

INFORMATION FOR THE REPATRIATES WHO ARE THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS

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Evaluation of the necessities of repatriates who are third-country nationals.
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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this booklet is to provide basic information to repatriates about life in Latvia – matters of housing, employment, education, health care, etc. This will help you understand not only Latvian society in general but also the work of state institutions, thereby making easy the solving of any problems and questions for new members of our society.

In the creation of this booklet were used results from the research on “Needs assessment of repatriates third country nationals” that was performed within the frameworks of project. In the creation of this booklet were involved also repatriates who have moved to Latvia, and who expressed their opinion on the process of repatriation and received support, indicated their main needs and problems after moving to Latvia, and what additional state support measures would be necessary to solve them.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF REPATRIATED THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS

In order to clarify the opinion of repatriates third country nationals on the process of repatriation and received support, as well as to find out what are their main needs and problems after moving to Latvia and what additional state support measures are necessary to solve them; the research was carried out from June 2009 through December 2009, within the frameworks of which were surveyed (inquired or interviewed) more than 350 repatriates.

The results of research states that in general repatriates are satisfied with the process of repatriation and renders a positive evaluation on various factors (the amount of documents that need to be submitted, time necessary for procedure performance, accessibility of information etc.). The only sphere of dissatisfaction is the amount of material assistance – approximately half of the surveyed repatriates evaluates it as dissatisfactory.

The formal process of repatriation (collecting documents and visiting state offices) can take from one to two months. When surveyed repatriates evaluate the collaboration with state institutions and the obliging attitude of their employees positively, in separate cases the problems arose due to insufficient awareness of the repatriates in arranging of separate procedures and in competencies of institutions.

The main problems the repatriates face after arriving in Latvia are:

- employment problems: most of the repatriates cannot find a job appropriate to their qualification;
- housing problems: repatriates face problem finding a permanent place of residence within a short period of time after moving; furthermore the support from the state in this sphere is less than it was expected previously.

The results of research show that the repatriates do not fully know in what areas and what type of state support is available for them both during and after the moving process. Very often the repatriates have solved their problems in various areas (for example, consultations of legal and medical mode, interpreter's services, expenses of moving) on their own, because they had no knowledge about the possibility of receiving help from state institutions. Still the surveyed repatriates admit that in general the accessibility of information and sufficiency both on repatriation process and other significant questions is sufficient. It is emphasised that before moving it is suggested that one consult both with employees of OCMA Department of Migration, and persons who have already repatriated to Latvia who can share their experience, in order to better prepare for the repatriation process and to avoid unexpected problems.

EXAMPLES OF REPATRIATES EXPERIENCES WHILE MOVING TO LATVIA

Mr. Juris Kovalevskis: repatriated together with the wife from Omsk (Russia) on June 2009:

“When I left work, friends, place of residence in Russia and I moved here I was guided by love to my Mother’s country and native land – and I have looked to Latvia with such point of view.

We met very responsive officers both at the Latvian embassy in Moscow and at the Repatriation department in Riga (from 08.06.2009 – Department of Migration Affairs) where we received needed help with drawing up required documents and by compensation for relocation. We received a lot of help and we still receive help in process of acquisition state language, as well as in solving everyday problems (training, lease of the place of residence etc.).

The decision to move to another country is a life changing event that will require effort and some hardships. You have to prepare for insistent work while arranging your life, adjusting yourself to new circumstances and becoming of ful-pledget member of the society in your home land – Latvia.”

Melmaņi family – repatriated on 2008:

“We arrived in Latvia from Russia, Ural. When we decided to return to my husband’s motherland - Latvia, at first we visited the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs (PMLP) on website <http://www.pmlp.gov.lv>. This internet site described well, who the repatriate is, what kind of documents are necessary, how to form the status of repatriate, as well as rights and obligations when you move to Latvia permanently.

We followed the instructions closely. If we had any questions we called to the Latvian embassy in Moscow or to Repatriation department in Riga (from 08.06.2009 – Department of Migration Affairs) and there we received answers to all of our questions. We followed the application process closely as well as did the involved state offices.

Our suggestions for the next repatriates:

- it is of importance to follow required policies in your country as well as in Latvia;
- in a situation of uncertainty it is always best to find out the right way of doing things;
- follow all the policies, laws and regulations closely;
- strictly follow all the provisions of the law, then the process of repatriation will be an easy road without any delays.”

Mr. Andris Ozols, 43 years:

“Our family moved to Latvia on year 2008. Till then we lived in Russia, in Kolima, Madagan city. We decided to move, because we wanted to live in Riga, Latvia. We like here very much (we have visited more than 20 states), yes, and for our son Andris, who is 11 now, life in Latvia will provide better future opportunities in Europe for him. For example a choir he is in just recently won a competition “Silver key of the Riga city” and his school Classical Gymnasium of Riga has been awarded as one of the most musical Russian speaking schools in Latvia.

Both my wife and I are striving to be compatible in the European job market and both of us are currently pursuing Masters level education one in business and the other one in psychology meanwhile advancing our studies of the Latvian language, we have acquired the 2nd level already.

Advice for those, who are moving:

- if you move from Russia, pay close attention to every required document, signature or seal you may need to avoid dealing with state offices and using postal services to get needed documents;
- if you have pets, find out the requirements of Latvia and EU, as well as the requirements of transportation company and border crossing point. We transported our two cats and it turned out that information differed from the embassy’s website and the veterinary service of Madagana, and the Air-Baltic enterprise, in the airport Sheremetyevo-2 and also in the Moscow railway station;
- we suggest to clarify in advance the status of your diplomas and certificates with the Diploma Correspondence Information Centre, maybe some of the information will have to be supplemented (for example, not all of the documents Diplomas issued in Russia are acknowledged in Latvia as the document confirming higher education);
- if there is a need to transport containers with household goods, agree upon the transportation in advance – in Russia there are several problems when transporting household goods to Latvia;
- there is help and support available for repatriates in Latvia and you do not need to be afraid.

LATVIA

Full name: The Republic of Latvia

Capital: Riga

Area: 64 589.00 km²

Regions: Vidzeme, Kurzeme, Latgale, Zemgale

Largest cities and towns: Liepāja, Daugavpils, Jelgava, Rēzekne, Jūrmala, Ventspils

Area of Riga: 307.12 km²

Neighbouring countries: Lithuania, Estonia (both EU and Schengen treaty countries), Russia, Belarus

National language: Latvian

Most common foreign languages: Russian, English and German

Largest religious denominations: Roman Catholic, Evangelic Lutheran, Russian Orthodox

SHORT HISTORY OF LATVIA

The ancestors of modern Latvians have lived in the territory of Latvia starting from 3000 BC. Until the 13th century the territory of Latvia was divided into several small countries, which were ruled by chieftains of Kurshi (kurši), Semigallians (zemgaļi), Liivs (līvi), Selonians (sēļi), Latgallians (latgaļi) and Vends (vendi).

During the 13th century Latvia was conquered by German crusaders under the guidance of Bishop Albert, and in 1201 Riga was founded. At the end of the 13th century Riga joined the most important of Europe's trade associations – the Hanseatic League. Also, Christianity was introduced to the Latvian territory by German missionaries at the beginning of the 13th century.

The Latvian territory came under Livonian Order and jointly with the countries of Riga and Kurzeme bishops established the Livonian confederation, which existed until the 16th century.

In the second half of the 16th century the Livonian confederation collapsed and Vidzeme and Latgale came under direct control of the Polish-Lithuania Union, but Kurzeme and Latgale each became an autonomous duchy.

In the year of 1621 during the Polish-Swedish War, Riga and Vidzeme were conquered by Sweden, but the Swedish period in this territory of Latvia lasted only till the beginning of the 18th century when Swedish Vidzeme was subjected to Russia (1721). After repeated division of Poland Russia annexed Kurzeme and Zemgale duchy (1795).

After WWI and Germany's capitulation in November 1918 a Latvian People's Front was formed, which on November 18, 1918 proclaimed Latvia an independent state. A temporary government was established and Kārlis Ulmanis became as its leader. The Latvian Constitution was adopted on May 1, 1920.

After collusion between SSR and Germany (Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact) in 1939 Latvia came under the Soviet Union's sphere of influence. On June 17, 1940 the Soviet Union occupied Latvia, but on August 5, 1940 it was included between the SSR Soviet Republics.

Soviet occupation in Latvia, except for a short occupation period by Germany during WWII, lasted until the reforms of soviet communism promoted Latvian Independence Movement and on August 21, 1991 the state regained its independence.

Since then Latvia has founded its own state, based on democratic state administration. In 2004 Latvia became a member state of NATO and the European Union.

STAGES OF EMIGRATION

Within Europe in the 19th century grew a new society, new life style and emigration of inhabitants took place. The main reasons for it were the fast increase in the number of population, management intensification that released from works more and more people. From 1815 through 1914 approximately 50 million people left Europe, who travelled over the Atlantic Ocean. Among the emigrants were Latvians.

The first emigration campaign in Latvia took place at the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century, when farmers emigrated to Russia – voluntarily, hoping to acquire land. Another emigration wave in Latvia was caused by refugee movements and revolutionary shocks due to WWI.

Another flow of emigrants and refugees followed due to WWII, when many Latvians escaping from the terror of SSR and German occupation regime went to the West. Due to cruel history experiment were created Diasporas – totalities of persons from one nationality in which are included both victims of political and religious persecution, and war refugees. A large number of Latvian refugees went to Canada, the United States of America, Germany, and England. In Brazil lived Latvian Baptists, who were dealing with agriculture. Refugees of WWII lived in Venezuela, Bolivia and Chile. There were families who lived in China, Nepal and even in Africa and Manchuria. It is estimated that the number of Latvians who emigrated within the 20th century is around 300 000 people. Right now approximately 200 000 people live outside of Latvia who identifies themselves as Latvians.

The cruellest genocide was within SSR's communist terror when on June 14, 1941 and on March 25, 1949 around 29 000 people were deported from Latvia to Siberia.

Many Latvians freely emigrated to the Nordic regions of Russia, Siberia and to the Far East in order to earn money in communism shock-work construction.

REPATRIATION – RETURN BACK TO LATVIA

Since adoption of Repatriation Law in 1995 approximately 6 000 repatriates and their family members have returned to Latvia.

Starting from 1995 till 2009 through repatriation in Latvia have moved 5 731 repatriates and their family members for permanent life int.al. from 2001 (have statistical data) till November 2009 in Latvia have returned:

- 1190 – from East (from former SSR territory) – 66%,
- 613 – from West – 34%.

The largest number of repatriates and their family members are from Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and USA. Each year the number of repatriates is decreasing. Right now in the society has started opposite process – large numbers of inhabitants are leaving Latvia. Now – at the beginning of the 21st century –the flow of economic emigrants to developed Europe countries and to other countries of the world takes place.

For living (work and/or studies, or for other purposes) to other county have moved 4.7% of Latvian inhabitants, and that attests research company's CR Baltic performed inquiry of the inhabitants of Latvia. The most popular destination of the inhabitants of Latvia is Great Britain; 32% of all emigrants have emigrated there, further Ireland – 28% and Germany – 7%. Great Britain takes first place in this list due to inhabitants of Latgale and Riga region. In between other regions the most popular place between emigrants is Ireland especially between inhabitants of Vidzeme (42% of inhabitants).

The basic aim of emigration is considered work. Due to this goal from Latvia have emigrated 79% emigrants, but due to studies there have moved only 10%. We should mark out that almost all emigrants are representatives of groups of economically active inhabitants.

NATIONAL HOLIDAYS

National holidays in Latvia are:

- ✓ January 1: New Years' Day
- ✓ March/April: Great Friday (Good Friday), first and second Easter
- ✓ May 1: Convocation of the Constituent Assembly of the Republic of Latvia, Labour Day
- ✓ May 4: Declaration on Restoration of Independence of the Republic of Latvia
- ✓ Second Sunday of May: Mother's Day
- ✓ May/June Midsummer
- ✓ June 23: Ligo Day (Midsummer Eve)
- ✓ June 24: Jāņi (Midsummer)
- ✓ November 18: Latvian Independence Day
- ✓ December 24, 25, 26: Christmas (Midwinter)
- ✓ December 31: New Years' Eve

Representatives of orthodox, old-believers and other denominations celebrate Easter, Midsummer and Christmas in days stated by their denomination.

If the holidays –May 4 and November 18 – are on Saturday or Sunday the following working day is stated as **holiday**.

REMEMBRANCE AND FESTIVE DAYS

- ✓ January 20: Commemoration Day of Defenders of the Barricades in 1991
- ✓ January 26: International (*de jure*) Recognition of the Republic of Latvia
- ✓ March 8: International Women's Day
- ✓ March 25: Commemoration Day of Victims of Communist Terror
- ✓ May 8: The Defeat of Nazism and Commemoration Day of Victims of World War II
- ✓ May 9: Europe Day
- ✓ May 15: International Day of The Family
- ✓ June 1: International Children's Day
- ✓ June 14: Commemoration Day of Victims of Communist Terror
- ✓ June 17: Occupation of the Republic of Latvia
- ✓ June 22: Heroes' Commemoration Day (Anniversary of the Battle of Cēsis)
- ✓ July 4: Commemoration Day of Genocide against the Jews
- ✓ Second Saturday of July: Sea Festival Day
- ✓ August 11: Commemoration Day of The Latvian Freedom Fighters
- ✓ August 21: Passing of the Constitutional Law on the Status of the Republic of Latvia as a State and Actual Restoration of the Republic of Latvia
- ✓ August 23: Day of Remembrance for victims of Stalinism and Nazism
- ✓ September 1: Knowledge Day
- ✓ Second Sunday of September: Father's Day
- ✓ September 22: Baltic Unity Day
- ✓ October 1: International Day of Older Persons
- ✓ First Sunday of October: Teacher's Day
- ✓ November 11: Lāčplēšis Day (Latvian Freedom Fighters' Remembrance Day)
- ✓ First Sunday of December: Commemoration Day of Victims of Genocide Against the Latvian People by the Totalitarian Communist Regime

WHO IS A REPATRIATE?

A repatriate is a person who is a citizen of Latvia or whose parents or grandparents are Latvian or Liiv (livs) and who on his/her own volition makes a permanent move to the Republic of Latvia.

Entitled to enter Latvia accompanying a repatriate are his/her family members: the spouse of a repatriate; the underage and dependant children (biological and adopted) of the repatriate and/or repatriate's spouse; the parents of the repatriate.

REPATRIATE'S RIGHTS:

1. To bring into Latvia his/her belongings without import duties, by showing in the customs document that attests the state of repatriate.

2. To receive free of charge permanent residence permit (if the citizenship of the Republic of Latvia is not restored or assigned).

3. To receive pension in accordance with the Law "On State Pensions" of the Republic of Latvia.

4. To gain in his possession an apartment or house, as well as other movable or immovable property, to gain lease rights of living accommodations in a house owned by state or municipality.

5. To receive material assistance.*

* Rights on material assistance stated in the Repatriation Law have a repatriate who has emigrated from Latvia till May 4, 1990 or has born abroad, or has emigrated from Latvia after May 4, 1990 and within the period of emigration has been underage.

REPATRIATE'S OBLIGATIONS:

1. If you have received permanent residence permit and you need to stay out of Latvia without interruption for more than six months within a period of calendar year, or for more than two years and six months within a period of five years, you have to submit in the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs a corresponding application and documents that explains your absence. Basing on this application a notice that explains your absence will be issued.

2. The permanent residence permit is registered once every five years, not later than 30 days before the term when residence permit expires by turning to the territorial department of Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs which is stated by your declared place of residence, the permanent residence permit should be registered also in the case if the passport has been changed.

REGULATORY ENACTMENTS OF THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA THAT REGULATES THE RIGHTS OF REPATRIATES AND THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS:

- Constitution of the Republic of Latvia – mentioned state system, basic human rights;
- Regulation (EEC) No. 918/83 that creates Community system of exemptions from custom duty was adopted on March 28, 1983. There is established procedure how the inherited estate, objects for private use and household objects of the repatriate are exempt from customs duty;
- Repatriation Law – adopted on 1995, defined main conditions so that the repatriates could return back to Latvia for permanent life;
- Immigration Law – stated immigration, stay, transit, emigration and detention order of foreigners, as well as the order in which the foreigners are kept into protection of the Republic of Latvia and deported from it, in order to ensure implementation of migration policy according to international legal provisions and provisions of the Republic of Latvia;
- Law on Population Register – stated order in which the data on repatriates and their family members are included in the Population register, as well as the amount of data that needs to be included there;
- Law “On Municipality Assistance in Solving of Housing Issues”, adopted on December 6, 2001;
- Citizenship Law – stated order in which the repatriate, who is not a citizen of the Republic of Latvia, and his family members can receive the citizenship of the Republic of Latvia;
- Law “On State Pensions” – stated order in which the state social insurance ensures the pension due to age, disability and due to loss of supporter;
- Regulations No. 275 “On Material Assistance for the Repatriated Persons” issued by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia on April 19, 2005;
- Regulations No. 222 “Regulations on State Duty for Reviewing of Documents Necessary for Visa, Residence Permit or for Requesting European Community Permanent Inhabitants’s Status in the Republic of Latvia and with it Connected Services” issued by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia on April 1, 2008. The regulations state that the repatriate and his/her family members,

- who arrive in the order stated by the Repatriation Law, are exempted from the payment of state duty for visa, for requirement of permanent residence permit or reviewing of documents necessary for registration and resoration of residence permit, if the travel document has been changed;
- Regulations No.813 "Regulations regarding Residence Permits" issued by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia on October 3, 2006. Mentioned documents necessary for requirement of permanent residence permit, the issuance, registration and annulment order of permanent residence permits;
 - Regulations No.586 "Procedures for the Entry into and Residence in the Republic of Latvia of Citizens of European Union Member States, European Economic Area States and the Swiss Confederation, and their Family Members" issued by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia on July 18, 2006.

With the regulatory enactments of the Republic of Latvia you can get acquainted in www.likumi.lv.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS:

In case of an emergency situation call the numbers below:

| | |
|------------------------|------------|
| General emergency: | 112 |
| Fire: | 01 |
| Police: | 02 |
| Ambulance: | 03 |
| Gas emergency service: | 04 |

It is important to remember that it is impossible to call to the numbers 01, 02, 03, 04 from mobile phone!

PHONE HELP LINES

“The Help Line phone service will provide information in any situation and can be seen as ambulatory services!

Latvian Phone Help Lines: **1188, 1180, 1189.**

Languages help available: Latvian, Russian, and English language. When calling specify which language assistance is needed.

The Help Line services offer various types of information on firms, organizations, as well as information on addresses and telephone numbers of private persons. The main Help Line on internet in Latvia are www.1188.lv, www.zl.lv and www.1189.lv.

CURRENCY

Latvian national currency is Lats (abbr. LVL or Ls). Lats is a freely convertible currency. For further information on currency and its exchange rates please go to (www.bank.lv).

Credit cards are accepted and ATM's are available in most all major hotels, restaurants and shops in Riga, as well in most largest cities and towns of Latvia.

National currency was introduced in 1993. 5-, 10-, 20-, 50-, 100- and 500- lats banknotes, and 1-, 2-, 5-, 10-, 20-, 50- santims and 1- and 2- lats coins are in use in Latvia.

BANKS IN LATVIA

Most Latvian banks are open from 9:00 a.m. till 5:00 p.m. on business days and bank branches that are located at the biggest shopping centres are open also on Saturdays and Sundays usually from 10:00 a.m. till 8:00 p.m.

| | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| • Latvijas Krājbanka | Information telephone 67092020 | http://www.lkb.lv |
| • SEB Banka | Information telephone 80008009 | http://www.seb.lv |
| • SWEDBANK | Information telephone 67444444 | http://www.swedbank.lv |
| • DnB NORD Banka | Information telephone 67171880 | http://www.dnb nord.lv |
| • NORDEA | Information telephone 67096096 | http://www.nordea.lv |
| • GE Money Bank | Information telephone 67001878 | http://www.gemoneybank.lv |
| • PAREX Banka | Information telephone 67010000 | http://www.parex.lv |
| • DANSKE banka | Information telephone 67959599 | http://www.danskebanka.lv |
| • Aizkraukles banka | Information telephone 67775555 | http://www.aizkraukles.com |
| • VEF Banka | Information telephone 67556774 | http://www.vefbank.com |
| • NORVIK Banka | Information telephone 67041111 | http://www.norvik.lv |
| • Hipotēku banka | Information telephone 80000100 | http://www.hipo.lv |
| • PrivatBank | Information telephone 80001515 | http://www.privatbank.lv |
| • SMP Bank | Information telephone 67019153 | http://www.smpbank.lv |
| • Rietumu Banka | Information telephone 67025555 | http://www.rietumu.lv |

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION IN RIGA

- All trams, buses, trolley-buses and minibuses (int.al. rout taxis) in Riga have fixed routes.
- The driver can let out and pick up the passengers only in stops for public transport.
- If you plan to use public transport daily, it will be cheaper for you to get a monthly pass for particular routes or combination of transports. This allows you to ride the public transportation system as often as you want in that particular month.
- You can buy and reload smart cards and smart tickets in press trade outlets: “Narvesen”, “Preses apvienība”, “Plus Punkts”, as well as in ticket vending machines.
- You can buy the ticket also in the public transport, but then the price of one drive will be higher than by using e-ticket or smart ticket.
- The public transport usually runs every day from 5:30 a.m. till approximately 00:30 a.m., but in some routes the services are rendered only till 10:30 p.m.
- On all public transportation the number and final destination are displayed visibly so that you know where it is going.

- All information on the routes of public transport and tickets is available in www.rigassatiksmelv.lv. Free of charge information telephone **80001919** (on working days from 7:30 a.m. till 9:00 p.m.).

TYPES OF TICKETS FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN RIGA

Types of E-tickets:

1. Personalized E-ticket

It is made out of plastic, valid for 5 years, attached to one holder only, contains holder's data - photo, Name, Surname can be used by its holder only. The personalized E-ticket is compulsory for passengers using fare discounts in public transport, except those who enjoy 100 % fare discount granted by the state; everybody can apply for this type of ticket in a customer service centre by fulfilling application form. In case of loss, it can be blocked and restored without losing the products loaded to it, and the ticket can be reloaded in ticket vending machines, press trade outlets (*Narvesen, Plus punkts* and *Preses apvieniba*) and in Rīgas satiksme ticket trade outlets and in the Internet <http://etalons.rigassatiksmelv.lv>. You can load one-month travel cards and tickets for a certain number of trips.

2. Non-personalized E-ticket

It is made out of plastic, valid for 5 years, does not include personal data – can be used by several passengers, you can buy it at ticket trade outlets after paying a deposit of 2.00 lats, it is necessary for those who use the public transport on a regular basis, including those who buy one-month travel cards without discounts and who do not want to use personalized e-tickets. If this ticket has been lost, it cannot be blocked or restored, you can reload this ticket in ticket vending machines, press trade outlets (*Narvesen, Plus punkts* and *Preses apvieniba*) and in Rīgas satiksme ticket trade outlets. You can load one-month travel cards and tickets for a certain number of trips.

3. Smart ticket

It is made out of cardboard, with a microcircuit chip, after usage of product it cannot be *reloaded*, you can buy time tickets and tickets for a certain number of trips, you can buy it in ticket vending machines, press trade outlets (*Narvesen, Plus punkts* and *Preses apvieniba*) and in Rīgas satiksme ticket trade outlets, it is convenient for those who do not use Riga public transport on a regular basis, including Riga visitors.

4. Paper ticket

Paper ticket is sold only by the public transport drivers and it costs more than the ticket bought using e-ticket or smart ticket.

This kind of ticket is valid for one trip only and on the vehicle where it was bought.

Luggage and pet tickets are sold only by public transport drivers.

5. Transfer ticket

In case of technical problems, the driver issues to the passengers transfer tickets which are valid for one hour in any vehicle of *Rīgas satiksme*.

Types of tickets:

1. Monthly ticket

The ticket is valid for one month after its first registration day without trip restriction.

2. Ticket with a designated number of trips

There are two kinds of tickets you can buy, a plastic smart-card or a cardboard smart-ticket. Benefit in getting this kind of ticket is a discount applied at the time of purchase, for example:

A ticket for 10 or 20 trips;

2-trip ticket for 2 passengers and 2-trip ticket for 3-passengers (available on cardboard smart-tickets only).

3. Timed ticket

This is a time limited ticket – 5 days, 3 days or 24 hours.

You can buy them only in a cardboard smart ticket format.

4. One-time ticket

This is a paper ticket that is sold by public transport drivers and is more expensive than a ticket bought with e-ticket or smart ticket.

Paper ticket for pensioners, who have been granted fare discounts, is sold by public transport drivers only.

Luggage and pets tickets are sold by public transport drivers only.

Prices of tickets for inhabitants, pupils, teachers, pensioners, students, persons with 3rd group visual and hearings disability, participants of the Chernobyl AES accident consequences liquidation, parents of large family differ, you can find more information on *Rīgas Satiksme* home page: www.rigassatiksme.lv or in press trade outlets.

TRAINS

- The trains in Latvia can be divided into international trains and local trains. The domestic trains in Riga are very often used as a common transportation within in city limits.
- International trains stop in Riga Central Station. It is possible to go to Saint Petersburg or Moscow with an international train without a transfer.
- Domestic trains stop at various stations within the route. Before riding a train check whether the train stops at your station.

- All the information on train routes and ticket prices is available on www.ldz.lv, www.pv.lv. Information phone line for clients and passengers **1181**.
- Even though train is a cheap mean of transportation, it is not possible to reach every point of destination in Latvia this way.
- It is possible to calculate the approximate price of ticket within domestic train routes by multiplying the amount of kilometres with LVL 0,025.
- The ticket there and back costs less than the cost of one-way ticket.
- For illustration, costs of one-way train ticket in the direction of various cities of Latvia:
 - Riga – Sigulda – LVL 1.55
 - Riga – Jelgava – LVL 1.35
 - Riga – Valmiera- LVL 2.80
 - Riga – Rēzekne – LVL 4.80
 - Riga –Daugavpils – LVL 4.70
 - Riga – Liepāja – LVL 4.80

INTERCITY AND INTERNATIONAL BUSES

- The main stop of international routes and intercity buses is Riga Central Bus Station, however they stop also in several bus stops out of Riga centre (for example, buses driving in the direction of Valmiera/ Saint Petersburg stop in Teika and Jugla).
- Buses are considered the most efficient means of transportation and by bus it is possible to reach every town of Latvia.

All information on international and intercity buses and their traffic is available on www.autoosta.lv. Telephone number Bus Stations inquiry service **90000009** (payphone – LVL/min 0.24). Telephone through which you can reserve tickets **90001111** (payphone – LVL/min 0.35).

- It is possible to calculate the approximate price of ticket by multiplying the amount of kilometres with LVL 0.03.
- For illustration, costs of one-way bus ticket in the direction of various cities of Latvia:
 - Riga – Sigulda – LVL 1.50
 - Riga – Jelgava – LVL 1.50
 - Riga – Valmiera- LVL 3.10
 - Riga – Rēzekne –LVL 6.70
 - Riga –Daugavpils – LVL 5.60
 - Riga – Liepāja – LVL 5.40
- The most popular international bus firms are “Eirolines” (www.eirolines.lv), “Ecolines” (www.ecolines.lv) and it is possible to travel to various cities of Baltic States, Europe and Russia without a transfer.

TAXIS

- Taxis operate 24 hours a day in Riga and almost all major towns of Latvia.
- When a taxi is available - a green light is ON, if not then the red light is ON.
- You can find a taxi both at a taxi stand or you can even flag down a taxi on the street by raising your hand, or by calling to Taxi inquiry service by telephone **8880** (paid service), where you will be put through with any taxi company, or by calling to inquiry services **1188, 1180** or **1189**. Several taxi firms have free of charge telephones.
- Normally the taxi fares are provided on the cab's doors.
- The meter on the dashboard of the taxi shows the fare. Make sure that it is actually running.
- Approximate costs of taxi in Riga (for various taxi firms it can differ):
 - LVL 1.50 - entering (from 00.00 a.m. till 12.00 p.m.)
 - LVL 0.50 - 1 km (from 00.00 a.m. till 12.00 p.m.)
 - LVL 6.00 – 1 hour waiting
- For example, drive from Riga centre to Riga airport usually costs LVL 6.00 – 9.00.
- In case you have doubt, ask the driver the approximate price before actually you enter the taxi.

OWNING A CAR

You must register the car with the Road Traffic Safety Directorate.

- All the information on driver's licence and on driving your own car is available on www.csdd.lv. RTSD information telephone **67025777**, e-mail office@csdd.gov.lv. In order to use your own car it is obligatory to undergo roadworthiness tests; this test will determine whether the vehicle is in an appropriate technical condition.

In accordance with the law the owner should acquire obligatory third-person transport liability insurance, which would cover losses caused to third party due to road accident caused by the owner of the car or authorized user.

REQUIREMENTS WHEN DRIVING WITH A CAR

- You must be 18 to drive a car in Latvia.
- Road traffic rules in Latvia are relatively strict. On small violations you can receive a warning from police or they can impose a penalty, the penalties on heavier violations (for example, driving under the influence of alcohol) are very rough – bigger penalties, taking away of driver's license, also administrative arrest.
- There is a penalty point system in force in Latvia. When you reach 16 points your driving licence is suspended and you can renew it only by passing exams again.
- Usually the permitted speed in towns and urban areas is 50 km per hour, whereas in rural areas - 90 km per hour.

- In some places mobile photo radars have been set up in order to check the speed. They are displaced to various places.
- Driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs is strictly prohibited.
- In case of a car accident call the emergency number **112** and describe the situation. The operator will put through you to the Road Traffic Police and other services, if necessary.

RESTRICTIONS IN LATVIA

The restrictions in Latvia can be stated by the law, mandatory provisions of municipalities and by private owners.

It is important to remember that in Latvia:

- Smoking is not allowed in most public places. Permission to smoke is showed with a corresponding sign;
- Alcoholic beverages are prohibited in public places, except where it is permitted;
- Children till the of age 16 are not allowed to be in public places at night without a parent, guardian, foster family or another authorized person. In Latvia night is considered a time period from 10:00 p. m. till 6:00 a. m. Each local municipality has authority to define "night hours" and "age of children" locally so above mentioned information will differ from one municipality to the other;
- It is not allowed to sit in lawn and greenery in which the municipality has placed prohibition signs;
- It is not allowed to dwell (sleep, stay overnight, etc.) in parks, beaches, on streets and in other public places;
- It is not allowed to litter, spit or to relieve yourself in places, which are not intended for that particular purpose.

- Gathering mushrooms and berries on a private property (woods) that is marked as such is prohibited unless permission by a property owner is granted. To gather mushrooms, berries, fruits, nuts and mushrooms is allowed in woods owned by state or municipality unless prohibition signs are posted in the area.
- Each fisherman in Latvia (except children and youth till age of 16, and persons after reaching age of 65) should acquire fishing pass, which gives rights to fish in the waters of Latvia. In very good fishing places, where the resources of fish are regularly supplemented the fishing is organised only with licenses. The fisherman should take into consideration that in Latvia many lakes are private and the rights to fish in them belongs to the owners of the coastal land. If the fisherman's chosen lake is a private one the permission of the owner of coastal land has to be obtained.

HOUSING

The housing expenses are calculated based on a size of an apartment and location. It is typical in Latvia that an apartment comes with a refrigerator and a gas top stove. The public utility payments (heating, bringing out of waste, electricity, hot and cold water etc.) are not included in the payment of rent and you will be responsible to pay these costs in addition!

Where to find information on housing? Ask friends, in the newspapers advertisement section, search internet (for example, www.rentinriga.lv, www.city24.lv, www.dzivoklis.lv, www.ss.lv, www.reklama.lv, www.nams24.lv, www.varianti.lv etc.).

When you have found the house/apartment you like, then get in touch with the agent, owner or person, who rents the house; before renting if at all possible make an appointment to see the place before signing a lease.

If you are satisfied with the house, then you should agree with the apartment owner on the lease. Make sure you have a clear written agreement before you pay to the owner or steward any amount of money. Make sure you know the owner's contact information: name, surname, address and telephone number. In addition find out to whom, when and how you should pay the lease (with bank transfer or in cash). Upon agreeing and paying lease ask for a receipt and keep copy of one signed lease contract and monthly payments for yourself.

DECLARATION OF A PLACE OF RESIDENCE

If you live not declaring your place of residence or you change your place of residence you have to declare it immediately.

To declare your place of residence:

1. in the corresponding municipality or municipal institution;
2. in the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs (PMLP);
3. electronically.

Additional information on declaration of a place of residence in the corresponding municipality or municipal institution, in the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs (PMLP) or electronically is available on www.pmlp.gov.lv.

In order to declare your place of residence under appropriate municipality or municipal institution, in the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs (PMLP), you or your authorized representative should:

1. present a passport or other identification document valid in Latvia (the authorized representative should present written authorization in addition to other documents);
2. fill out a form for declaration of a place of residence.

You can declare your place of residence electronically on Web site www.latvija.lv, if you have digital signature or credit institution's electronic settlement system's means of authentication. When declaring place of residence electronically on Web site www.latvija.lv, you have to fill out a special online form.

EMPLOYMENT

Free information on employment can be obtained in the client service departments of State Employment Agency (NVA), as well as by consulting a career consultant. **The information on employment is also available on www.nva.gov.lv, telephone 67021706.**

Where to find information on job openings? You can find the information in newspapers, on advertisement boards, on the internet (for example, www.ss.lv, www.e-darbs.lv, www.job.lv, www.workingday.lv, www.cvmarket.lv, www.personals.lv etc.).

The information on various courses, the possibility to receive discount cards, advertisements are available on www.nacundari.lv.

LABOR CONTRACT

In order to legally work in Latvia, you and your employer should sign a written labor contract, which is a document that states rights and obligations of both parties i.e. employer and you as employee.

The labor contract should contain your name, surname, personal identity number, place of residence, name and surname of your employer, registration number and legal address, starting date of labor legal rights and the planned length (if your labor contract is concluded on a concrete period of time), work place (if the performance of labor responsibilities is not planned a concrete workplace, the employee can be employed in various places), your profession, post, speciality, amount of wage and payment date to that who is hired for a day or for a week, labor contract's notice term, collective contract is also indicated, as well as work order provisions that can be applied to labour legal relationships. The labor contract shall be prepared in two copies- one copy for each party.

UNEMPLOYMENT

You are entitled to unemployment benefits, if you are:

- Registered in State Unemployment Agency and received the status of an unemployed person;
- Your total insurance (labour) period is not less than one year;

- Compulsory Social Security Contributions performed in Latvia not less than last 9 months within the period of 12 months before the day you received the status of an unemployed person;
- At least 15 years old;
- You have not reached an age of receiving state pension.

To register for unemployment you need:

- Passport;
- Payroll tax certificate that you can receive in the local Department of the State Revenue Service (VID) of your residence;
- Permit of permanent residence if you are not a citizen of the Republic of Latvia.

Unemployment benefit is paid for up to nine months within a year after its granting.

After moving the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs (PMLP) pays a monthly benefit in the amount of 90% from the minimal salary, if the repatriate within a year after his moving on permanent life in Latvia has submitted an application in the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs (PMLP) and has registered in the State Employment Agency (VSAA) as unemployed. The benefit is paid six months in turn.

After you have registered in the State Employment Agency (NVA) and received the status of unemployed, you have to apply to the State Social Insurance Agency (VSAA) in order to receive your unemployment benefit. For more detailed information on how the unemployed benefits are calculated call to free of charge telephone **8001015**.

Information on state pensions and child care benefit can be found on State Social Insurance Agency's (VSAA) home page you can find information also on state pensions and child care benefit www.vsaa.lv.

Information on social care centres and boarding houses for the elderly people, various benefits is available on www.rehab.lv.

Information on labor safety and various risk factors at work you can find on www.stradavesels.lv.

STARTING A BUSINESS WHILE UNEMPLOYED

The State Employment Agency (NVA) renders a consultative assistance and financial support for starting up a business, as well as ensures evaluation of business plan's implementation correspondence for 24 months from the day when the business plan's implementation is started to those unemployed, who want to start up business or self-employment.

Unemployed, who meet the following requirements, can participate in this program:

have acquired professional or higher education in the field of entrepreneurship, business management or in any other similar field;

- within the frameworks of unemployed professional training have acquired educational programs, thereby acquiring the necessary knowledge in the sphere of entrepreneurship;

have acquired professional or higher education (in a field that is not related with entrepreneurship) and informal education programs in the field related with entrepreneurship management.

Within the measure the unemployed will receive such assistance for the starting up of business and self-employment:

- consultations how to draw up and workout the business plan (20 consultations within 6 weeks);

if the specialist chosen by the State Employment Agency (NVA) has rendered a positive adjudgement on business plan viability and on the necessity of further support from the State Employment Agency (NVA):

- consultations for business plan implementation within the first year of self-employment or business (20 consultations);
- business grant for business plan implementation – not more than 4 thousand lats corresponding to the approved business plan estimate;
- monthly grant within the initial period of measure implementation (within first six months) – in the amount of minimal monthly salary stated in the state.

The unemployed can gain additional information on business or self-employment starting up measure in the closet branch of the State Employment Agency (NVA) or on website: www.nva.gov.lv.

STARTING A BUSINESS AND THE REGISTRATION OF ENTERPRISE

Registration of self-employed person.

You can register as self-employed person in the territorial institution of the State Revenue Service (VID) of your place of residence. The employee of the State Revenue Service (VID) will hand out an application form of taxpayer registration and will help to fulfill it. When registering in the State Revenue Service (VID) you have to present a passport and submit:

- application form;
- in accordance with the type of economic activity - copies of additional documents (presenting the originals).

For further information see: www.vid.gov.lv.

Registration of individual businessman.

In order to register an individual businessman in the Register of Companies, one should submit in the Enterprise Register the following:

- application form;
- receipt on state duty payment for the individual businessman's registration in the Register of Companies;
- receipt on Register of Companies record's publication payment in the official newspaper "Latvijas Vēstnesis".

For further information see: www.ur.gov.lv.

Registration of Limited Liability Company (Ltd.).

In order to register a Ltd., in the Department of Enterprise Register according to legal address of the Ltd., one should submit the following:

- application form;
- establishment contract;
- articles of the association of the Ltd.;
- bank notice on payment of fixed assets;
- documents that verify the value of each contribution;
- a written agreement of each councillor in order to be a councillor of the council (if the Ltd. has the council);
- a written agreement of each member in order to be a member of the board;
- notaries certified examples of signatures of the board members (if the board member as the founder has not already signed the application of the Ltd. registration in the Register of Companies);
- board's announcement on legal address of the Ltd.;
- receipt on state duty payment on the Ltd. registration in the Register of Companies;
- receipt on Register of Companies record publication payment in the official newspaper "Latvijas Vēstnesis".

For further information see: www.ur.gov.lv

Registration of a joint-stock company (JSC)

The joint-stock company can be registered in the Department of Enterprise Registers by the JSC legal address, one should submit the following:

- application form;
- establishment contract;

- company's articles of the association;
- bank notice on payment of fixed assets;
- documents that verify the value of each contribution; ;
- a written agreement of each councillor in order to be a councillor of the council;
- a written agreement of each member in order to be a member of the board;
- notaries certified examples of signatures of the board members (if the board member as the founder has not already signed the application of the Company's registration in the Register of Companies);
- board's announcement on legal address of the JSC;
- receipt on state duty payment on the JSC registration in the Register of Companies;
- receipt on Register of Companies record publication payment in the official newspaper "Latvijas Vēstnesis".

For further information see: www.ur.gov.lv.

PAYROLL TAX CERTIFICATE

In order to ensure the accounting of taxpayer, payment control of personal income tax and proper application of untaxed minimum and tax concession the payroll tax certificate is necessary.

The payroll tax certificate entitles you to receive benefits – untaxed minimum, deduction for dependent relatives, disabled dependent relative etc. Each inhabitant of the Republic of Latvia can acquire only one payroll tax certificate, which a physical person can receive in the territorial institution of State Revenue Service (VID) by the taxpayer place of residence. The payroll tax certificate has no validity term.

You should acquire payroll tax certificate when starting to work for the first time.

In order to receive payroll tax certificate and to update the data showed in the certificate, the taxpayer presents passport or other document confirming the personality, and documents that verifies taxpayer's rights on tax benefits.

HEALTH

In order to receive a state guaranteed health care (paying only the patient fee), you are obliged to choose your family doctor.

A patient fee is the patient participation payment for the services provided. You can choose your family doctor on the Health Payment Center home page www.vnc.gov.lv or by calling to free of charge telephone **80001234**, information on medical establishments and praxis of family doctors you can find on the portal www.neslimo.lv, by telephone **67220661**.

In order to receive the services, you have to register by filling out the registration form.

You cannot visit a medical specialist without seeing your family doctor first. The doctor may refer you to a medical or other specialist for further treatment. In this case you will need to pay only the patient fee.

Remember to consult your family doctor how to apply for any of such consultations or examinations.

You need to make an appointment by phone to see most of the doctors.

Please call the office to cancel any appointments you have made.

You can go to an emergency room of the hospital without an appointment.

You have to pay LVL 1.00 for your outpatient visit to the family doctor.

An outpatient visit to a specialist would cost you LVL 5.00.

Children under age of 18, expectant mothers and women in their maternity period up to 42 days, low-income persons (presenting a note) as well as some other groups of people are exempt from any such fee.

A family doctor visit at home is free of charge for children, for other patients – it is a charged service.

Children under age of 18 can visit the dentist free of any charge.

EDUCATION

Costs of acquiring pre-school, primary and secondary education established by the state or municipality are covered by the state budget or municipality budget according to the order stated by the Cabinet of Ministers. Private education establishment can state a fee on education acquisition.

PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION ESTABLISHMENTS

In Latvia, especially in Riga, is a great shortage of state pre-school education establishments, thereby register your child in a pre-school education establishment right after his/her birth. When register your child you have to present child's birth certificate, as well as document that verifies your personality.

When you have registered your child in any of pre-school education establishment in Riga, it is possible to follow the situation in a row in a public register on the portal of Riga City Municipality www.riga.lv.

In case of uncertainty call the Education, Youth and Sports of Riga City Council: **67026818** or **67026841**, or ask for the information in the corresponding municipality.

Registration applications are systemized in the following registers:

- first level in the register, if the child's place of residence is declared in the corresponding administrative territory of municipality;
- second level in the register - if the child's place of residence is declared in the corresponding administrative territory of municipality and the pupil has been accepted in one of municipality's pre-school education establishments, but the parents desire to change the pre-school education establishment;
- third level in the register - if the child's place of residence is declared out of the corresponding administrative territory of municipality;
- fourth level in the register – if the child's place of residence is declared out of the corresponding administrative territory of municipality and the pupil has been accepted in one of municipality's pre-school education establishments, but the parents desire to change the pre-school education establishment.

Child's registration procedure in the pre-school education establishment is stated by mandatory rules of each municipality. In the mandatory rules of various municipalities is stated that at least one of the parents should be declared in the administrative territory of the corresponding municipality.

PRIMARY EDUCATION

Primary and secondary education in Latvia is free of charge.

You have to apply to the educational establishment of the area you have declared your residence. You can register your child in the school of other administrative territory following the row (line), because a preference will be to children from registered place of residence in the corresponding territory.

Basic education in Latvia is compulsory (9 years).

Secondary education (which comprises also the basic 9 years education above) lasts for 12 years.

Portal of schools in Latvia on www.skolas.lv.

The description of education on the portal www.education.lv.

Information for pupils and students on the portal www.aiknc.lv.

Children registration in the educational establishments of Riga is performed throughout the year, the parents should submit particular example application, as well as to present child's birth certificate or document that indicates child's personal identity number, and a document which confirms personal data of parents (for guardian – a decision of Orphans court that confirms the fact of custody).

HIGHER EDUCATION

In order to enter a higher educational institution you have to complete the general secondary educational establishment.

The list of higher education establishments find on the portal www.aiknc.lv.

Where to look in Latvia for recognition of educational document issued abroad?

Educational documents should be submitted for expertise in the Academic Information Centre (AIC – www.aic.lv), for contact information: tel. **67225155**, e-mail: diplomi@aic.lv, address: Brīvības iela 33, Riga.

POSSIBILITIES OF INFORMAL EDUCATION

Informal education is offered as one of the options how to spend the free time in Latvia. Informal education programs are implemented by informal education establishments, general education establishments, professional and professional orientation establishments founded by the municipality, private education establishments involving children and youth from the age of 3 till 25. You can find the information on www.vjic.gov.lv.

EXAMINATION OF STATE LANGUAGE SKILLS

Levels of state language skills:

In Latvia are stated three levels of state language skills:

basic or Level A,

middle or Level B,

higher or Level C.

Each level has two degrees:

1 – lower degree;

2 – higher degree.

A state language certificate is necessary for the professional use in the Republic of Latvia. The aim of the state language certification is to evaluate the level of person's state (Latvian) language skills. If the person has passed the state language examination successfully, then the person receives the state language certificate.

Levels and degrees of state language skills for concrete professions and posts are stated in the Regulations No.733 "Regulations on the order of state language examination for the performance of obligations for profession and post, on reception of permanent residence permit and acquisition of permanent inhabitant's status in the European Community and on state duty on state language examination" issued by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia on July 7, 2009;

- Appendix 1 (for those who are employed by the state and municipality institutions);
- Appendix 2 (for those who are employed by private establishments, organizations and enterprises (business entity)).

Application on registration for the state language examination can be submitted:

IN PERSON (in the city, in which you prefer to pass the examination).

If the person submits the application personally, the following documents shall be presented:

- valid document conforming person's identity;
- credit institutions attested payment order (or any other document attesting the payment) on the paid state duty. The mentioned document is valid not longer than three months from its submission in the centre.

- if the person is entitled and desires to take an examination of privilege, he has to submit a statement from rehabilitation doctor that states functional restrictions regarding to the state of health.

ELECTRONICALLY (visc@visc.gov.lv).

The document shall be signed with digital signature (or digital). If the person sends the application electronically, he has to present other necessary documents when coming to the examination:

- valid document conforming person's identity;
- credit institutions attested payment order (or any other document attesting the payment) on the paid state duty. The mentioned document is valid not longer than three months from its submission in the centre.
- if the person is entitled and desires to take an examination of privilege, he has to submit a statement from rehabilitation doctor that states functional restrictions regarding to the state of health.

TO POST IN A LETTER (State Educational Content Center, Valņū iela 2, Riga, LV-1050). Postmark not later than 10 days before the examination).

If the person sends the application by post, he has to present other necessary documents when coming to the examination:

- valid document conforming person's identity;
- credit institutions attested payment order (or any other document attesting the payment) on the paid state duty. The mentioned document is valid not longer than three months from its submission in the centre.
- if the person is entitled and desires to take an examination of privilege, he has to submit a statement from rehabilitation doctor that states functional restrictions regarding to the state of health.

A **place and time** of a particular examination is announced by the centre's employee not later than within three days after registered application:

- **in written**, if the person has submitted the application personally. The person signs on reception of received information;
- **in written (in a registered letter by post)**, if the person has sent the application by post;
- **electronically**, if the person has submitted the application electronically.

When person arrives in examination room he has to provide the valid document confirming his personality.

Within the examination should be observed such rules:

- the state language examination materials issued by commission are allowed to use in the examination;
- the examination is taken without any assistance;
- the examination materials are filled out using the pen;
- the person confirms with his/her signature in the examination process minutes that has taken the written and oral part of the examination.

The person is informed on examination results by post in a written letter or electronically within 15 working days.

It is important to remember that the results of the state language skills and state language certificate cannot be applied within the process of naturalization!

Contact information:

Postal address: Valņu iela 2 (606. cabinet), Riga, LV-1050

Telephone: **67814480; 67281232**

For further information see: www.visc.gov.lv.

CITIZENSHIP OF THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA

Acquisition of the citizenship of the Republic of Latvia is within the competence of Naturalization Board. For further information see www.np.gov.lv.

Smilu iela 1/3, Riga, LV-1050, telephone **67814001**, informative telephone **67814159**.

Latvians and Liivs (līvi), whose permanent place of residence is in Latvia and who have registered in the Population Register according to stated order and have no other citizenship or have received and expatriation permission, if such permission is foreseen in the laws of this state, from the previous state of citizenship can register the status of Latvia citizenship.

In order to register the citizenship of the Republic of Latvia, the person has to submit copies of such documents confirmed by the notary or Naturalization Board:

- passport with an entry of nationality “Latvian (latvietis)” or “Liiv (līvs/libietis)” or a permission for change of the entry of nationality to “Latvian (latvietis)” or “Liv (līvs/libietis);
- if the person submits a passport, which is issued till August 21, 1991 or a passport, which does not contain the information about nationality, the person has to submit a birth certificate or other document that affirms one of person's parents as Latvian or Liiv.

The Naturalization Board examines the fact of person's permanent place of residence in Latvia.

Person on its own request can receive the Latvian citizenships in the stated order of naturalization.

Persons who are registered in the Population Register can receive the Latvia citizenship in the stated order of naturalization and:

- who have reached the age of 15;
- whose place of permanent residence, on the application submission date for the naturalization, has been in Latvia for no less than five years (persons who entered Latvia after July 1, 1992, the five-year term shall be counted from the date of the received permanent residence permit);
- who know the Latvian language and the history of Latvia, the basic principles of the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia and the text of the national anthem;

- who have a legal source of income;
- who have submitted a statement of renunciation of their former citizenship and received an expatriation permit from the state of their former citizenship, if is provided according to laws of that state, or received an attested document of renunciation (loss) of their former citizenship;
- who have pledged loyalty to the Republic of Latvia;
- to whom do not relate the restrictions of naturalization stated in the clause 11 of the Law on Citizenship.

Children permanently residing in Latvia and up to the age of 15 can become naturalized together with their parents.

The statement of renunciation of their former citizenship, an expatriation permit or document certifying the loss of citizenship has to be submitted by the person after the official announcement showing that there are no other obstacles in order to receive the Latvian citizenship.

The person received the Latvian citizenship cannot have double citizenship.

You can get acquainted with the Law on Citizenship (Pilsonības likums) on www.likumi.lv.

BRINGING IN THE PERSONAL BELONGINGS

To bring belongings of repatriate, who has emigrated from Latvia till May 4, 1990 or has born abroad, or has emigrated from Latvia after May 4, 1990 and within the moment of emigration has been under-age in the Republic of Latvia is not forbidden or restricted without imposing a customs tax or customs duty while crossing the border of the Republic of Latvia.

To bring in the personal belongings in case of changing the place of residence in one of states which is not in the European Union (further - EU) to a place of residence in one of EU member states:

Household objects (clothes, dishes, kitchen-ware, furniture, household electrical appliances etc.), bicycles and motorbikes, private mechanical vehicle and their trailers and living trailers, stocks of household goods for everyday needs of the family and pets shall be considered as the personal belongings. Purpose of bringing in the personal belongings in no case shall be considered as commercial.

The personal belongings shall be exempted from customs duty on imports, if the following terms are executed:

- person has **lived** in this state permanently **at least 12 months**;
- the person has **owned the property** in this country for **at least 6 months**.

There are some exceptional cases. Exemptions are not granted for alcoholic drinks, tobacco goods, commercial vehicles and goods for particular occupation or profession. It is important to remember that previously mentioned exceptions refer to the personal belongings, which is brought in within 12 months after the day when the corresponding person has founded a place of residence in the EU.

At the same time we inform that the personal belongings brought into the territory of EU shall be declared for customs procedure – for release into free circulation, and has to submit documents for the Customs that confirm persons permanent place of residence outside of the territory of EU at least 12 months and a notice that the person changes his/her place of residence to a permanent place of residence in the EU.

For further information: www.vid.gov.lv. State Revenue Service (VID) informative telephone **1898** (within the working hours of the State Revenue Service (VID)).

OLD-AGE PENSIONS

The repatriate has rights to receive pension in accordance with the Law "On State Pensions".

The rights to receive old-age pension are granted to women and men reaching age of 62 and at least 10 years of insurance period.

Premature pension can be requested till December 31, 2011 – two years before reaching the retirement age, ie. not earlier than at age of 60, if the insurance period is not shorter than 30 years.

Starting from the July 1, 2009 the delivery of pension to the place of person's residence is a payable service and right now it costs LVL 1. 22. *This pay is automatically deducted from the pension.* But there is an alternative for the person who opens an account in a credit institution or post in order to receive pension free of charge in their account in a credit institution or post.

Within the period from the July 1, 2009 till December 31, 2012 the payment of old-age pension is stated in a limited amount in accordance with the Law "On Payment of State Pension and State Benefits within the Period from the July 1, 2009 till December 31, 2012". Those pensioners, who are not obligatory socially insured persons (employees or self-employed) receive 90% of the granted pension amount, but those pensioners who are obligatory socially insured persons (employees or self-employed) receive 30% of the granted pension amount.

In order to request an old-age pension you have to go to any branch of the State Social Insurance Agency (VSAA).

For further information on old-age pensions see in www.vsa.gov.lv and www.lm.gov.lv.

In case if you have been socially insured in other member state of the European Union and an application for pension you are submitting in the department of State Social Insurance Agency (VSAA) you have to indicate labour period and to it equaled periods in other member state of the European Union. That corresponds also to the periods before the Latvia joined the European Union.

The Republic of Latvia has concluded contracts on the collaboration in a field of the social security with several countries:

- Contract on including the period of former USSR stored insurance of the governments of the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Estonia
- Contract on social security of the Republic of Latvia and Canada;

- Agreement on the collaboration in the sphere of social security between the governments of the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Lithuania;
- Agreement on the of social security benefit export and securing an allocation process of the Republic of Latvia and the Kingdom of Netherlands;
- Contract on social security of the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Finland;
- Contract on the collaboration in the sphere of social security of the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Ukraine.

More concrete information you can gain in the State Social Insurance Agency (VSAA).

TRAVEL

Travel abroad to a great extent is considered of the fact that Latvia is a member state of both the European Union, and the Schengen Agreement.

If you have received the permanent residence permit, you can travel to other member states of the Schengen Agreement (**Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Malta, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Italy, Iceland, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Finland, Spain, Switzerland, Germany and Sweden**) in the state of guest or tourist without a visa.

Exceptions is traveling to **Great Britain, Ireland and Cyprus** which are not the member states of the Schengen Agreement in order to travel to these countries for the citizens of third countries visa is requested.

Without visa you are eligible to travel as before to countries with whom your country of citizenship the visa free agreement has concluded.

According to a residence permit issued by Latvia you can stay up to 90 days within a half year in other Schengen Agreement member states.

The residence permit issued by Latvia does not allow employment in other member states of the European Union and the Schengen Agreement!

Latvian citizens can travel without a visa and to stay in the status of visitor or tourist in countries stated on the list, see the web site of the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs www.am.gov.lv. If you have any uncertainties regarding to travel conditions, get in touch with an embassy of the corresponding state.

Despite of the fact that Latvia joined the zone of Schengen Agreement member states and border control has been removed, while traveling to any of the Schengen Agreement member states you have to take along documents that are valid for traveling.

USEFUL ADDRESSES

Department of Migration Affairs of the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs

Čiekurkalna 1.līnija 1, k-3,
Rīga, LV-1026

Telephones: (+371) 67219259,
(+371) 67219586 or (+371) 67829797,
fax (+371) 67219448

E-mail: mn@pmlp.gov.lv
www.pmlp.gov.lv.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia

K.Valdemāra iela 3, Rīga, LV-1395

Telephone: (+371) 67016201,
fax: (+371) 67828121

E-mail: mfa.cha@mfa.gov.lv
www.am.gov.lv.

State Revenue Service, Customs Headquarters

11.novembra krastmala 17,
Rīga, LV-1841

Telephone: (+371) 67111222
SRS informative telephone: 1898
www.vid.gov.lv.

State Social Insurance Agency (VSAA)

E-mail address for consultations :konsultacijas@vsaa.lv
List, addresses and contact telephones of SSIA departments:
www.vsaa.lv/vsaa/content/?lng=lv&cat=727

Marta (support for women)

Brīvības iela 183/2-30, Rīga
Telephone: (+371) 67378539,
fax: (+371) 67378538
E-mail: centrs@marta.lv
www.marta.lv.

Latvian Red Cross

Skolas iela 1, Rīga, LV-1010
Telephone: (+371) 67336651,
fax: (+371) 67336652
E-mail: secretariat@redcross.lv
www.redcross.lv.

Dialogi.lv (promote tolerance)

Ģertrūdes iela 19/21 – 5, Rīga
Telephone/fax: (+371) 67270436
www.dialogi.lv

**Information on the overnight accommodations,
various activities in Latvia, tourism, a.o. things.**

www.visitlatvia.lv



