

Latvia

Report by

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State Authority on Museums in Latvia

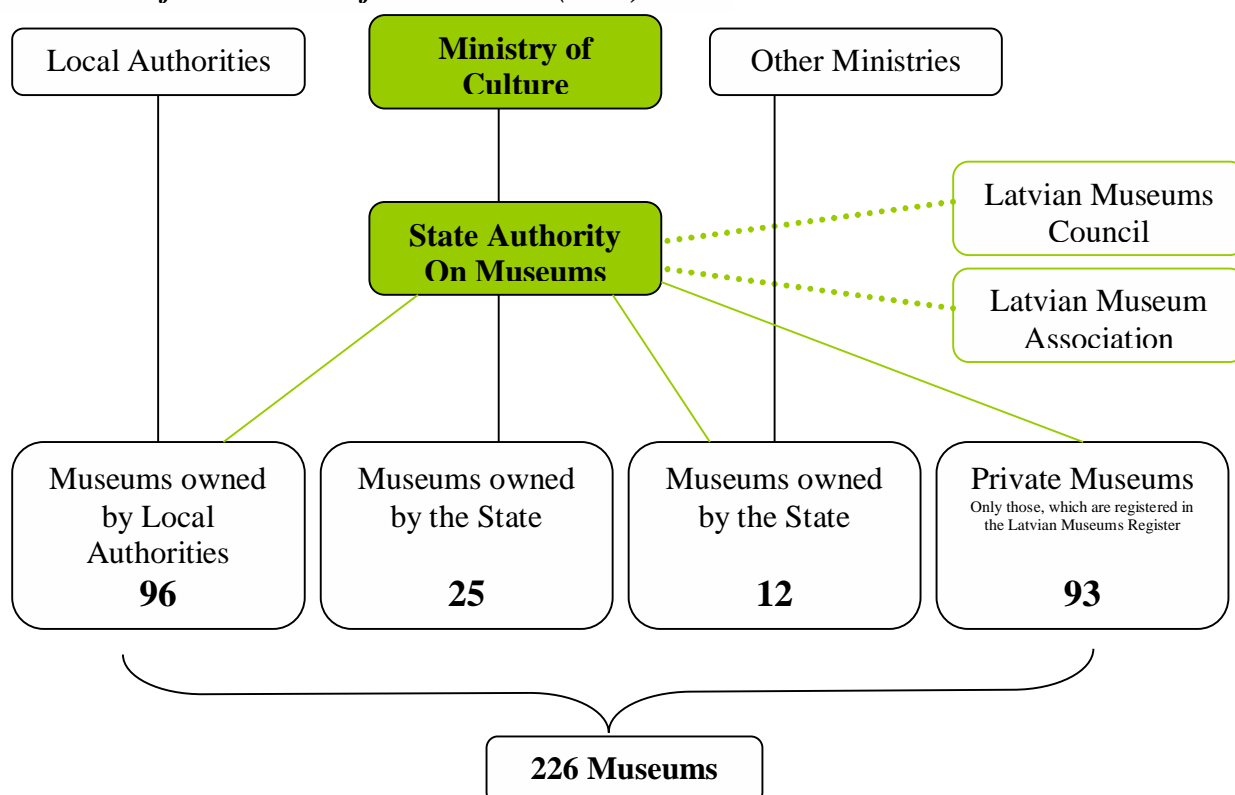
Introduction - Key Issues

The Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia compiles statistical information in the Republic of Latvia. Information about museum work held by the Bureau's archives reaches back to 1945. Information is collected in accordance with the Law on State Statistics. State and local authority museums are required to submit information, whilst private museums remain unmonitored. The Bureau regularly publishes compilations of this information in their yearbook.

In conformity with the Law on Museums, State Authority on Museums was established as a supervisory institution in 1998. The main tasks of the Authority are to develop, represent and supervise the state museum policy, as well as to foster and ensure professionalisation of the museums and museum staff members. Every year by virtue of the State Authority on Museums the state administrative work on the field of museums getting more coordinated. The State Authority on Museums collaborates with the Central Statistical Bureau in the compilation of statistical information, by providing information about changes in the museum network - the establishment of new museums and the abolishment of others, as well as coordinating the content of the survey form.

Statistical information is utilised by the State Authority on Museums in the preparation and publication of their Annual Public Report, in which the work of Latvian museums is evaluated. The Annual Report of the State Authority on Museums has become an essential component of analysis of the museum field. This allows institutions managing museums to analyse the performance individual museums in the context of the field. Statistical information is also used as a source of information in the process of museum accreditation, which began in Latvia in 1998.

Structure of the museums field in Latvia (2002)



Definition of Museum

Latvia's Law on Museums includes the following definition of museums:

“A museum is an institution of education and research that is accessible to the public, whose task is to collect, preserve, research and popularise national, spiritual and material cultural values and to encourage their utilisation in the education and development of society.” (The Law on Museums. Article 3)

Existence of Museum- related Laws

The Law on Museums was passed by the Saeima (Parliament of the Republic of Latvia) on 18 June 1997. The Law on Museums outlines the relationship between the state and community in the field of museums. The Law determines also the structure of the Latvian museum system and its sources of funding.

To ensure museum work that is of high quality, professional and relevant to society, the Law on Museums requires periodic accreditation for state and local authority museums. Accreditation is a prerequisite for private museums to receive state funding. Museum accreditation is prescribed in the Regulations on Museum Accreditation (1998) issued by the Ministry Cabinet (Government, the highest executive body of the country). The accreditation of museums began in January 1999.

All of the cultural historical valuables held in national and local authority museums combined form the National Museum Holdings, which is the wealth of the nation and is under the protection of the estate. Management of the holdings is regulated by the Ministry Cabinet Regulations about the National Holdings (1998).

Furthermore the Law on Museums states that accredited museums, irrespective of their type, can receive state funding for the guarantee of their work. The Ministry Cabinet regulations prescribe also the procedure by which the Ministry of Culture awards accredited museum of the Latvian Republic especially assigned resources from the state budget, particularly in relation to the accomplishment of projects and programmes of national significance in the fields of cultural history, art and other fields (1998). The work focuses of the National Program Culture provide criteria that allow the identification of programmes and projects of national significance. The Law on Museums also determines that museums should prioritise the management and conservation of museum collections over any other aspect of their varied functions.

The State Authority on Museums was established in 1998 and Ministry Cabinet regulations related to the Law on Museums were issued. The State Authority on Museums was formed for the supervision of the museum system, after the ratification of the Law on Museums. The work of this civil institution is determined by a Ministry Cabinet regulation regarding the functioning of the authority. In the sphere of responsibility of the State Authority are all state and local authority museums, independent of where they are located or their legal jurisdiction. This allows for an overview of the entire field and means that specialists in museology are not required on the staff of other ministries or local authorities under which museums exist. This contributes to cost-effective management of other ministries.

The Law on Museums ensures the professionalism and democracy of the branch authority through the public advisory body, the Latvian Museums Council. Museums as well as community representatives are represented in the council; the Ministry Cabinet ratifies the membership. The council offers opinions about the most vital questions related to the field: politics, the National Museum Holdings, museum accreditation, funding and other questions.

Categories used regarding Type of Collection

There are currently no overarching categories used in the classification of museum collections - each museum defines their own categories according to the themes of their collection and their own traditions. The *Law on Museums* envisages a joint database - the development of a National Museum Holdings Joint Catalogue. This will include information about state and local authority museum collections. It is also envisaged that a classification system for museum collections will be developed within the framework of the joint catalogue. This system will be coordinated with information relating to the classification of archive and library collections, as far as is practicable. Until now (as of 2003) the work on the catalogue proceeds slowly because of deficient means of financing.

Categories used regarding Type of Ownership

The *Law on Museums* classifies Latvian museums according to their type of ownership.

State funded museums receive funding from the state budget and operate under the jurisdiction of Ministries (as of 2003): Ministry of Culture - 25; Ministry of Social Welfare - 4; Ministry of Education and Science - 1; Ministry of the Interior - 1; Ministry of Agriculture - 3; Ministry of Traffic - 1; Ministry of Defence - 1; Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development - 1. The largest portion of state museums is affiliated with the Ministry of Culture, mainly cultural history and art museums. The other state museums are related through their content to a specific theme and are administered by the corresponding ministry, in this way ensuring the opportunity to respond to the needs of the groups of people most interested in the work of the museums, and in order to implement the principle of decentralization of institutions. The State Authority on Museums is responsible for the operation of the decentralised museum system, through overseeing and coordinating all museums.

Local authority museums operate at various levels of local government (regional city, civil parish) and are dependent on finances from the budgets of governing bodies of regional, city or civil parishes. The establishment of new museums in Latvian regional centres was completed in the mid 1980s - each regional centre has a museum whose work encompasses the whole territory of the region. These museums have a local history specialisation, although they often also include and art gallery component.

All other museums that have not received funding from the budgets of the state or local authorities, according to the *Law on Museums*, are **private** museums and they are maintained by both legal and physical entities. The network of private museums is multifaceted and wide; these are financed by the founders of the museums, who are either legal entities or individuals.

Existing Data - Basic Figures and Diagrams

Statistical information from state and local authority museums is compiled regularly - **annually**. This allows the analysis of the dynamics of work in the field. Currently state and local authority museums submit information to the Central Statistical Bureau regarding:

The Museum collection: the total number of collection items; data relating to the review period: the number of items collected; the number of items that have undergone conservation or restoration work; the number of items that have been scientifically documented; the number of items that have been displayed; the number of items that have been used in the educational work of the museum.

Exhibition work: the total number; exhibitions outside the museum; permanent exhibitions.

Visitor numbers: the total number of visitors; excursions; lectures; events.

Scientific work: lectures, monographs, catalogues, guides, display and exhibition plans.

Museum area and employees: territory; area of floor space; number of employees; specialists with tertiary education.

Income: from the state budget; from the local authority budget; other income.

Expenditure: wages; utility payments; security; renovations; other expenditure.

Figure 1 *Main Data on Latvian Museums 1998 - 2002*

		2002	2001	2000	1999	1998
Number of museums	State museums	37	38	40	40	39
	Local Authority museums	96	104	93	91	81
Collection items	State museums	3 095 420	3 091 527	3 073 289	3 037 129	3 006 883
	Local Authority museums	1 851 355	1 811 608	1 752 814	1 702 328	1 646 364
Exhibitions	State museums	367	324	359	345	391
	Local Authority museums	927	932	848	889	912
Visitors	State museums	944 268	951 277	922 298	945 151	923 632
	Local Authority museums	627 651	582 624	559 550	568 311	520 056
Guided tours	State museums	9 825	10 409	10 253	10 086	13 725
	Local Authority museums	10 435	10 315	10 128	11 278	12 659
Personnel	State museums	1 142	1 158	1 152	1 246	1 229
	Local Authority museums	618	595	583	602	598
Budget (LVL) 1 EUR = -0,652 LVL	State museums	4 727 458	3 725 642	4 602 969	3 949 328	3 404 428
	Local Authority museums	2 566 860	2 207 691	2 219 071	1 977 911	1 723 908

List of References

Ministry of Culture www.km.gov.lv

State Authority on Museums www.km.gov.lv/Museums

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Cultural Capital Foundation www.kkf.lv

Latvian Museum Association www.muzeji.lv

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