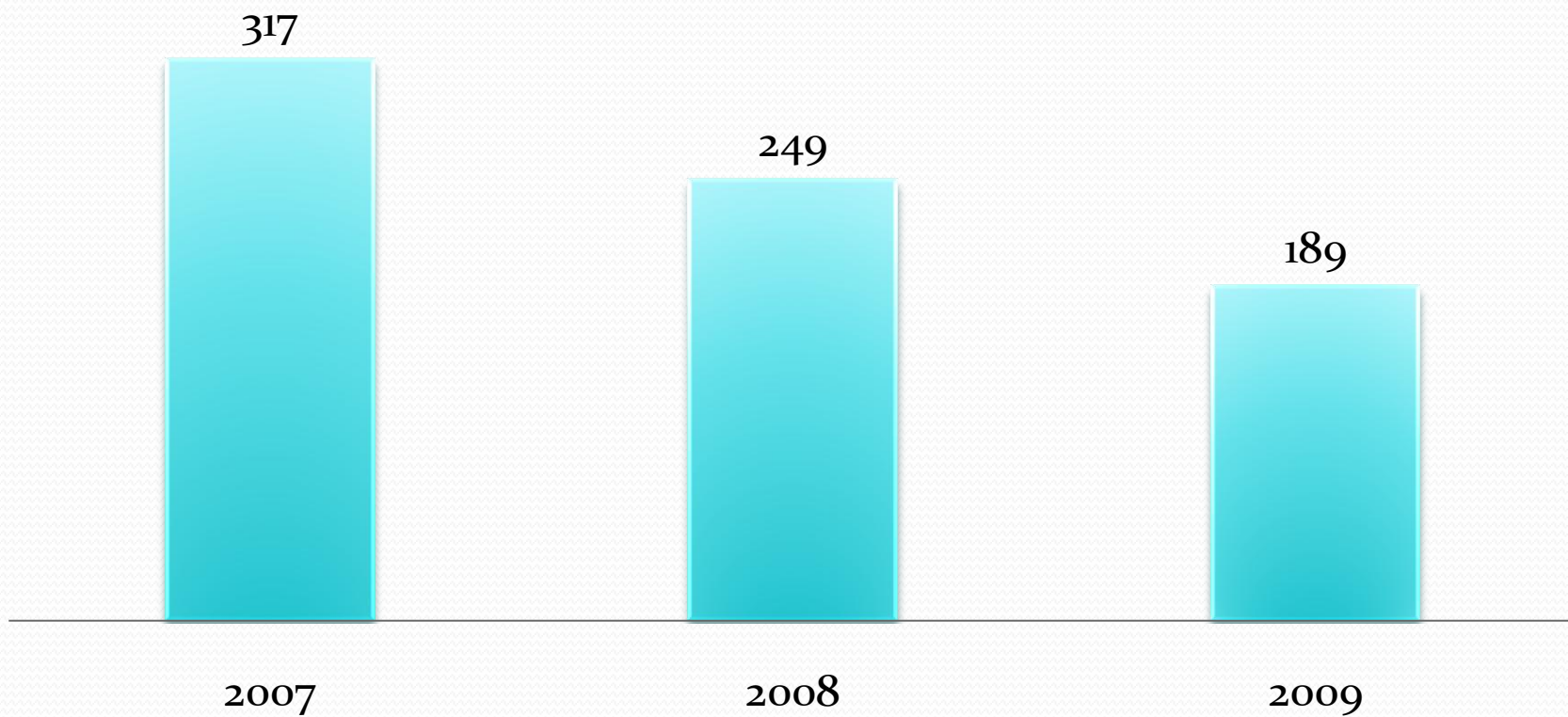
VISAS

In case, if a visa applicant is unable to explain extraordinary circumstances due to which he or she cannot leave the country by a date indicated in the visa, the OCMA rejects issuance of a visa. In 2009, issuance of a visa was rejected in 13 cases.

In 2009, a drop in the number of issued visas was seen in all Latvian institutions that issue visas: in diplomatic and consular representation offices of the Republic of Latvia, and at border control points and the OCMA. The drop in the number of visas issued by the OCMA can be explained by following more strict Schengen *acquis* rules that provide issuance of a visa domestically only in special well-founded cases. The number of issued visas is also influenced by the fact that third-country nationals have the right to enter Latvia and to stay temporary here also on the basis of a visa issued by another member state of the Schengen area.

VISAS

Visas issued



INVITATIONS

Pursuant to the provisions of the Immigration Law, a letter of invitation is a document where the inviter undertakes the obligations stated in the Law regarding the third-country national whom he or she has invited to stay in the Republic of Latvia. Letter of invitation is used in cases of visa application and applying for a residence permit.

In case of a visa application a third-country national must prove that he or she has sufficient financial means to stay in the country and, if necessary, to pay for medical expenses. Also, third-country nationals must prove the purpose of their entry, planned place of stay and must prove that their entry in the state does not bring immigration risk, i.e., that they would leave the country within the period indicated in their visa. A letter of invitation with approval of the OCMA, where the inviting person undertakes to ensure all the above-mentioned requirements, can serve as one of all substantiation documents required for issuance of visa. A letter of invitation is not a compulsory document for visa application; – the visa applicant can choose themselves a way to substantiate the need to receive a visa.

In 2009, 46,070 letters of invitation for visa have been approved by the OCMA offices that include 100,460 persons, and 7,320 invitations for residence permits covering 8,078 persons. There is the trend for the number of approved letters of invitation to decrease. Regardless the considerable decrease, approving of letters of invitation has been the second most demanded service from the OCMA during the reference year.

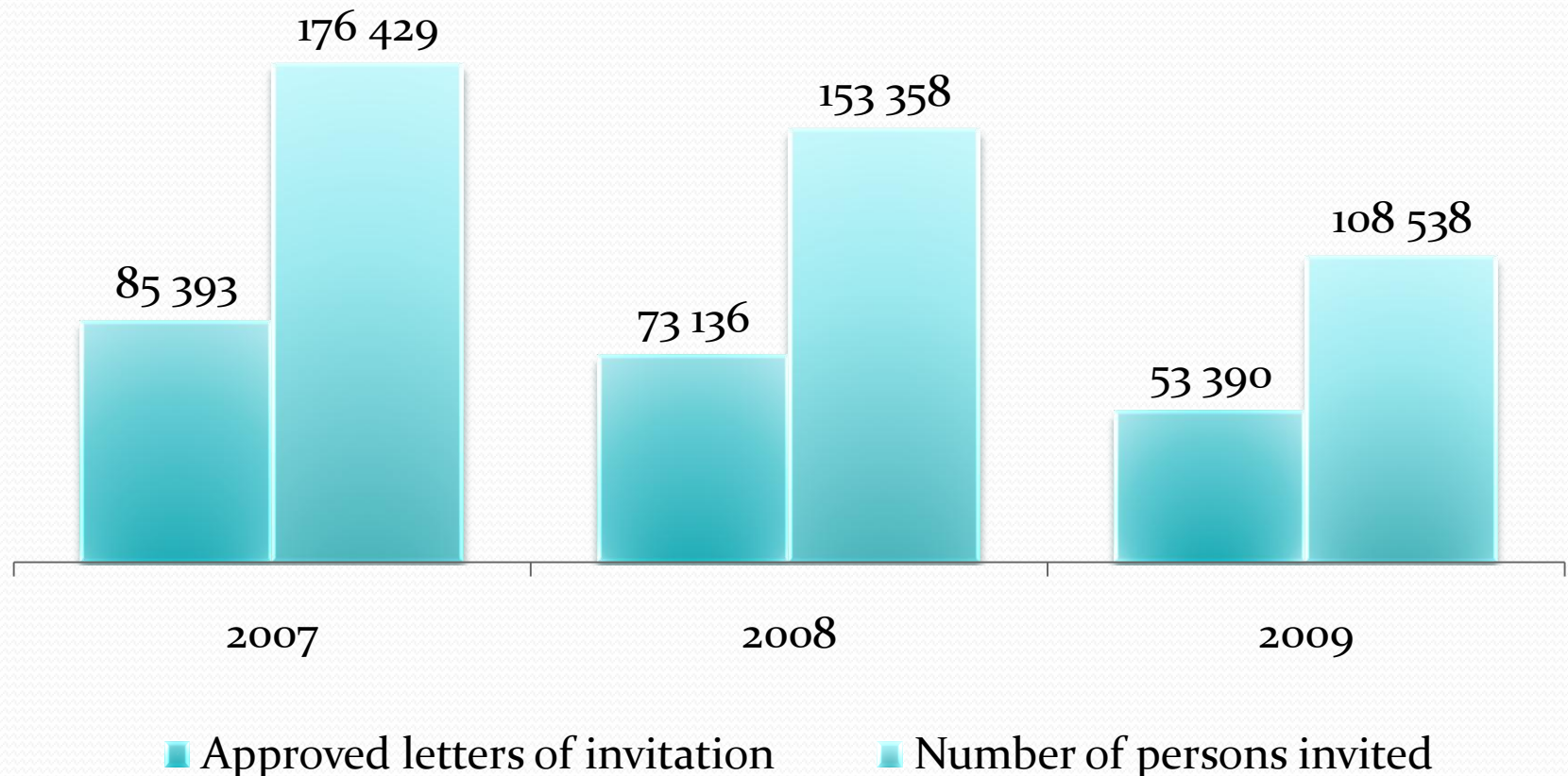
INVITATIONS

The falling number of letters of invitation was mainly due to the accession of Latvia to the Schengen Treaty, as the number of visas issued dropped consequently. Also, essential changes have taken place in relation to the supporting documents to be provided when applying for a visa; the European Community, wishing to promote sustainable relations in the areas of economy, culture and science with third countries and on the basis of reciprocity, at the same time ensuring that visa facilitation would not cause illegal immigration, has entered into agreements on visa facilitation with Russia, the Ukraine, Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. These agreements inter alia stipulates preferences and exceptions regarding letters of invitation to be applied to several categories of persons.

To facilitate and promote the development of tourism in Latvia, changes were implemented in the visa issuing procedure in March 2009 to stipulate that tourism agencies may submit the so called tourism vouchers instead of letters of invitation approved by the OCMA as well as the possibility to receive urgent visas. As for individual tourists from third countries, they need only a hotel booking, return travel tickets and a certificate of sufficient funds for staying in Latvia.

INVITATIONS

Approved Letters of Invitation and Number of Persons Invited



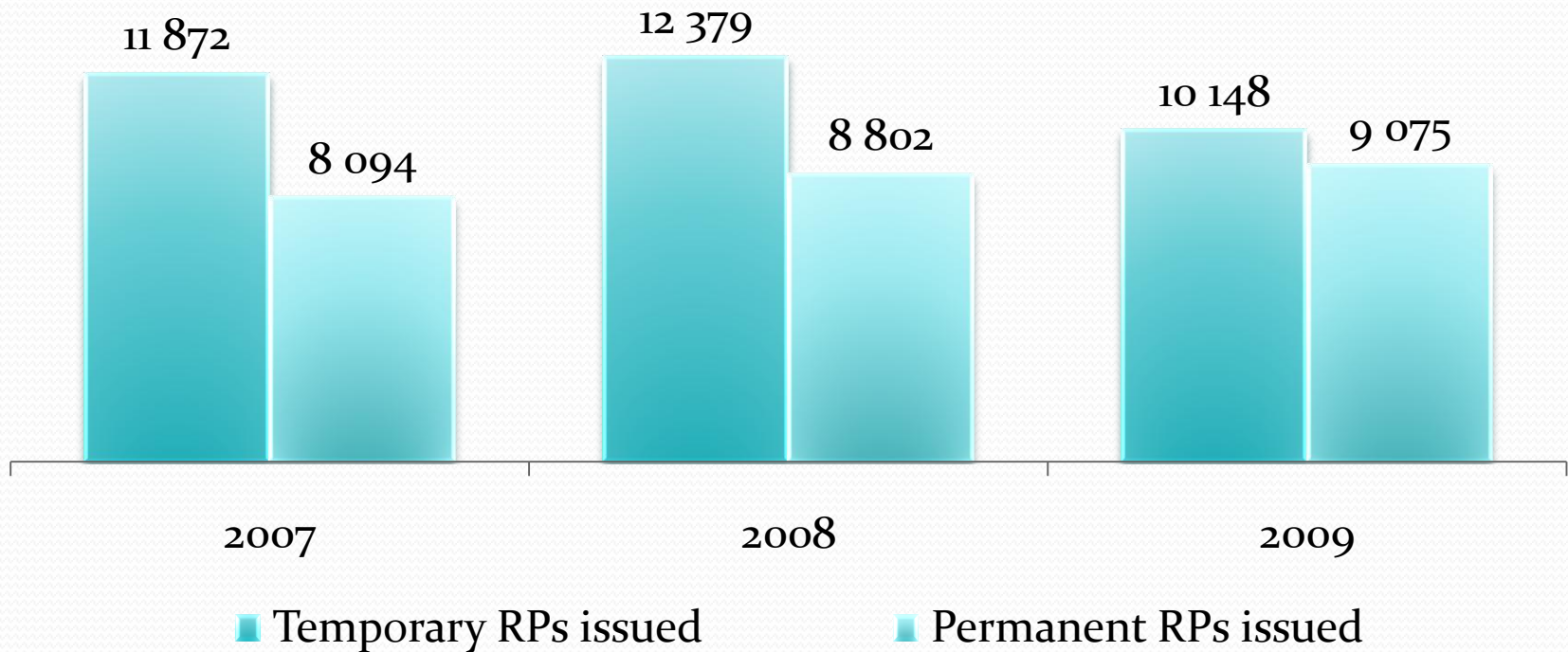
RESIDENT PERMITS

Tasks of the OCMA include the issuing, registration 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.

RESIDENT PERMITS

Residence Permits Issued



WORK PERMITS

Most popular reasons for entry were: employment, family reunion and studies. However, in the second half of 2008, as the economic growth rate fell and unemployment increased, the trend changed and the demand for foreign labour force dropped. The trend continued in 2009 too; consequently, the total number of TRPs issued by the OCMA in the reference year fell. On the other hand, the number of PRPs issued increased in 2009. This is due to the trend that more and more Latvian residents choose the citizenship of Russia but stay to live in Latvia.

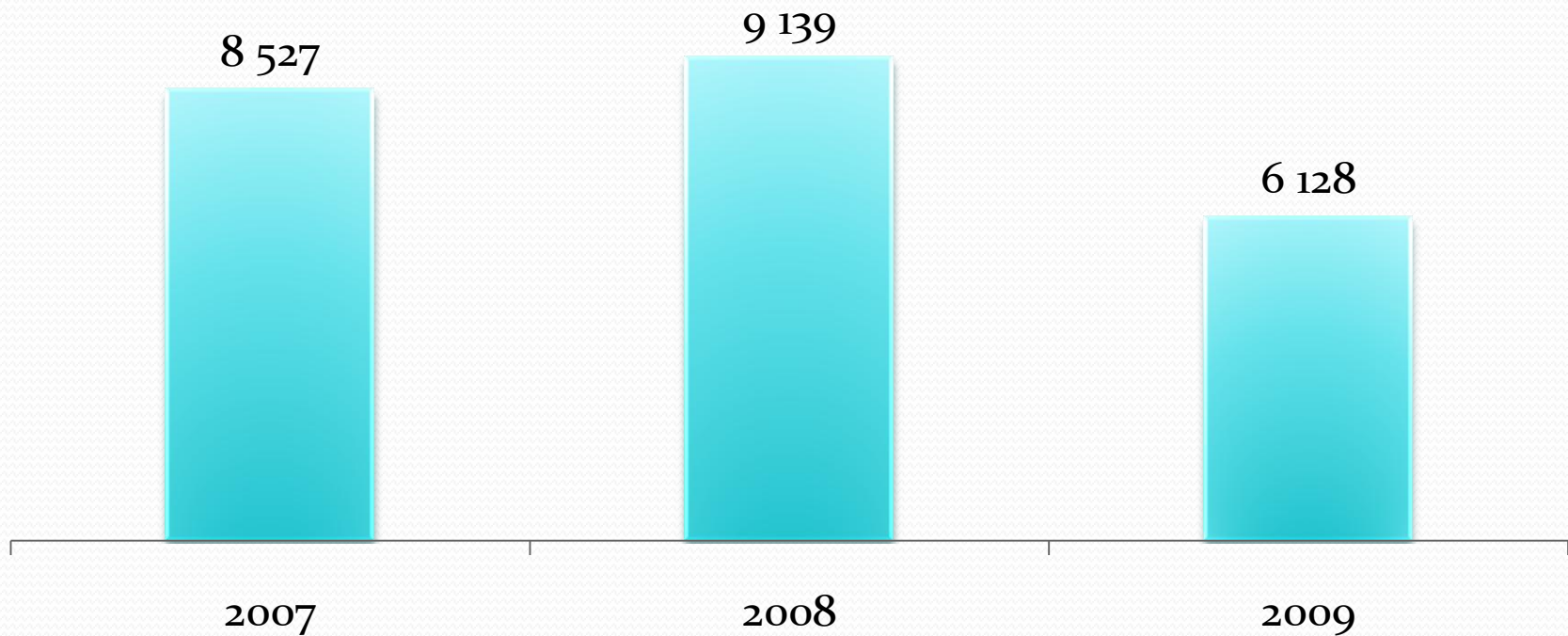
As of 31 December 2009, the total number of persons that held a valid residence permit in Latvia was: 13,785 TRPs and 36,249 PRPs.

The largest increase in the number of work permits issued by the OCMA in last three years was in 2007 and 2008: the demand for guest workers was large because of the rapid economic growth and the high level of Latvian workforce emigration (to work and study) after Latvia's accession to the European Union.

However, in late 2008 and in 2009, as the economic situation deteriorated and the unemployment increased rapidly in Latvia, the demand for work permits dropped. Only 6,128 work permits were issued in 2009, which was 33% less than in 2008.

WORK PERMITS

Work Permits Issued



EC LONG-TERM RESIDENT STATUS

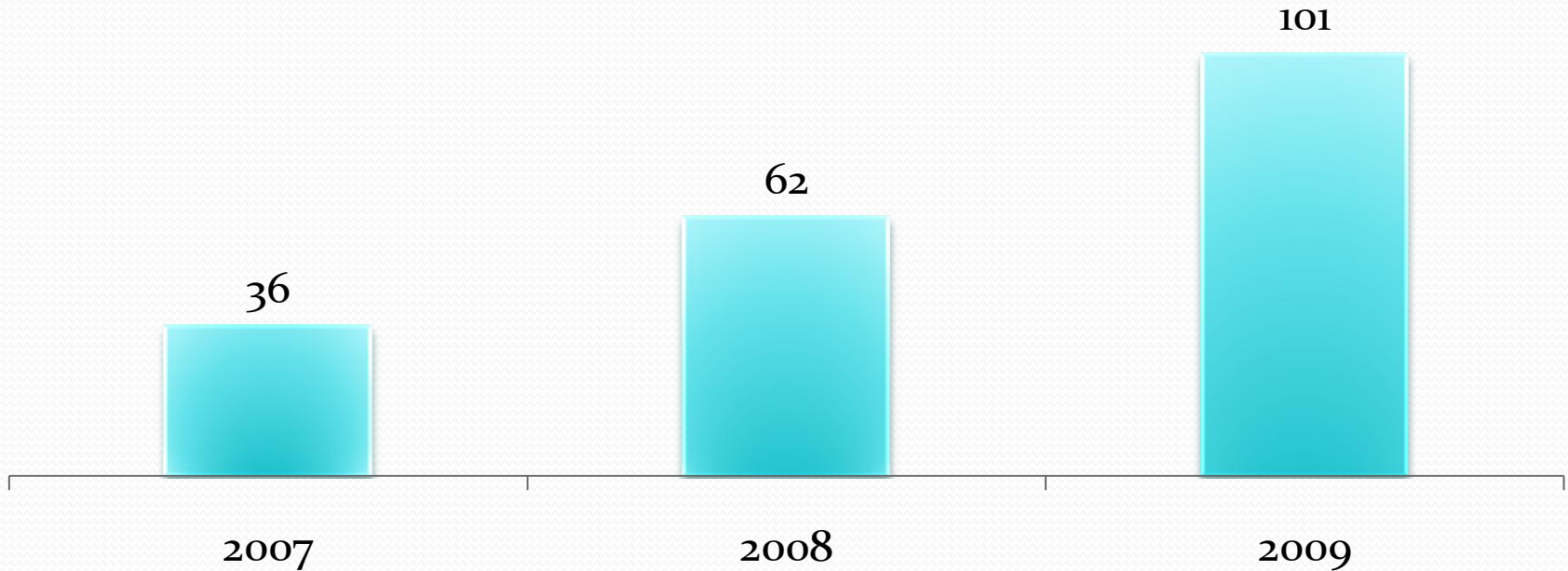
As from 21 July 2006, when the Law on the Status of a Long-Term Resident of the European Community in the Republic of Latvia entered into force, the OCMA takes decisions on granting the status of EC long-term resident status in the Republic of Latvia. The **EC long-term resident status** can be granted to foreigners who have been residing permanently and legally, holding a temporary residence permit, in Latvia for five years and to non-citizens of Latvia. To obtain the status, the persons must prove that they have sufficient and regular means of subsistence and that they know the Latvian language.

In 2009, the status of EC long-term resident was granted to 101 persons, of which 33 were non-citizens of Latvia, 46 Russian citizens, 7 Ukrainian citizens, 6 Belarussian citizens.

The statistics show that the status is not yet popular in Latvia and that a majority of persons apply for the national permanent residence permits, not the status of EC long-term resident in Latvia. Nevertheless, the interest in obtaining the status of EC long-term resident is increasing.

EC LONG-TERM RESIDENT STATUS

EC Status of Long-Term Resident Granted



REPATRIATION

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.

In 2009, compared to previous years, the number of repatriation applicants increased: 426 repatriation cases were examined. The status of repatriate was granted to 71 persons.

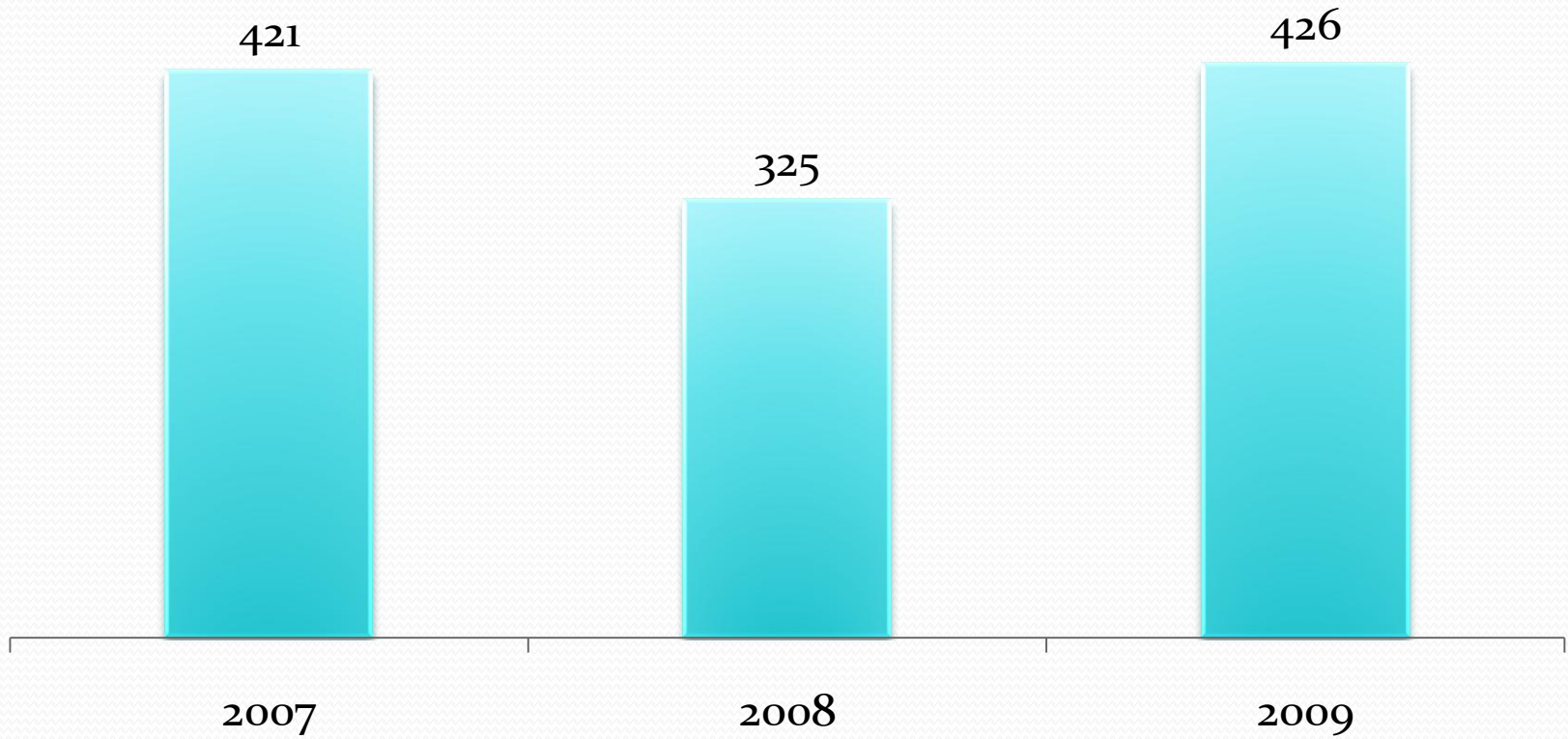
In 2009, in total 93 persons moved to Latvia: 71 repatriates and 22 members of their families.

Material assistance to repatriates (travel expenses, unemployment benefits or language training courses) in the reference year comprised 386 allowances for the total amount of LVL 51,517.98.

The largest number of repatriates in the reference year came from Russia (44 persons), followed by Belarus and Georgia (9 persons each), the Ukraine (8 persons), the USA (5 persons), Turkmenistan (3 persons), Canada, Kazakhstan and Lithuania (2 persons each) etc. Similarly to previous years, also in the reference year the number of repatriates from the East (Russia, Ukraine etc) was higher, whereas the number of persons coming from the West (USA, Canada etc) decreased.

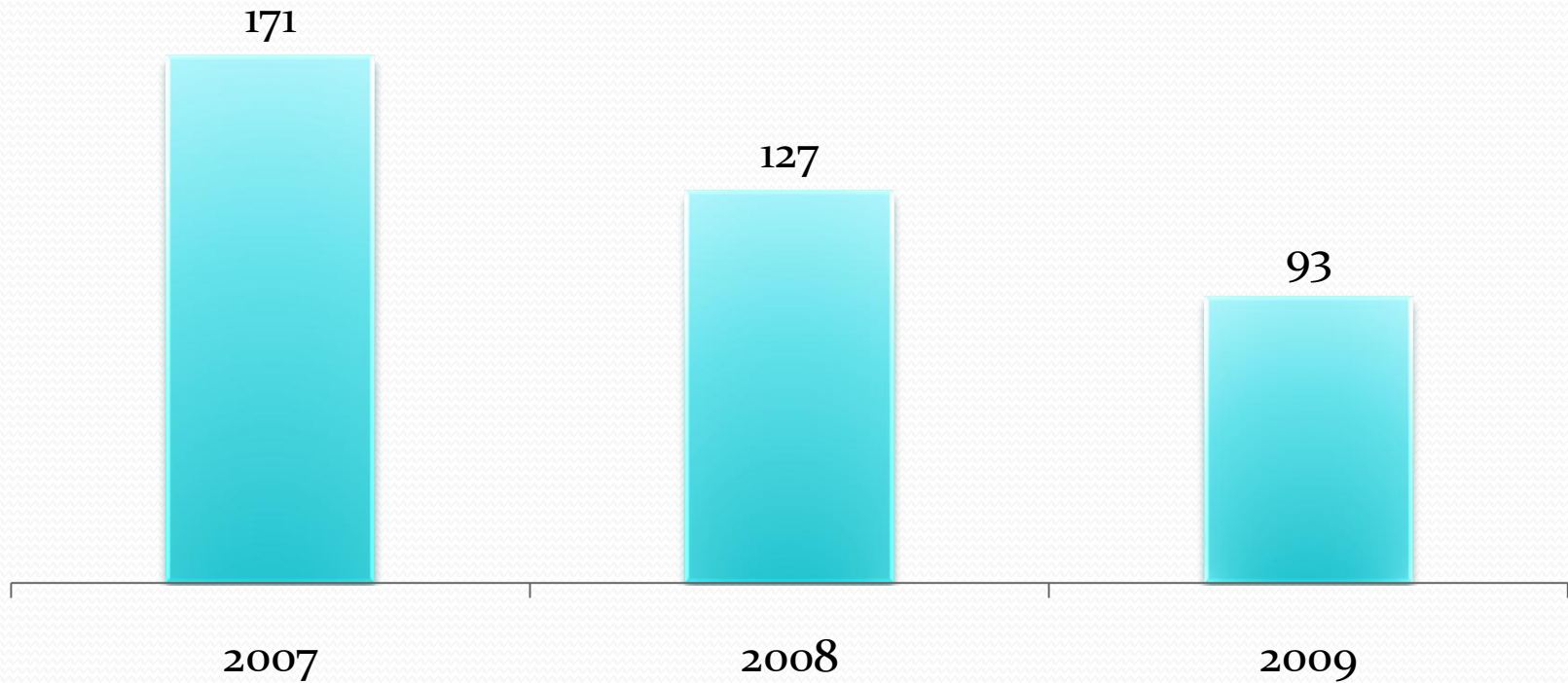
REPATRIATION

Repatriation Cases Viewed



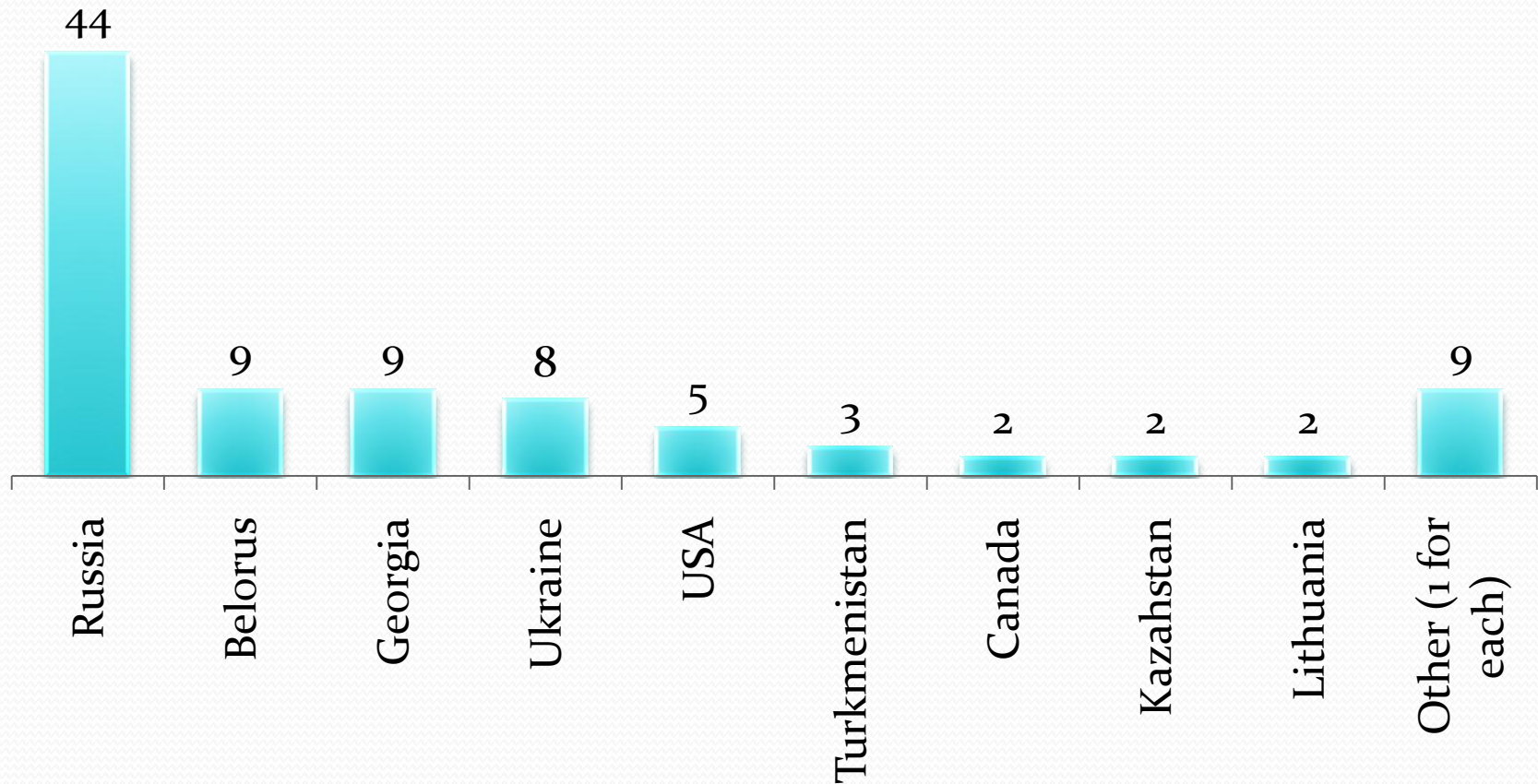
REPATRIATION

Status of Repatriate Granted



REPATRIATION

Repatriate Source Countries in 2009



ASYLUM

In the reference year, the situation in the field of asylum was about the same as in 2008, and the number of asylum seekers remained almost unchanged compared to 2008. However, the trends have changed in recent years, as more and more asylum seekers with large families that have even seven children come to Latvia, for example from Afghanistan.

In 2009, 52 immigrants applied for asylum in Latvia. The highest number of asylum applications was received from Afghani citizens.

The OCMA viewed all 52 applications for asylum in 2009: 5 persons received the refugee status under the Geneva Convention: of them 3 persons from Russia, 1 from Kirghizstan and 1 from Belarus.

Six persons were granted the subsidiary protection status, which is granted to asylum applicants who cannot be recognised refugees but in relation to whom there is a reason to consider that their return to the country of origin would endanger them.

Since 1998, when the asylum procedure was implemented, in total 306 persons have applied for asylum; of them, 22 have received the refugee status and 27 have received the subsidiary protection status. In this period, two of the persons who have received the refugee status have passed naturalisation and become citizens of Latvia.¹

ASYLUM

Asylum Seekers Source Countries in 2009:

Countries	Adults	Children
Afganistan	6	12
Uzbekistan	6	5
Iran	3	
Russia	3	
Palestine	3	
Bangladesh	2	
Georgia	2	
Congo	2	
Syria	2	
Turkey	2	
Belarus	1	
Eritrea	1	
Iraq	1	
Stateless person	1	
Total	35	17

ASYLUM

Requests Viewed in the Context of the Dublin Regulation

When Latvia accessed to the European Union on 1 May 2004, Council Regulation (EC) No 343/2003 of 18 February 2003 establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an asylum application lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national became binding on Latvia.

In 2009, Latvia received 150 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 lodge 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.

ASYLUM

Asylum Seekers' Reception Centre

In accordance with the international practice, in 1997 Latvia commenced the work on creating the Asylum Seekers Reception Centre *Mucenieki* (the Centre). 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 government 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 2009, in total 59 persons lived in the Centre (24 persons in 2008 and 14 in 2007).

Asylum seekers from the following countries have lived in the Centre: Afghanistan, Angola, Armenia, Belarus, Iraq, Kenya, Kazakhstan, Congo (Zaire), Russia, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Slovakia, Tajikistan, and the Ukraine. The largest number of asylums seekers living at the same time at the Centre has been 27 persons.

ASYLUM

In the Centre, 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, a TV room, a study room with Internet access, and a children room. In the project “Alfa” financed by the European Refugee Fund, improvements for disabled persons were implemented at the Centre (ramps, toilets, showers).

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.

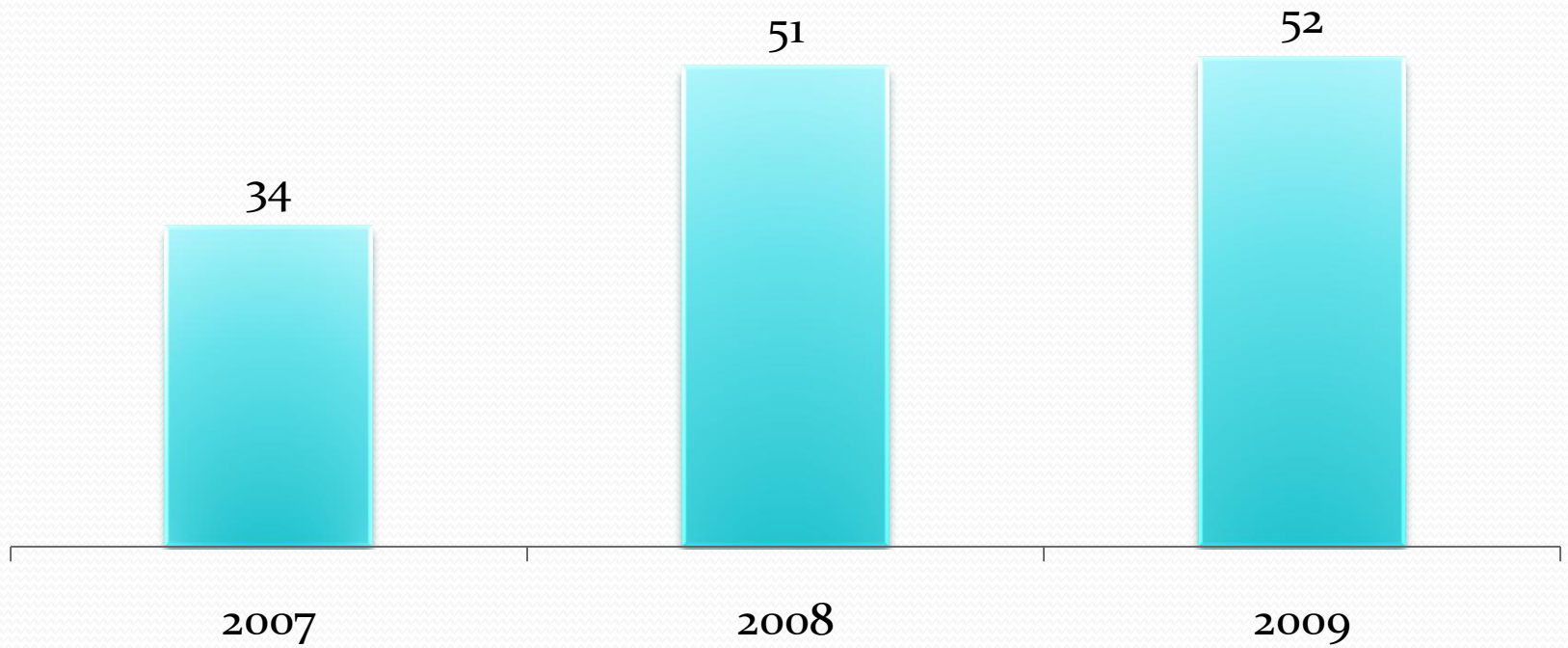
Asylum seekers are entitled to per diem for the acquisition of food, hygiene items and essential goods if required.

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

In order to use the Centre’s rooms usefully in the time when there are a few asylum seekers living in it, the Centre cooperates with non-governmental organisations and local governments that implement various social projects and need temporary accommodation for people.

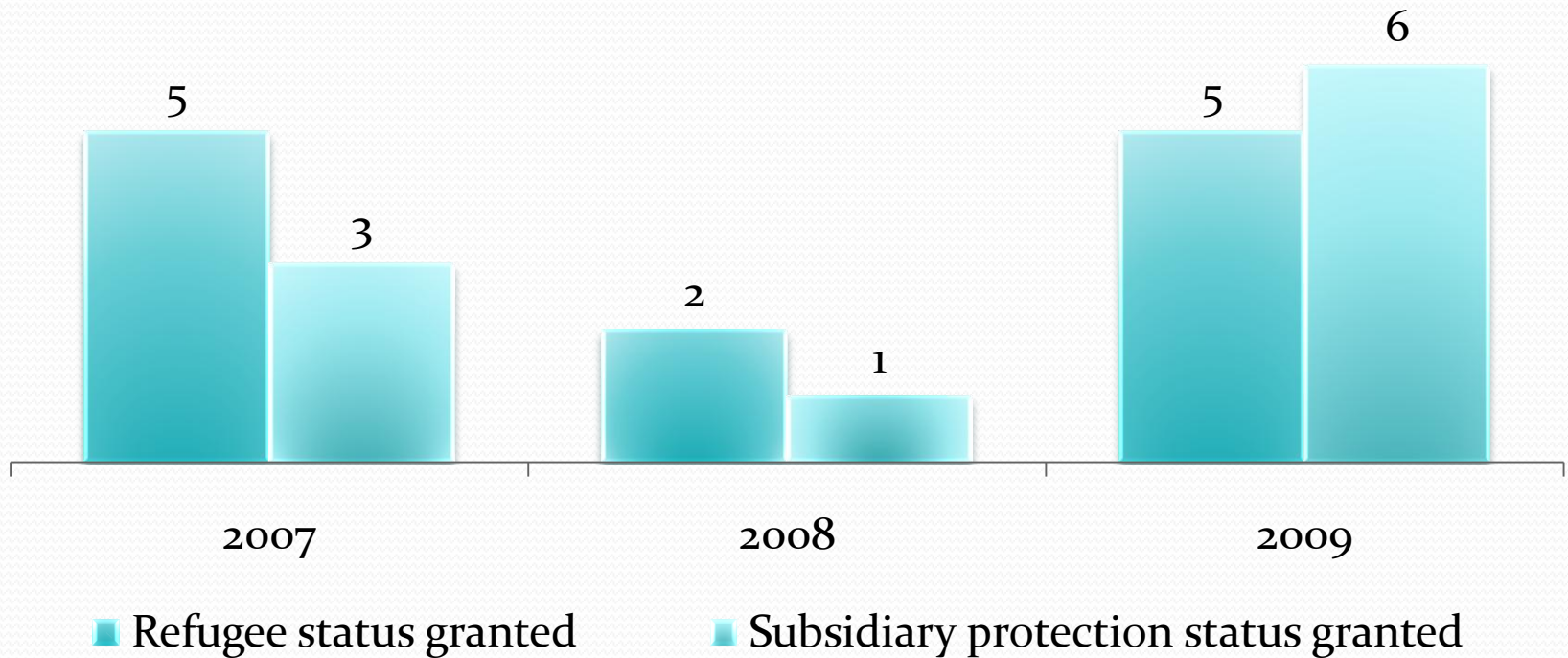
ASYLUM

Asylum Seekers



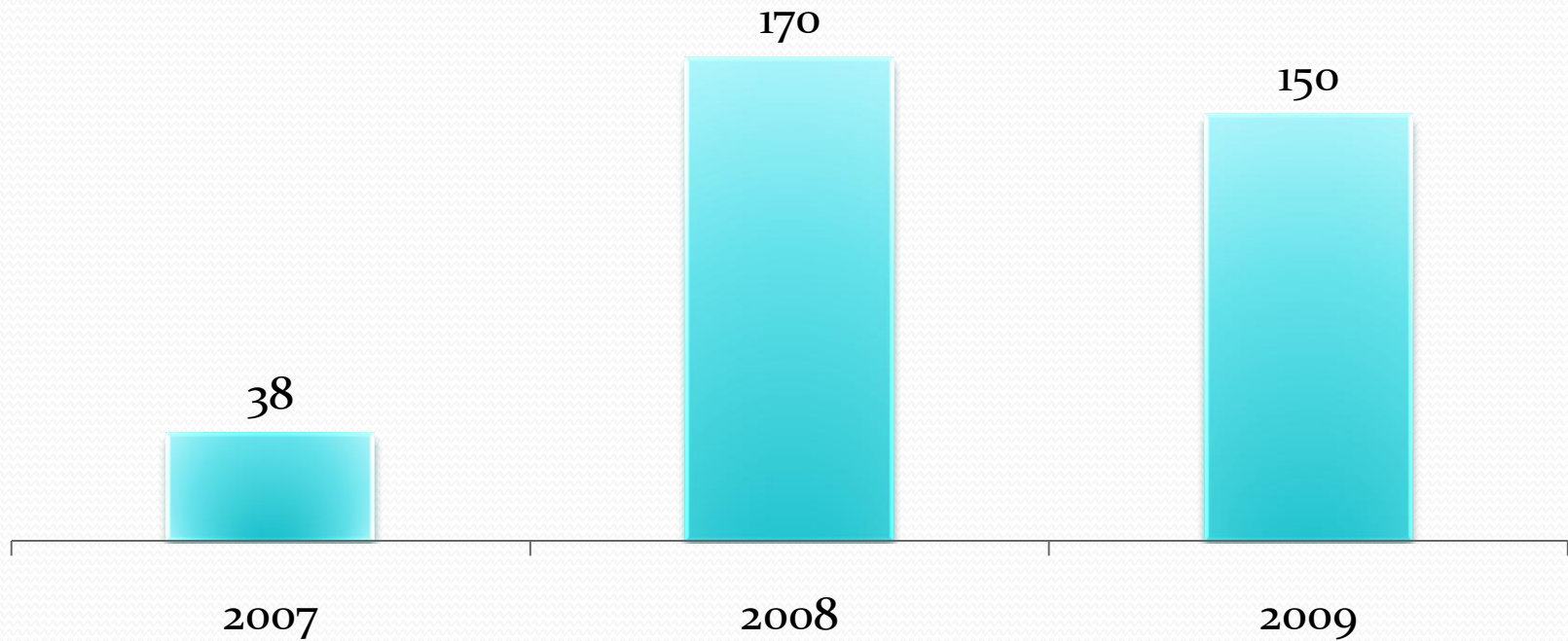
ASYLUM

**Refugee Status Granted,
Subsidiary Protection Status Granted**



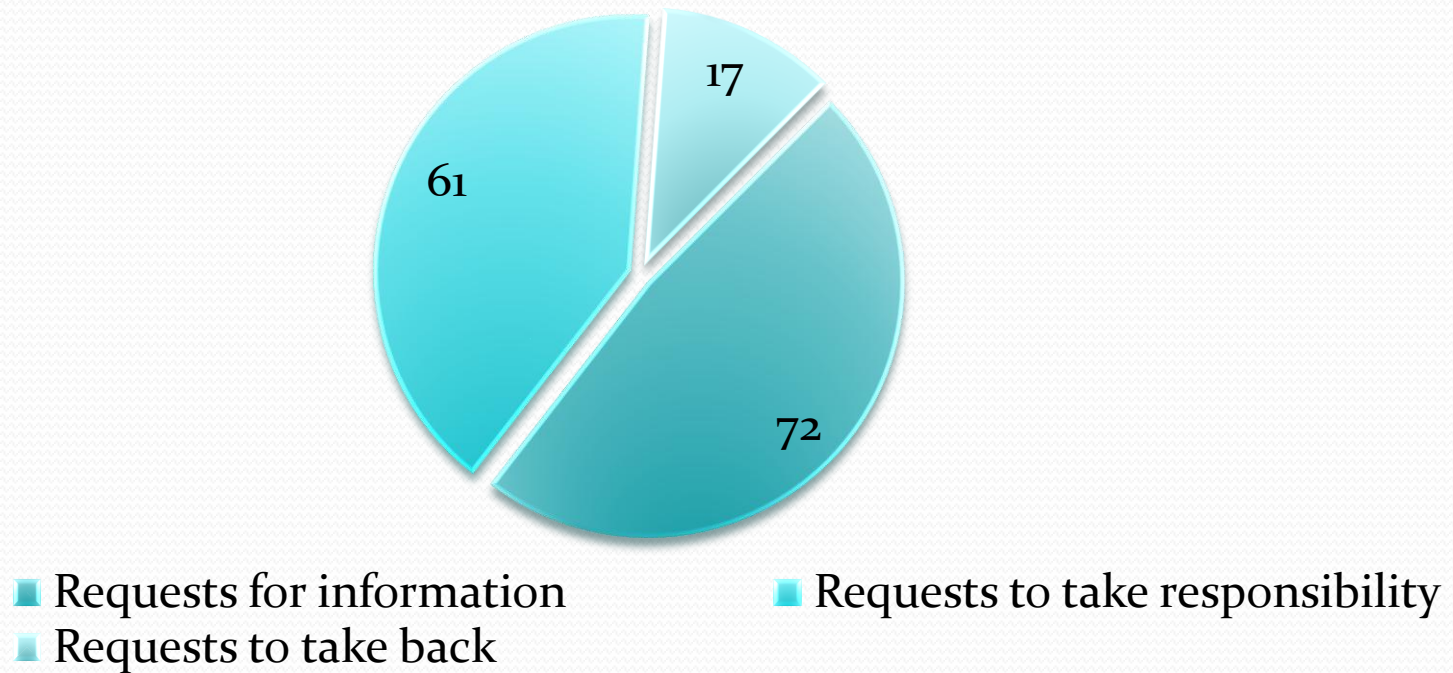
ASYLUM

Applications to be Viewed in Dublin Regulation Context



ASYLUM

Types of Requests in the Context of Dublin Regulation in 2009



DEPORTATION ORDERS

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.

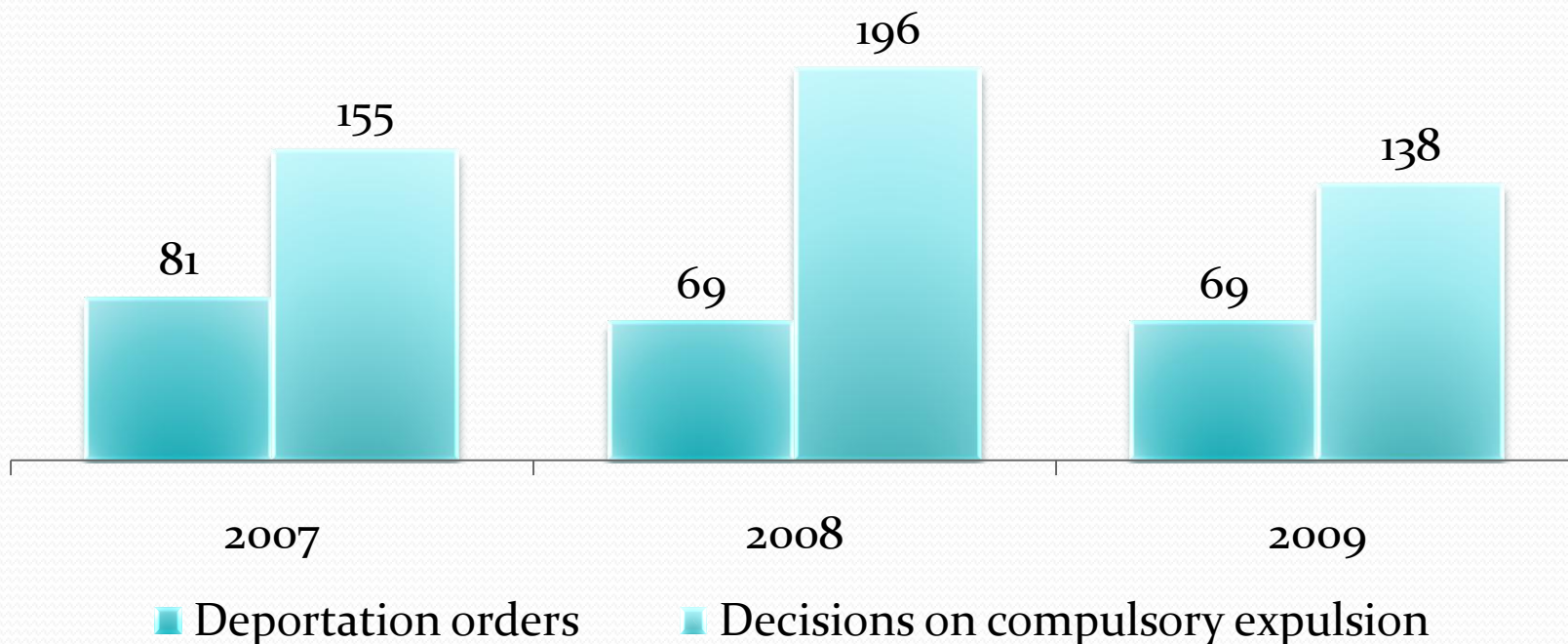
The deportation order gives the foreigner a possibility to leave Latvia within seven days of receiving the order. If a deportation order is issued, a prohibition to enter the Republic of Latvia for a period of up to 3 years may be applied.

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.

In 2009, the number of deportation orders issued was at the same level as in previous year, while the number of decisions on compulsory expulsion decreased considerably.

DEPORTATION ORDERS

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



EMIGRATION

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.

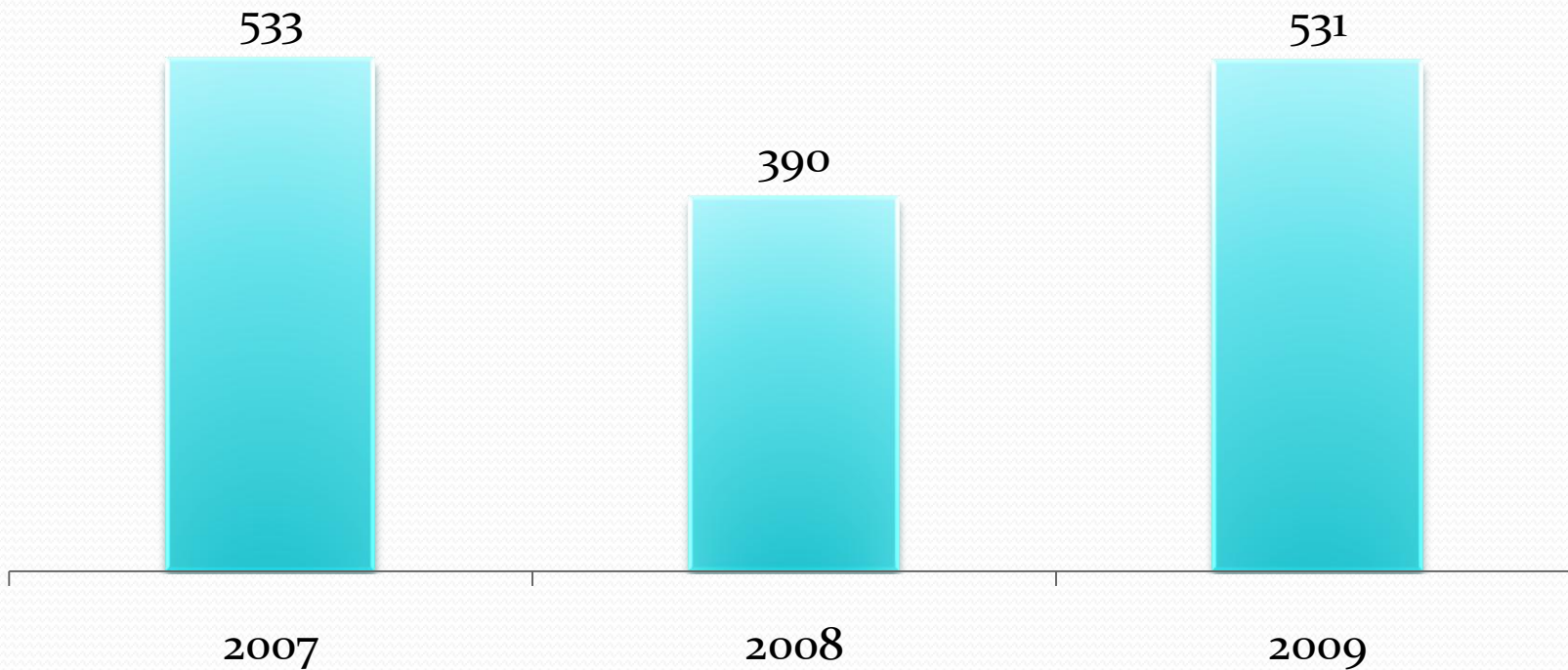
On the basis of information provided by the competent institutions, the OCMA takes a decision that there are no obstacles for the person to emigrate from Latvia and provides the statements to be submitted to the relevant foreign authorities.

In the reference year, the number of viewed emigration applications for permanent residence abroad grew to 531, which is 141 applications more than in 2008. The said trend was due to the worsening of the economic situation in Latvia.

Most often applications for emigration were submitted by persons who emigrate to the Russian Federation. In 2009, the OCMA reached an agreement with the Federal Migration Service of Russia on facilitated document processing and information exchange procedures; consequently, from 1 September 2009, the administrative procedures have been simplified as persons who emigrate to Russia do not need paid statements from the OCMA on the fact that there are no objections to their emigration.

EMIGRATION

Number of Emigrants



DETERMINATION of LEGAL STATUS of PERSON

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.

DETERMINATION of LEGAL STATUS of PERSON

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

The majority of cases of determination of legal status involved children whose one parent is a citizen of another country.

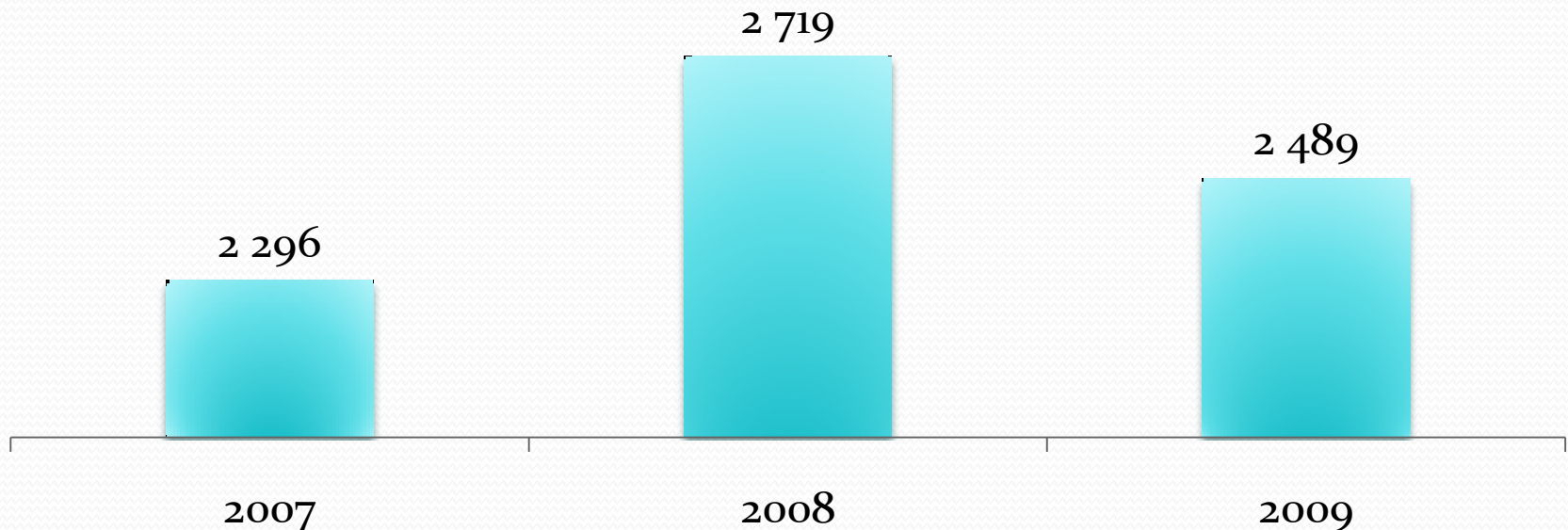
The OCMA also deals with cases of losing the status of Latvian non-citizen, which comprise refusing from the non-citizen status and revoking the non-citizen status.

Considering the worsening economic situation in Latvia, the number of applications for losing the status of Latvian non-citizen increased. People choose to obtain the citizenship of other countries and move outside Latvia for permanent residence or stay in Latvia with permanent residence permits.

In 2009, 2853 persons applied for refusing from the Latvian non-citizen status, and the status was revoked for 117 persons.

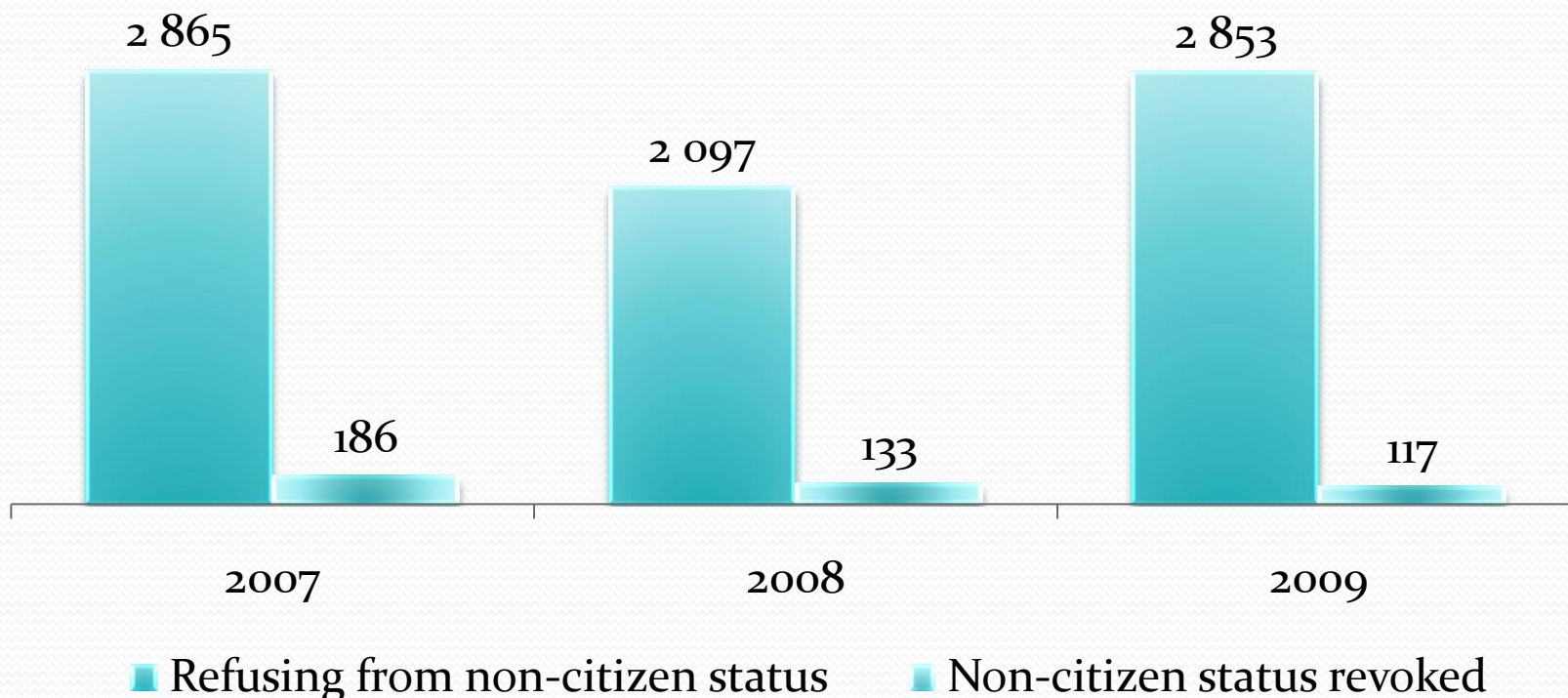
DETERMINATION of LEGAL STATUS of PERSON

**Number of Cases for Determination
of Legal Status**



DETERMINATION of LEGAL STATUS of PERSON

Lost Statuses of Latvian Non-Citizen



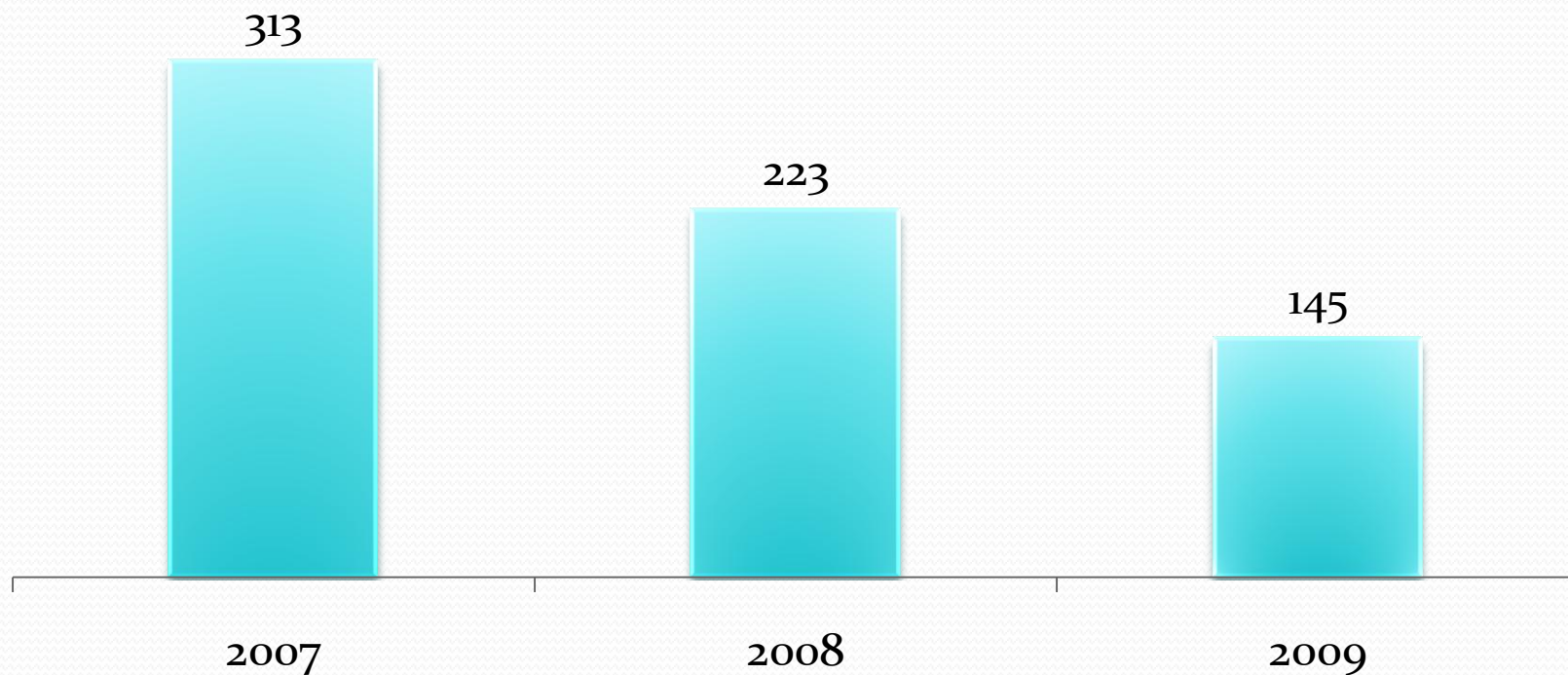
OPINIONS on RETURN CERTIFICATES

If a Latvian national, when abroad, has lost their personal identification document or if it has become void for travelling, they can get a return certificate that makes it possible to return to Latvia.

The OCMA provides opinions to Latvian embassies on the issuing of return certificates if it is required to additionally check the legal status of the person, verify the person's identity or the truthfulness of the information provided in the application for return certificate.

OPINIONS on RETURN CERTIFICATES

Number of Cases for Return Certificate



OPINIONS on LATVIAN CITIZENSHIP APPLICANTS

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 legislation or whether a foreigner complies with the residence requirements set out in the legislation), 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.

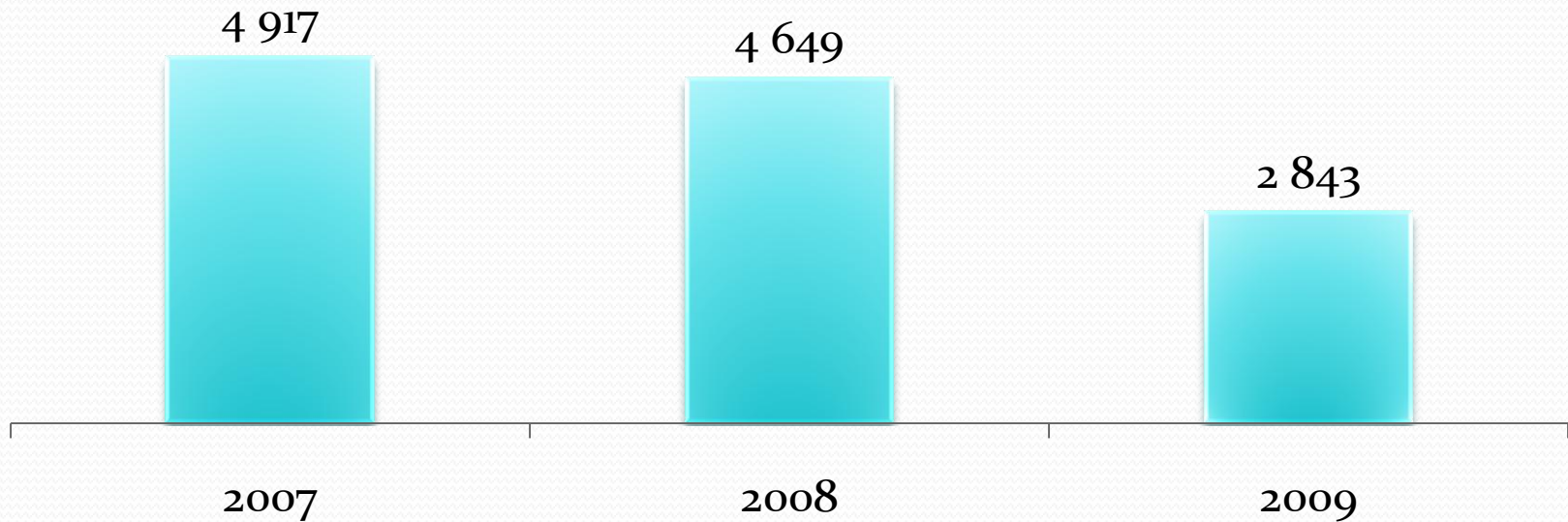
OPINIONS on LATVIAN CITIZENSHIP APPLICANTS

In 2009, the Naturalisation Board received 2,843 opinions on Latvian citizenship applicants from the OCMA.

The need for the said opinions is lowering, as the pace of naturalisation has been decreasing rapidly since 2006. 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: the freedom of movement makes the non-citizens unwilling to obtain the Latvian citizenship.

OPINIONS on LATVIAN CITIZENSHIP APPLICANTS

Opinions Provided to the Naturalization Board



PERSONAL ID and TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

In 2009, the OCMA issued in total 265,743 personal identification documents, inter alia 16 documents to refugees and persons under subsidiary protection.

In the reference year, the largest number of personal identification documents were issued by the OCMA Rīga Division 1, where 29,009 people received their passports; excluding Riga, the largest number of new passports was issued by the OCMA Daugavpils Division (16,519), followed by the Liepāja Division (14,648) and the Jelgava Division (13,382). Also, 5,651 persons applied for new passports through the diplomatic offices of Latvia abroad in the reference year. In total 199,106 Latvian citizen passports were issued in 2009. Compared to 2008, the number of issued Latvian citizen passports decreased considerably in 2009. The explanation for this is the fact that the OCMA commenced issuing passports that comply with the requirements of the European Union and the international standards on 20 November 2007.

PERSONAL ID and TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

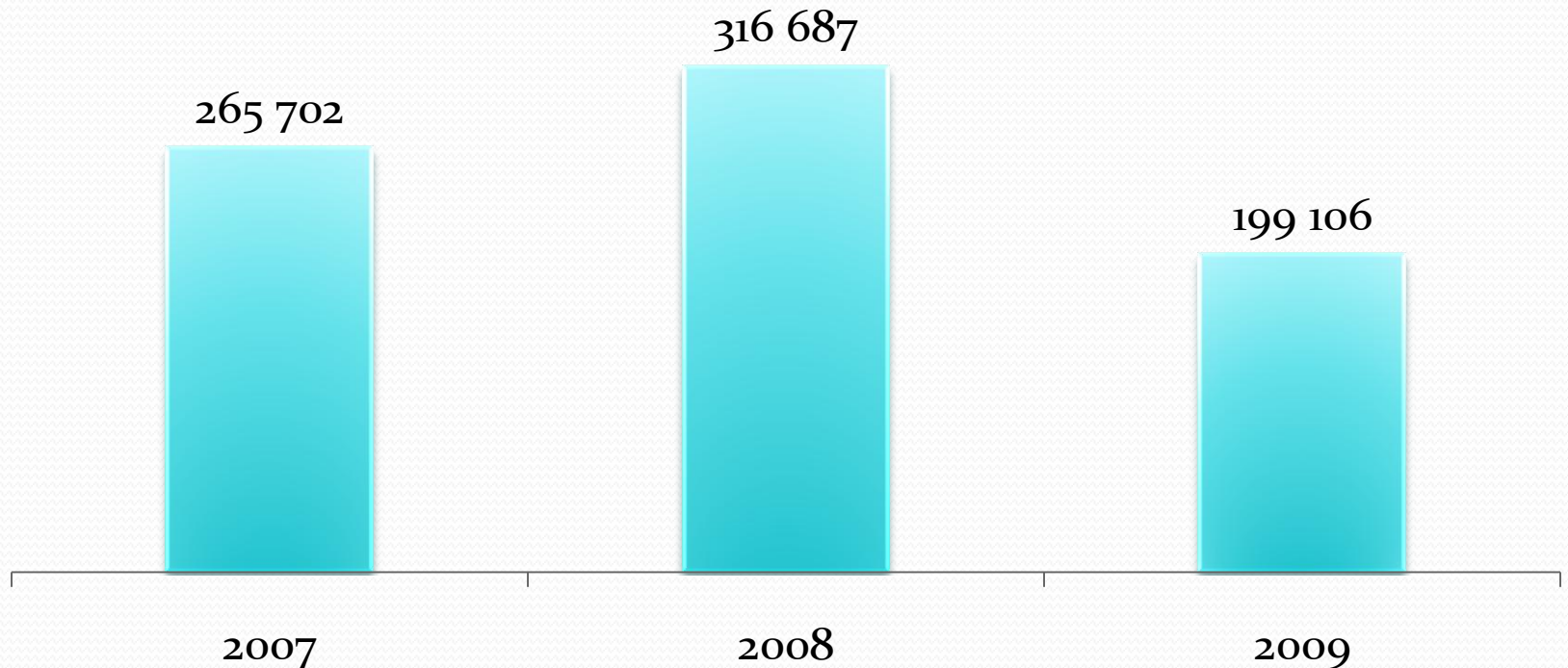
The new-design passport includes biometric data (digital face picture), and fingerprints have been included since 15 September 2008. Furthermore, the Latvian citizen passports issued till June 30 2002 (old-design passports with glued-in photos) became invalid for travelling outside Latvia from 1 July 2008. Due to the said two reasons, many Latvian people wanted to receive the new-design passport, although they still held valid old-design documents.

Also the falling number of **Latvian non-citizen passports** issued in 2009 was attributable to the huge interest of people in the new-design passports as well as to the fact that a considerable number of Latvian non-citizen passports that had been issued in 1998 with a validity period of 10 years expired in 2008.

The issuing of the new-design passports caused an increase in the number of issued travel documents for stateless persons too in 2008; however, in 2009 the need for new travel documents fell.

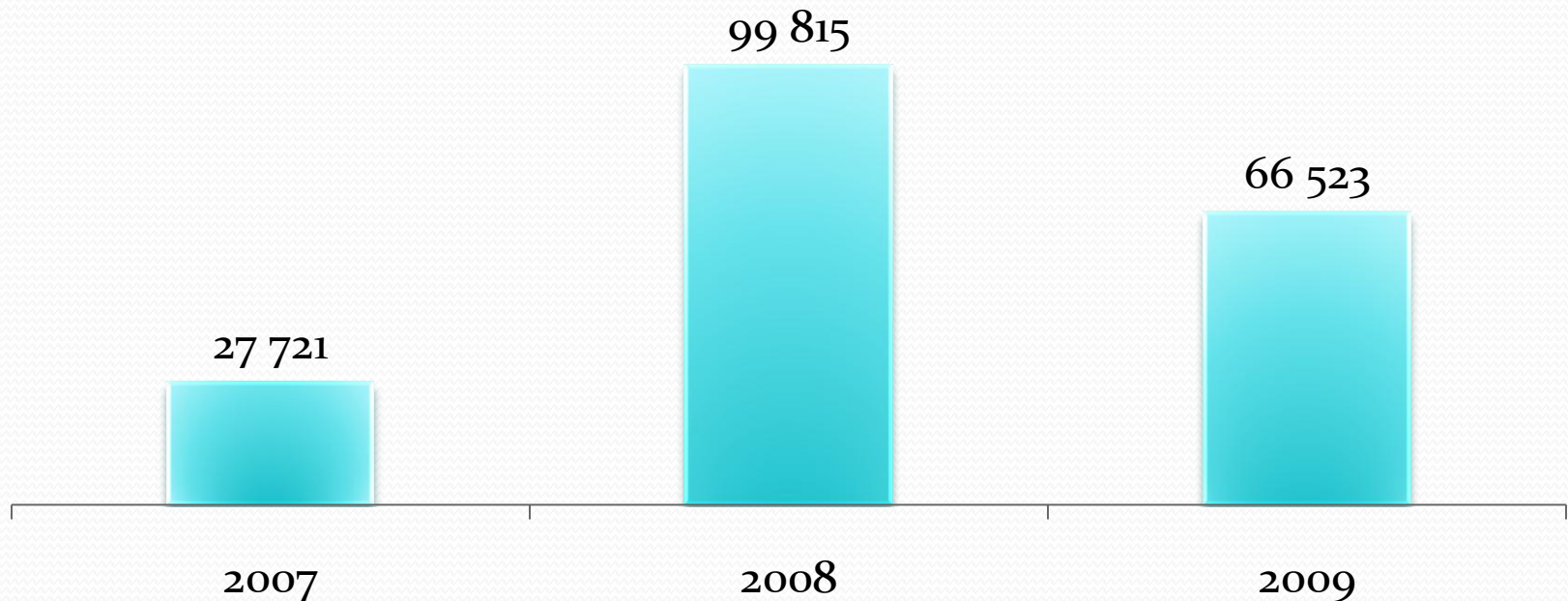
PERSONAL ID and TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Number of Citizen Passports Issued



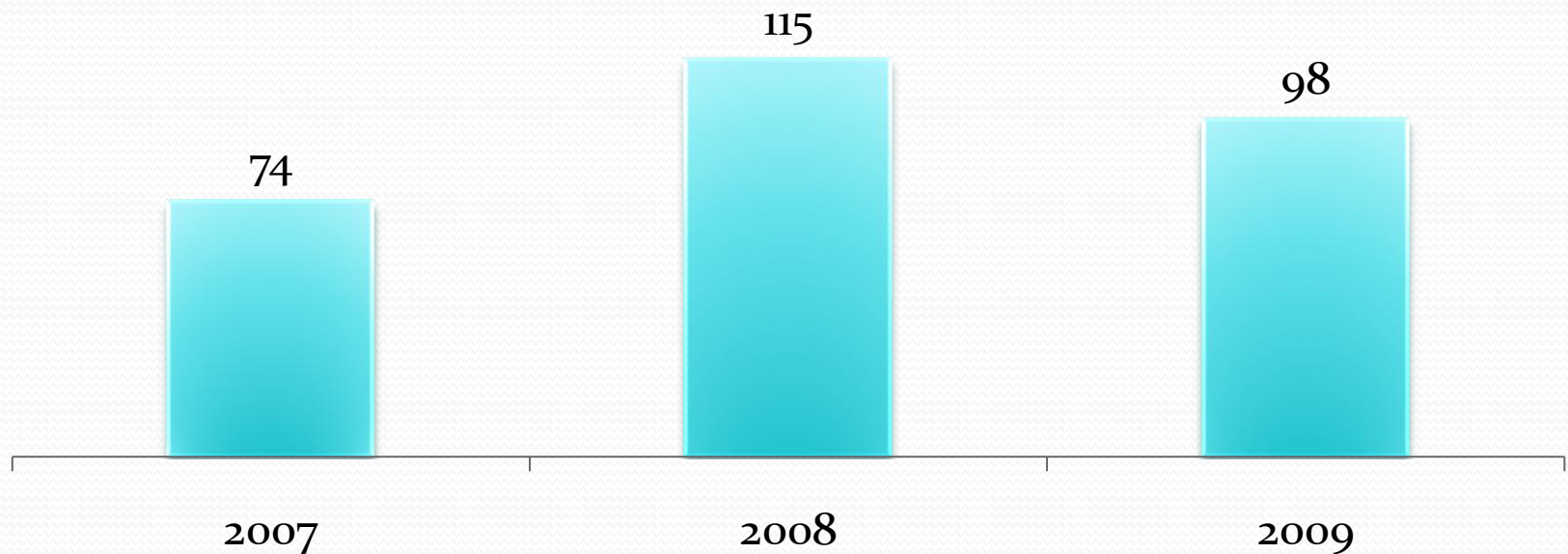
PERSONAL ID and TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Number of Non-Citizen Passports Issued



PERSONAL ID and TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Number of Travel Documents for Stateless Persons Issued





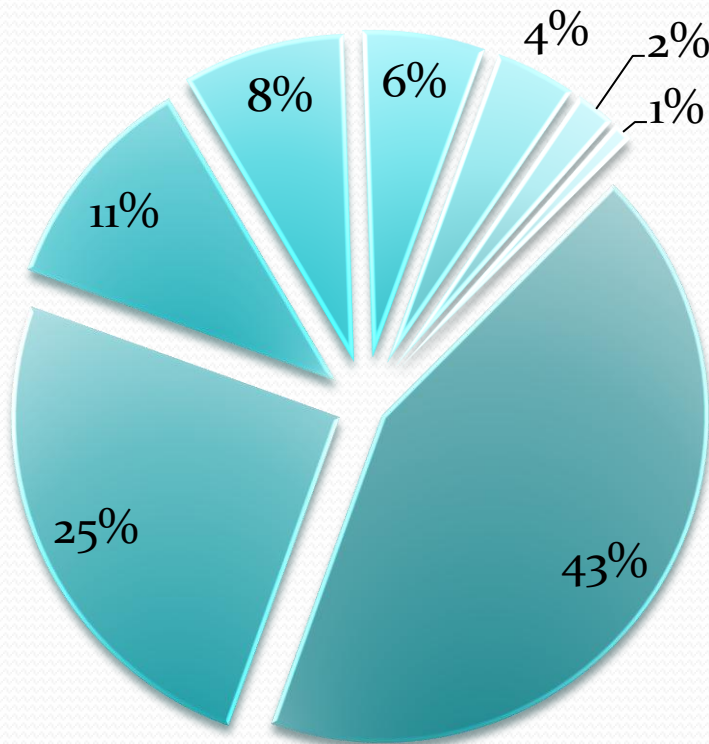
PERSONAL ID and TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Most of the new passports were issued to people whose previous passports were void for travelling, expired or lost or damaged.

Like in previous years, also in 2009 most people applied for new passports in the spring and the summer, and the lowest activity was seen in the winter months.

PERSONAL ID and TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Reasons for Issuing Passports



- Not valid for travelling
- Validity period expired - persons from 15
- First passport
- Validity period expired - children up to 15
- Lost or damaged
- Name changed
- New design passport desired
- Status changed

DECLARATION of RESIDENCE

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, using the electronic residence declaration service or by post.

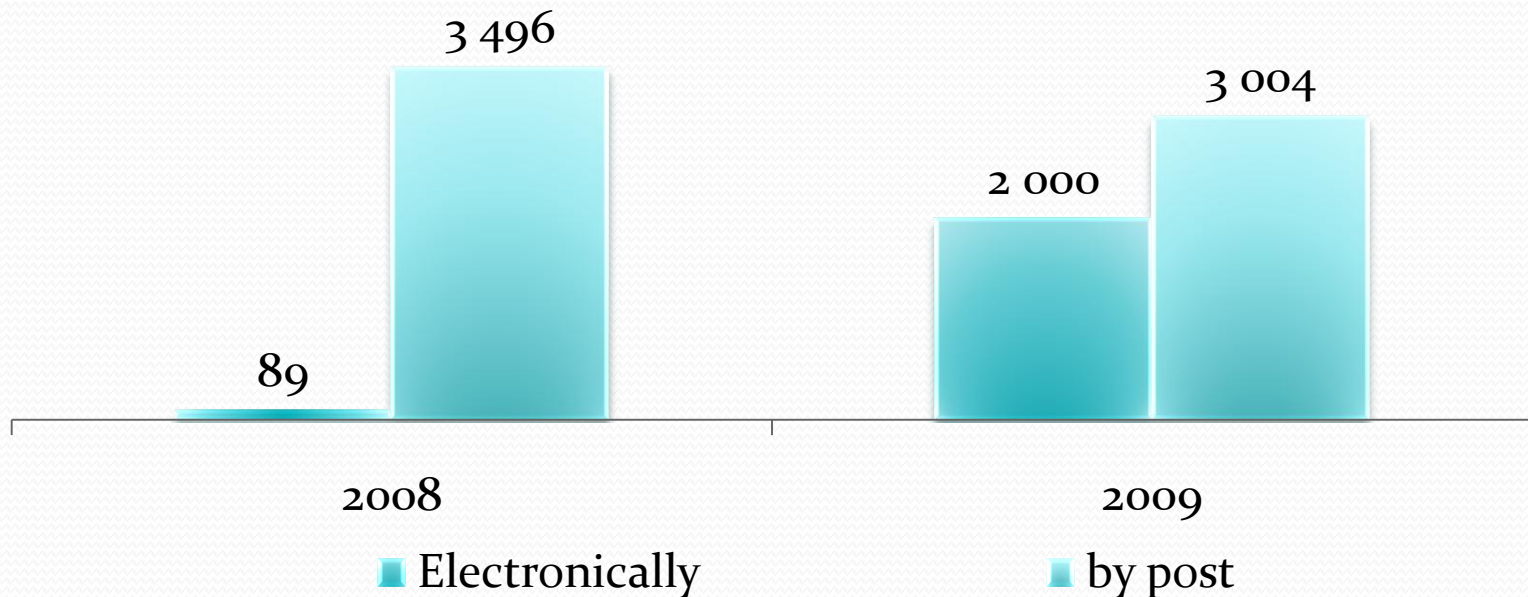
In 2009, compared to 2008, the interest in the option to declare residence by post or electronically increased considerably. In the reference year, this option was used 5,004 times, but in 2008 – 3,585 times.

The number of declarations submitted electronically grew considerably. The explanation is that from November 2009, to make the residence declaration procedure easier, the Residence Declaration Submission service was improved to make it possible to submit the declarations both by using a safe electronic signature and internet banking authentication tools. Consequently, the number of residence declarations submitted electronically increased rapidly in the end of the year: if in the first 10 months of the year the e-service (which was then only available with a safe electronic signature) was used 101 times, then in November and December this service was used by 1,899 persons already.

The OCMA is continuing its work to make the electronic declaration of residence more accessible to the people.

DECLARATION of RESIDENCE

Residences Declared Electronically and by Post



THE POPULATION REGISTER

The Population Register is one of the most significant databases of 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, residence, personal identification documents etc. The information is used for statistical surveys, tax estimates and calculations, organisation of elections and other processes of national scale.

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.

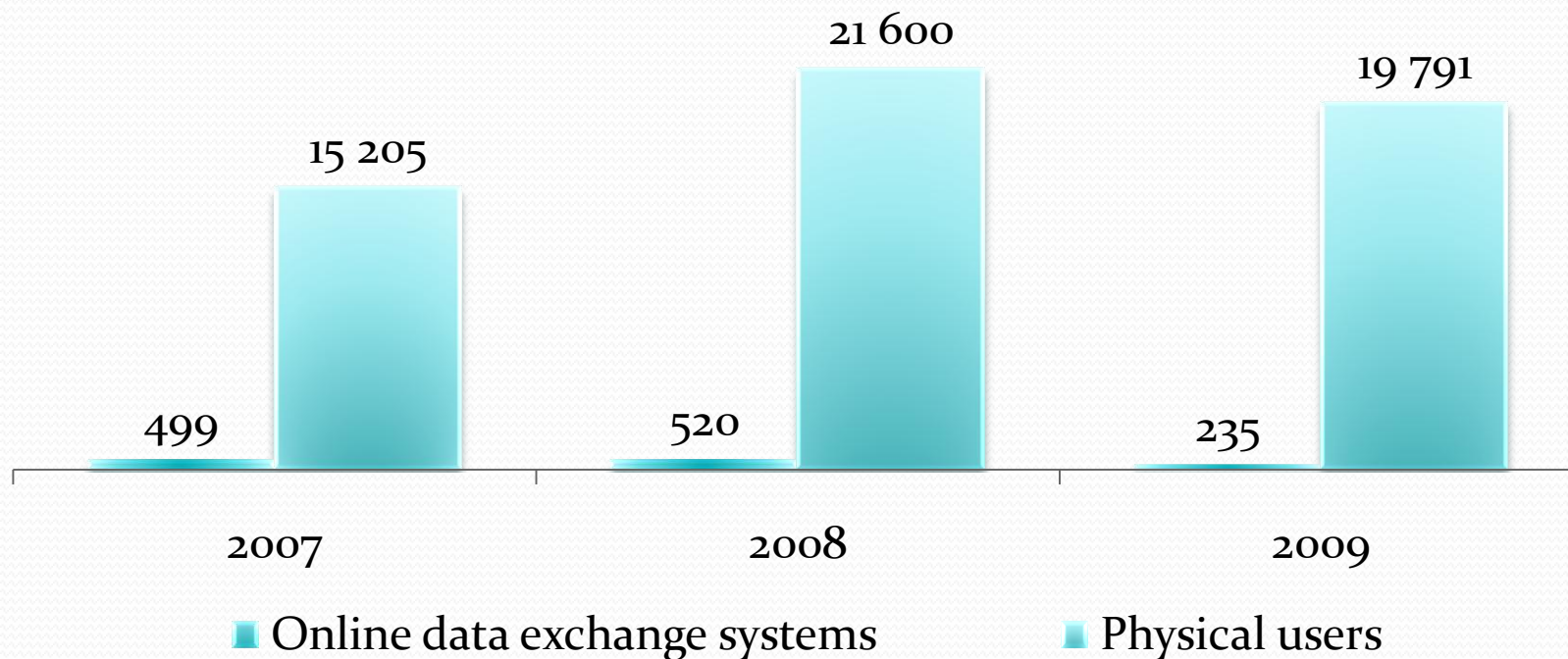
In the reference period, the OCMA issued 24,959 statements. This number includes both general statements and statements from the Population Register.

The number of statements issued decreased compared to 2008 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.

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

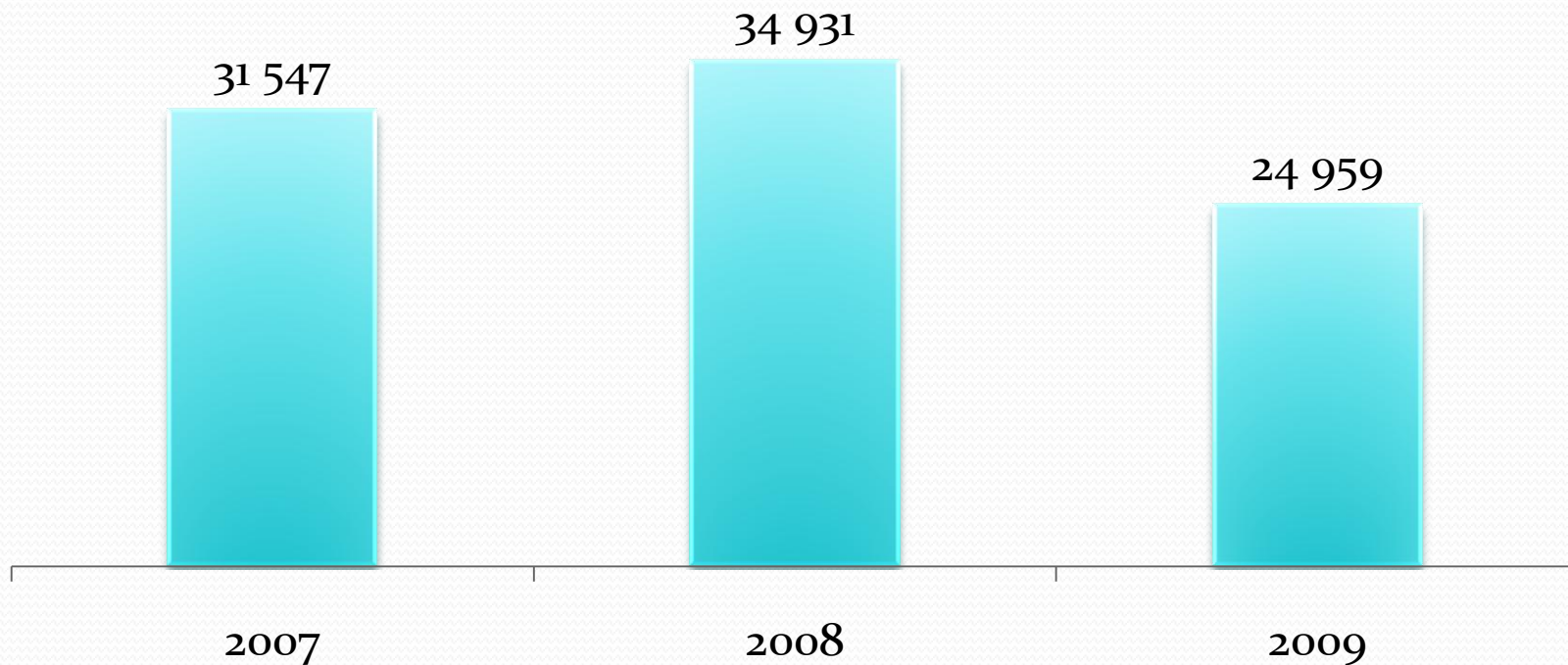
THE POPULATION REGISTER

Online Data Exchange Systems Provided and the Number of Physical Users



THE POPULATION REGISTER

Statements Issued



THE POPULATION REGISTER

- ❖ **Electronic services, that are available to the public by using authentication with an electronic signature or through an internet banking facility:**
 - **Submission of residence declaration:** 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.
 - **Persons declared 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.
 - **My data or data of persons represented by me in the Population Register:** 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.

THE POPULATION REGISTER

- **Checking whether the person is listed in the Population register and there is no information on person's death:** 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.
- **Checking whether the person has valid registration of residence at the specific address:** this service can be used to find out in the Population Register whether the person with the specified identity number has valid residence registration at the specified address.
- **Approval of letter of invitation for visa application:** this service enables the submission of applications for approval of letters of invitation that are required for foreigners in order to apply for a visa to enter Latvia.
- **Approval of letter of invitation for residence permit:** this service enables the submission of applications for approval of letters of invitation that are required for foreigners in order to apply for a residence permit in Latvia.

THE POPULATION REGISTER

- **Application for prohibiting or permitting the use of person's body, tissues and organs after death:** with this service, persons can notify to the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs their prohibition or permission to use their body, tissues and organs after their death.
- **Application for statement from the Population Register on the person or a 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.
- **Application for statement 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.
- **Application for registering residence abroad:** this service can be used to declare to the OCMA the residence address of the person, their underage children or persons in their custody or dependent persons abroad.

PERSONNEL

PERSONNEL

With every year the requirements for the qualifications of the OCMA personnel are growing as the functions of the authorities under the Ministry of the Interior are expanding in the fields of migration and asylum as well as in the fields of IT and electronic services.

In the reference period, the functions of the central structural units of the OCMA were optimized and reorganised. Employment relations were terminated with 84 employees, and 22 new employees were hired.

As at December 31, 2009, the OCMA employed 521 persons, of which 340 employees and 181 civil servants.

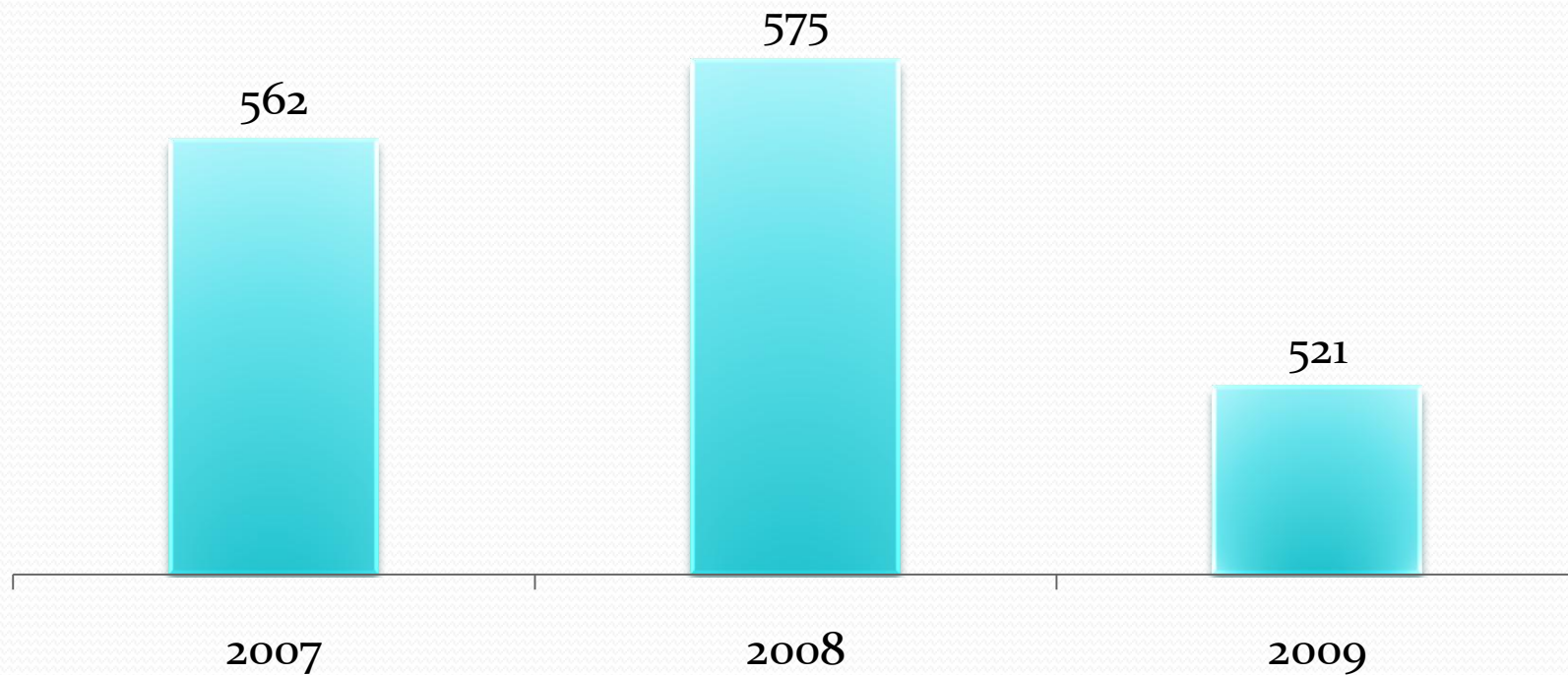
Of 521 employees at the OCMA, 304 had higher education, 241 – secondary education, and one employee - primary education.

There is a majority of women in the personnel of the OCMA: of the total personnel 460 employees are women and only 61 employees are men.

The major age group of employees is 50 to 59 years (149 employees), followed by: from 40 to 49 years (119 employees); from 30 to 39 years (113 employees), and from 20 to 29 years (105 employees). The number of OCMA employees in the age group over 60 is comparatively low – 35 people only. Comparing the employees by age groups and sex: women are a majority in the age group 50 to 59, whereas men – in the age group 20 to 29.

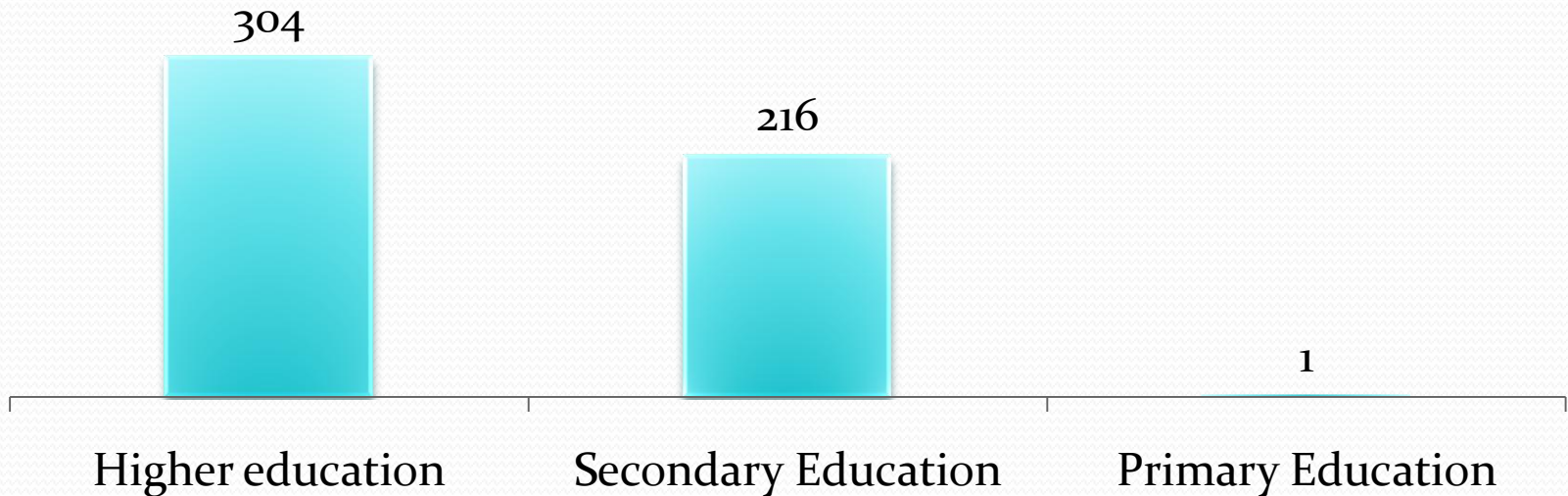
PERSONNEL

Number of Employees



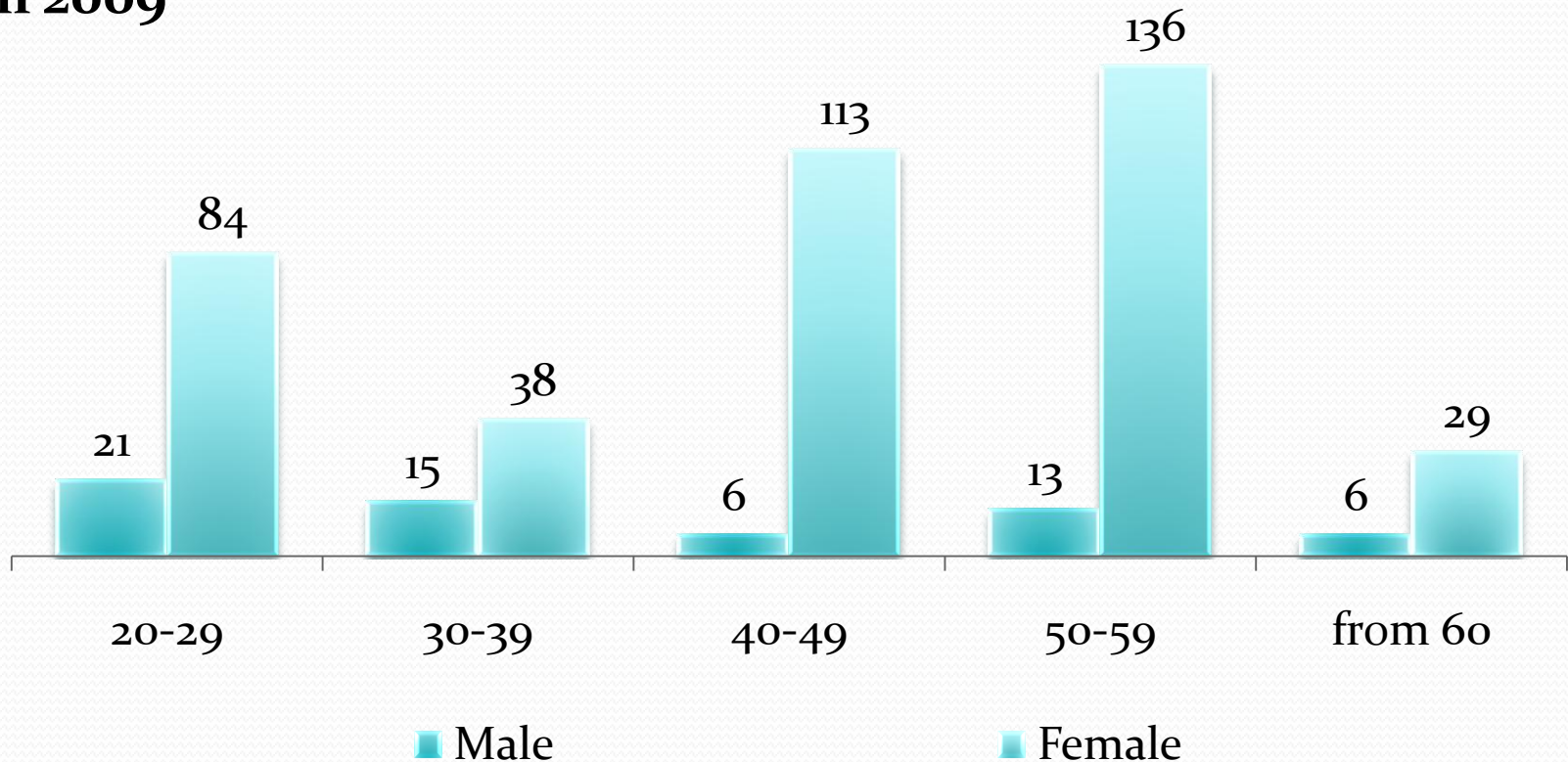
PERSONNEL

Education Level of Employees in 2009



PERSONNEL

Number of Employees by Age Group and Gender in 2009



Čiekurkalna 1. līnija 1/3

Rīga

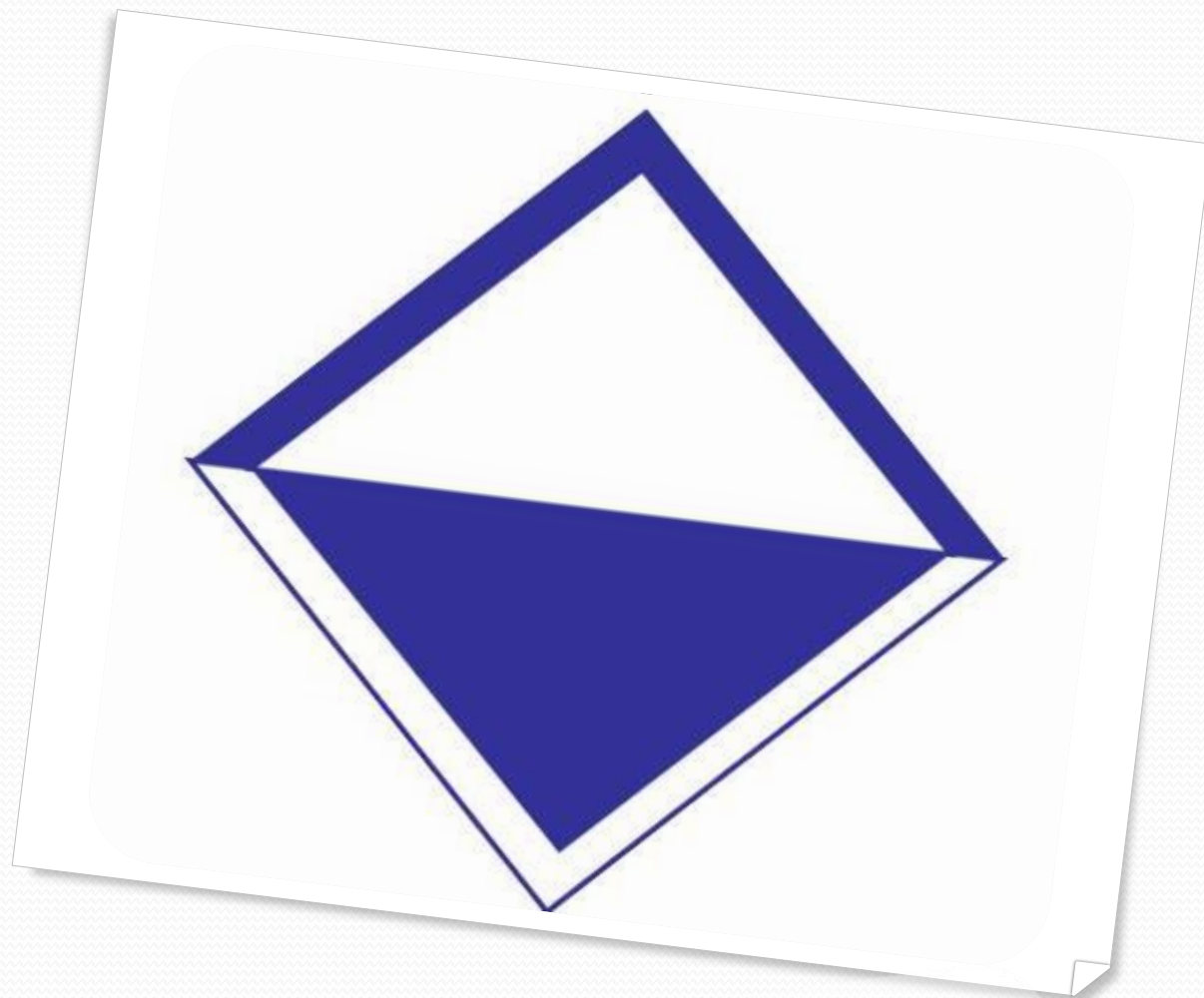
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