

LATVIA

Report by

Janis Garjans, Anita Jirgensone

Division of Museums and Visual Art of Ministry of Culture of Latvia

Introduction – Key issues

In order to know better the situation of culture in Latvia and to make this information available for everybody, since 2008 the Ministry of Culture has been running a project of cultural mapping. The project “The Latvian Digital Map of Culture” (LDMC) is a cross-sectoral project to create a comprehensive database of cultural statistics where detailed information about cultural institutions, conditions of cultural infrastructure, the overlay and accessibility of institutions as well as information about cultural activities and development trends in all regions of Latvia can be obtained. The aim of the project is the following:

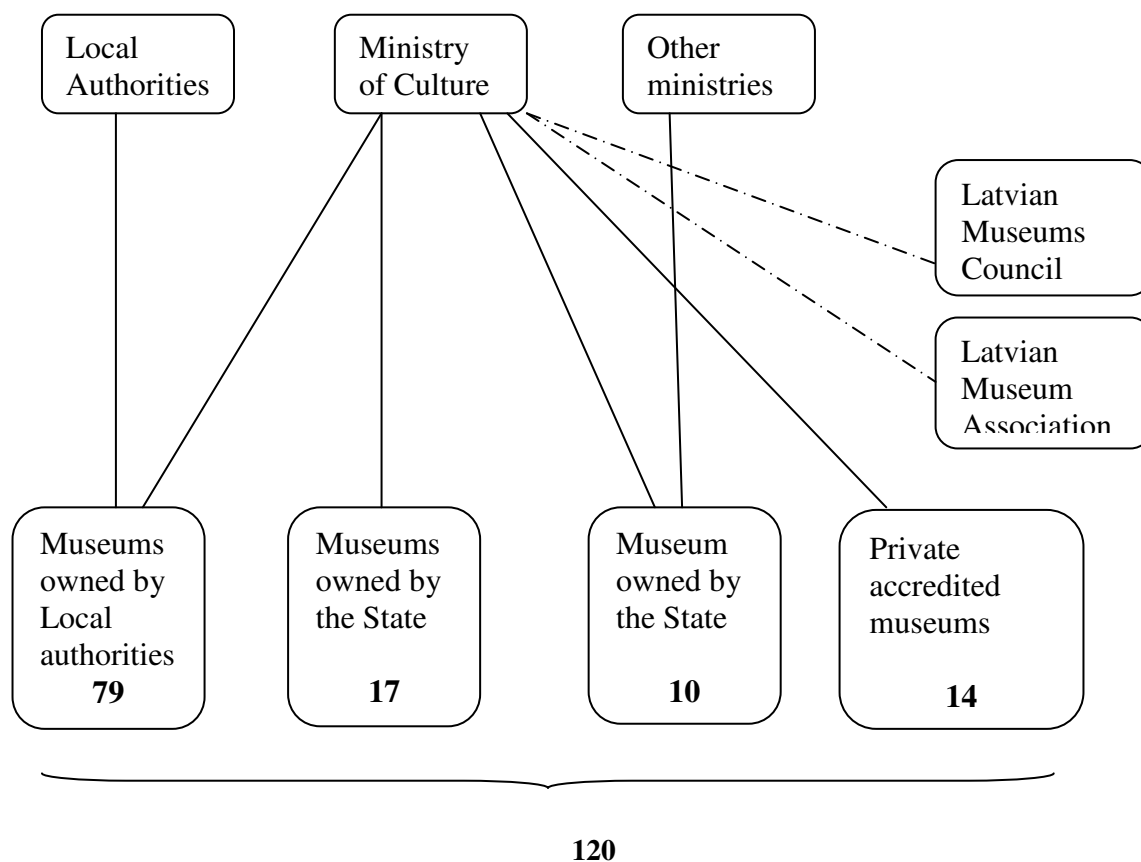
- 1) To offer comprehensive insight in processes of culture
- 2) To ensure opportunity for qualitative analysis of changes in development of the sector, for comparison of statistics of different sectors, and analysis of the sector in context of other sectors.

At the moment, the LDMC www.kulturaskarte.lv consists of the following systems:

- 1) Portal – it is a public part of the project with a map, showing the overlap of cultural institutions by administrative territories and the way, how to reach the place. Each institution has its own “profile” with contact information, short description, and information on current activities, offer, and some statistic information about activities of the previous year. Since 2009 all the statistic data of museum branch is being gathered in LDMC.
- 2) Information system – database of inner system with wide range of statistic material. Most part of this information is not available for the public and it is being used only as summary for developing different statements.
- 3) Decision support system – a tool of data analysis in different sections.

Gathering of statistics in the country is determined by the Law of Statistics. Its implementation is regulated by Regulations issued by the Cabinet of Ministers (Cabinet regulations No. 1074 “Regulations on Gathering National Statistics on Culture”). Therefore, LDMC serves as a mechanism for gathering statistics of national culture and a source of information.

Structure of the museums field in Latvia (2011)



Definition of museum

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

“A museum is an educational and research institution available to the public, the task which is to collect, preserve and communicate natural, tangible and intangible cultural values in the society pursuant to the specificity of operation of the museum, as well as to promote usage thereof for education and development of the society.” (*The Law on Museums*. Section 7 (1))

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 last edition adopted in 1 January 2010. 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 Regarding Accreditation of Museums (2006) issued by the 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 make a combined form of the National Museum Holdings, which is the wealth of the nation and is under the protection of the state. Management of the Holdings is regulated by the Cabinet Regulations Regarding the National Holdings of Museums (2006).

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 Council offers opinions about the most vital issues related to the field: politics, the National Museum Holdings, museum accreditation, funding and other issues.

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.

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 January 2011): Ministry of Culture - 17; Ministry of Health - 4; Ministry of Education and Science - 1; Ministry of the Interior - 1; Ministry of Agriculture - 2; Ministry of Defence - 1; Ministry of Environmental Protection - 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 Ministry of Culture 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 (region, regional city, area) and are dependent on finances from the budgets of governing bodies of regional, city or area. These museums have a local history specialization, although they often also include an art gallery component. Administrative territorial reform was finished in 2009. The objective of the administrative territorial reform was to establish administrative territories – local governments that have high economic growth potential, and are capable of providing high quality services to the inhabitants. Instead of 26 district councils and 522 local governments now there are the following administrative units in Latvia: 9 cities and 109 municipalities. Due to these changes in many cases subjection of museums also has been changed.

All other museums that have not received funding from the budgets of the state or local authorities 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

LDMC comprises the following information on museums (public data is underlined):

- 1) Basic information (address, legal status, mission, accreditation)
- 2) Working hours
- 3) Offer (free of charge and paid services)
- 4) Documentation (normative documentation)
- 5) Collections (amount, accession during the reporting period, purchases, removal from the collections, financial assessment, digital inventory of the collections, usage of the collections)
- 6) Scientific work (papers, monographs, catalogues, guides, exhibition plans, out of them published)
- 7) Communication (number of visits, number of temporary/permanent exhibitions, number of guided tours, number of educational programs, international collaboration, home page)
- 8) Infrastructure (buildings, territory)
- 9) Information technology (number and usage of computers)
- 10) Staff
- 11) Financial indices
- 12) Multimedia

Figure 1 Main Data on Latvian Museums*

Number of museums		2006	2007	2008
	State museums	36	36	36
	Local Authority museums	84	83	83
Collections				
	State museums	3 240 513	3 267 244	3 324 301

	Local Authority museums	2 009 723	2 051 804	2 105 005
Exhibitions¹				
	State museums	409	432	424
	Local Authority museums	1 017	991	1033
Visits				
	State museums	1 257 867	1 469 125	1 533 757
	Local Authority museums	734 753	702 960	792 626
Educational activities²				
	State museums	14 150	15 468	14 417
	Local Authority museums	16 242	12 843	13 917
Personnel				
	State museums	1 235	1 311	1 321
	Local Authority museums	670	701	727
Budget (LVL)				
	State museums	8 152 890	13 902 853	15 172 848
	Local Authority museums	4 627 454	5 455 692	6 704 274

- Due to introducing the new system for gathering statistics – the Latvian Digital Map of Culture – summarizing of the data is still in the process, therefore general data on 2009 is not available, yet.

List of References

Ministry of Culture www.km.gov.lv

Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia www.csb.lv

Cultural Capital Foundation www.kkf.lv

Latvian Museum Society www.muzeji.lv

National programme “Culture” 2000 – 2010, Sub-programme “Museums”, Riga 2001

¹ Exhibitions include temporary exhibitions displayed inside and outside the museum.

² Educational activities include: Museum pedagogical programs, Museum guided tours, Museum lectures and Museum events.