

Circular economy country profile 2024 – Latvia



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Introduction

The European Commission requested the EEA to produce EU country profiles that offer an updated view of the following elements:

- what circular economy policies are being implemented at a national level with a particular focus on elements that go beyond EU mandatory elements, and
- what are best practices with a focus on policy innovation.

With the EU Circular Economy Action Plan (CEAP 2020) "the Commission [...] encourages Member States to adopt or update their national circular economy strategies, plans and measures in the light of its ambition".

These country profiles originate in the work leading to the EEA More from less report (2016)¹, that presented an overview of approaches to material resource efficiency and to circular economy in thirty-two European countries. The More from Less report was followed by the 2019 EEA Report 'Resource efficiency and the circular economy in Europe 2019 – even more from less: An overview of the policies, approaches and targets of 32 European countries'².

It presented an updated and extended assessment of approaches and identified trends, similarities and new directions taken by countries in the connected policy areas of resource efficiency and the circular economy.

These reports, comprising a compilation of extensive survey responses from countries, were accompanied by 32 country profiles.

In the second quarter of 2022 a new survey with questions and guidelines was launched. Based on information reported by the Eionet network, in particular, the Eionet Group on Circular Economy and Resource Use, and after review and editing by the European Topic Centre on Circular economy and resource use (ETC CE), the 30 2022 Circular Economy country profiles³ were published alongside the EEA report 'Circular Economy policy innovation and good practice in Member States'⁴ (2022).

These 2024 Circular Economy country profiles are an update of the 2022 ones and based on the responses of 29 countries to the survey questions and guidelines that were launched in March 2024. The information in the countries' responses was again reviewed and edited by the European Topic Centre on Circular economy and resource use. A selection of Eurostat data was made to further complement these country profiles.

The main objectives of these assessments and its updates are to: • stimulate exchange of information and share good practice examples among country experts; • support policymakers in Eionet countries, the European institutions and international organisations by providing an updated catalogue of circular economy actions being undertaken in European countries.

This circular economy country profile is based on information reported by the Eionet network and, in particular, the Eionet Group members on Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy in the second quarter of 2024. Proposals for the further development or amendment of policies represent the view of the reporting country. For Latvia, all input was provided by the Ministry of Climate and Energy of Latvia. The information was reviewed and edited by the European Topic Centre on Circular economy and resource use. A selection of Eurostat data was made to further complement this country profile.

¹ [More from less — material resource efficiency in Europe — European Environment Agency \(europa.eu\)](https://www.euro.peco.eu/en/more-from-less-material-resource-efficiency-in-europe)


² [Resource efficiency and the circular economy in Europe 2019 — European Environment Agency \(europa.eu\)](https://www.euro.peco.eu/en/resource-efficiency-and-the-circular-economy-in-europe-2019)

³ [Country profiles on Circular Economy in Europe — Eionet Portal \(europa.eu\)](https://www.eionet.europa.eu/portal/en/circular-economy/country-profiles)

⁴ [draft-report-for-dg-env_final.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

The information is current as of September 2024, when members of Eionet verified the content of this profile.

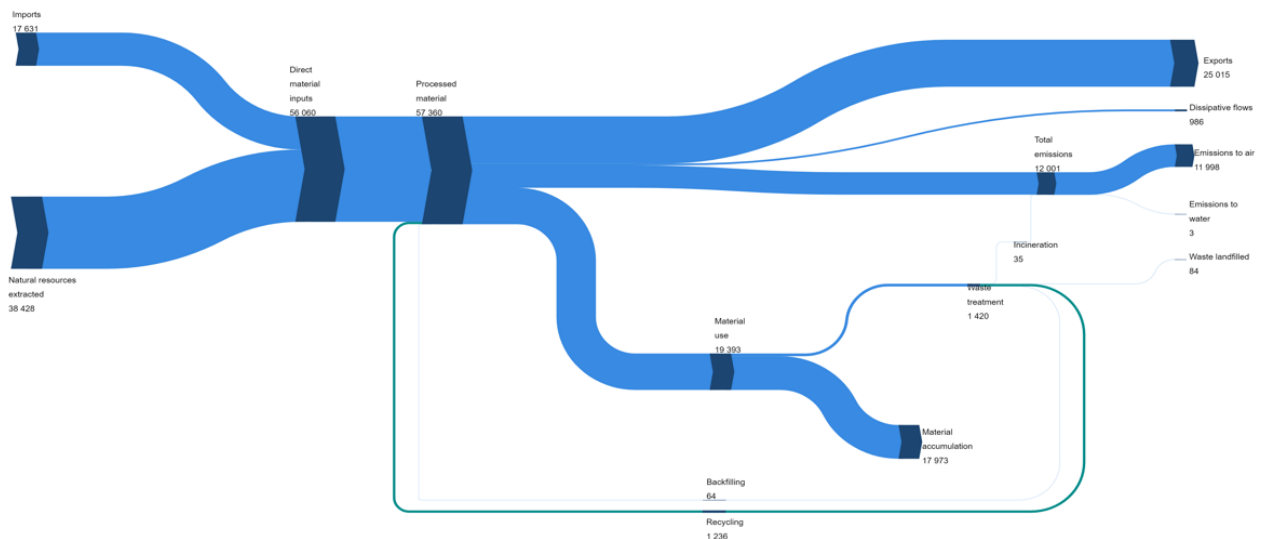
Latvia – facts and figures

	GDP: EUR 40.3 billion (0.2 % of EU27 total in 2023)
	GDP per person: EUR 21,440 (purchasing power standard) (70.4 % of EU27 (from 2020) total per person)
	Use of materials (domestic material consumption (DMC)) 30.6 million tonnes DMC (0.5 % of EU27 total in 2022) 16.3 tonnes DMC/person (114.3 % of EU27 average per person in 2022)
	Structure of the economy (2023): Agriculture: 4.7 % Industry: 23.7 % Services: 71.5 %
	Employment in circular sectors: 24,105 people employed in CE sectors (0.6 % of EU total in 2021) People employed expressed as a percentage of total employment: 2.8 % (compared to 2.1 % for EU average in 2021)
Surface area: 64,573 square kilometres (1.5 % of EU27 total)	
Population: 1,883,008 (0.4 % of EU27 total in 2023)	

Note: all definitions and metadata used in this profile are taken, as shown, from Eurostat

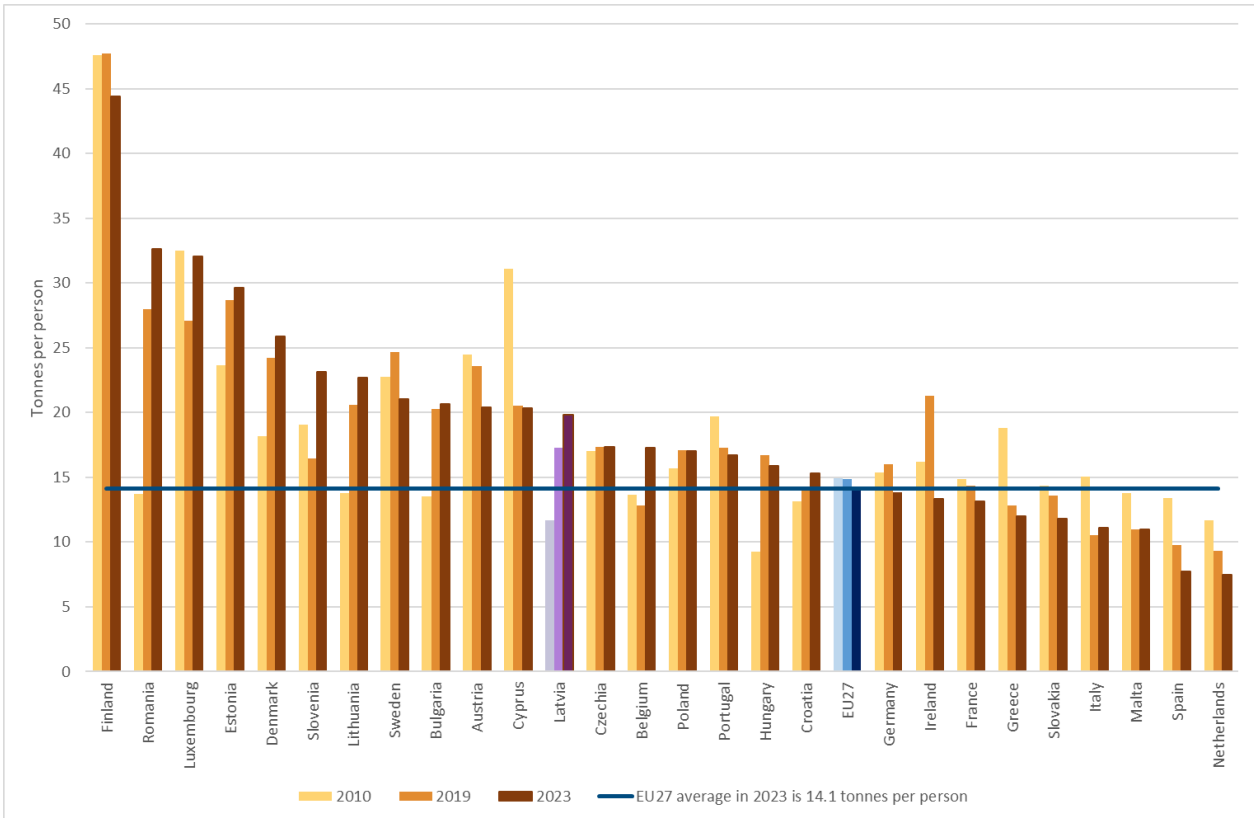
Source: Eurostat datasets, EU27 2021 EU27 2022 and EU27 2023 (accessed 21 August 2024)

Figure 1 Material flow diagram for Latvia in 2022, thousand tonnes



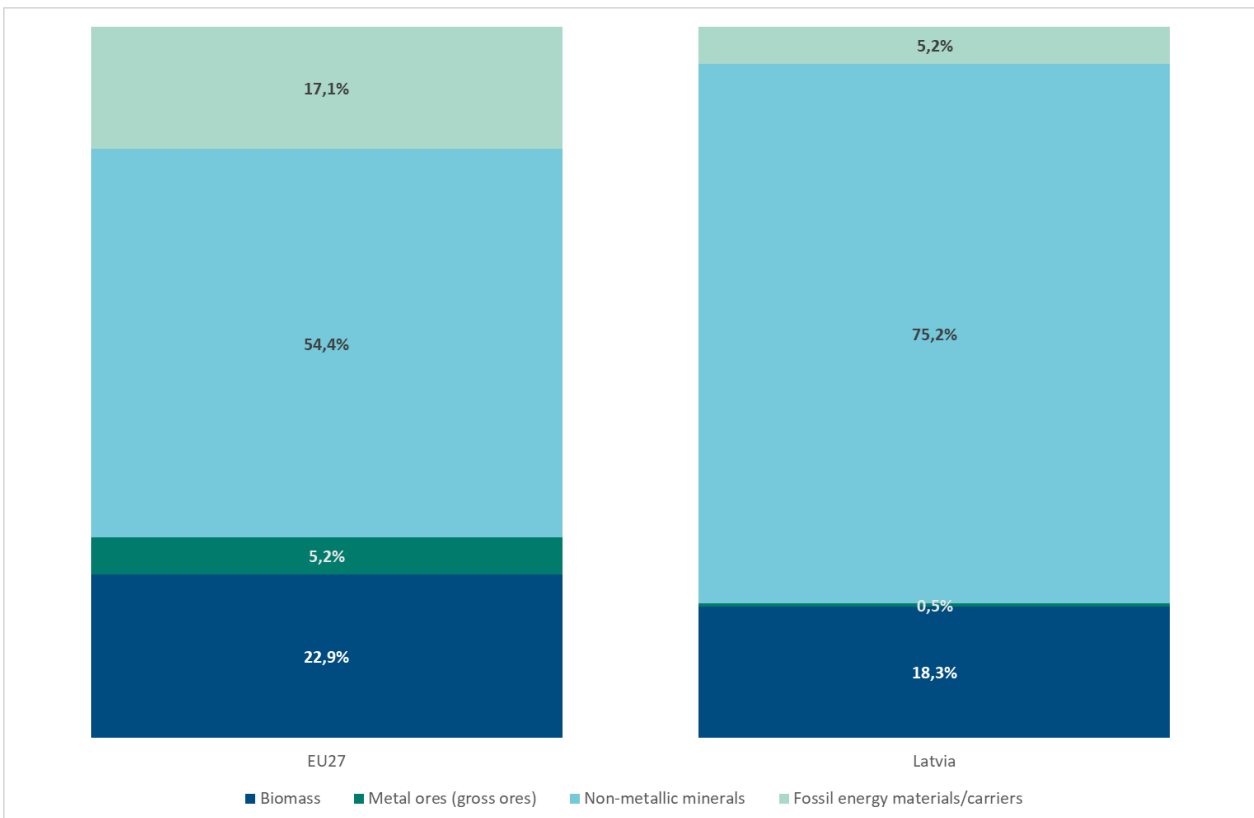
Source: Eurostat (2024) [env_ac_mfa], [en_ac_sd], [env_wassd] (accessed 21 August 2024)

Figure 2 Material footprint (raw material consumption), 2010,2019 and 2023, tonnes per person



Source: Eurostat (2024) [env_ac_rme] (accessed 21 August 2024)

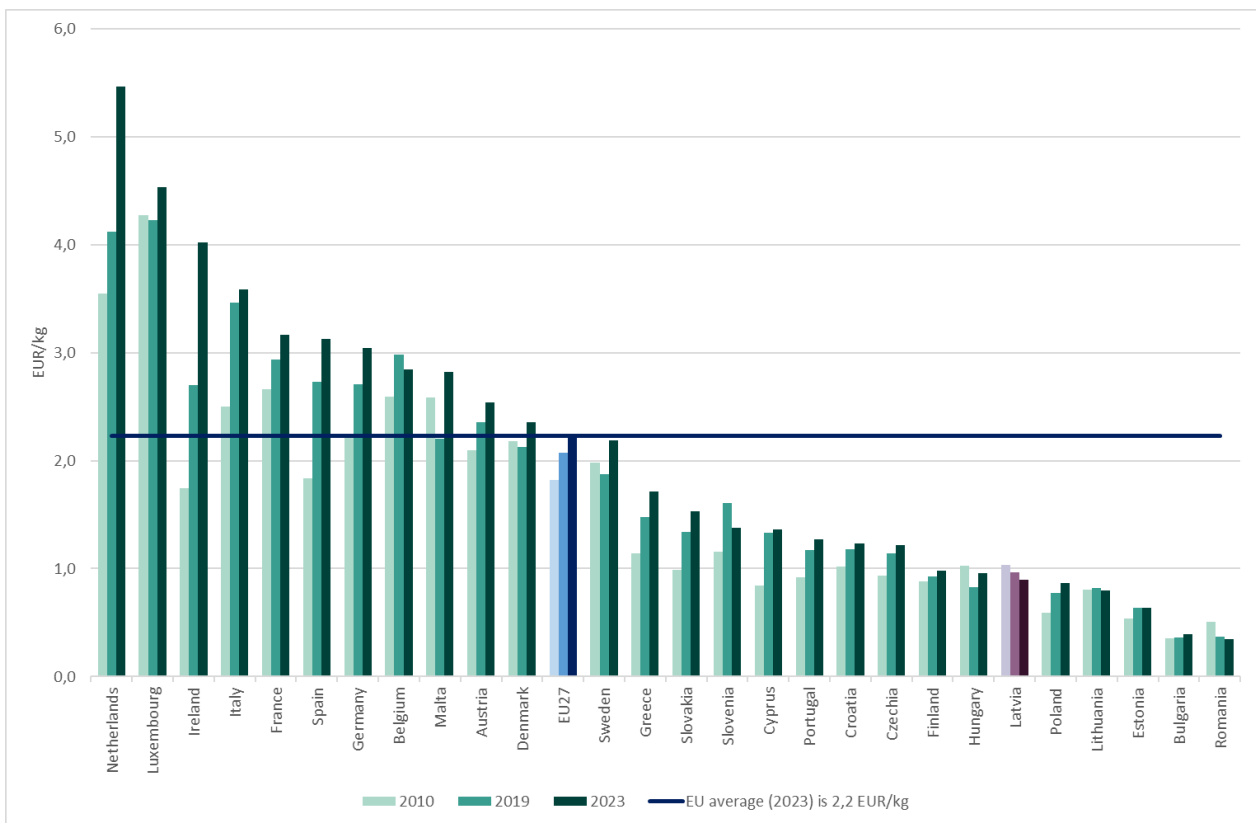
Figure 3 Domestic material consumption by selected material category, EU and Latvia, 2023, per cent



Note: totals may not sum to 100 % due to rounding

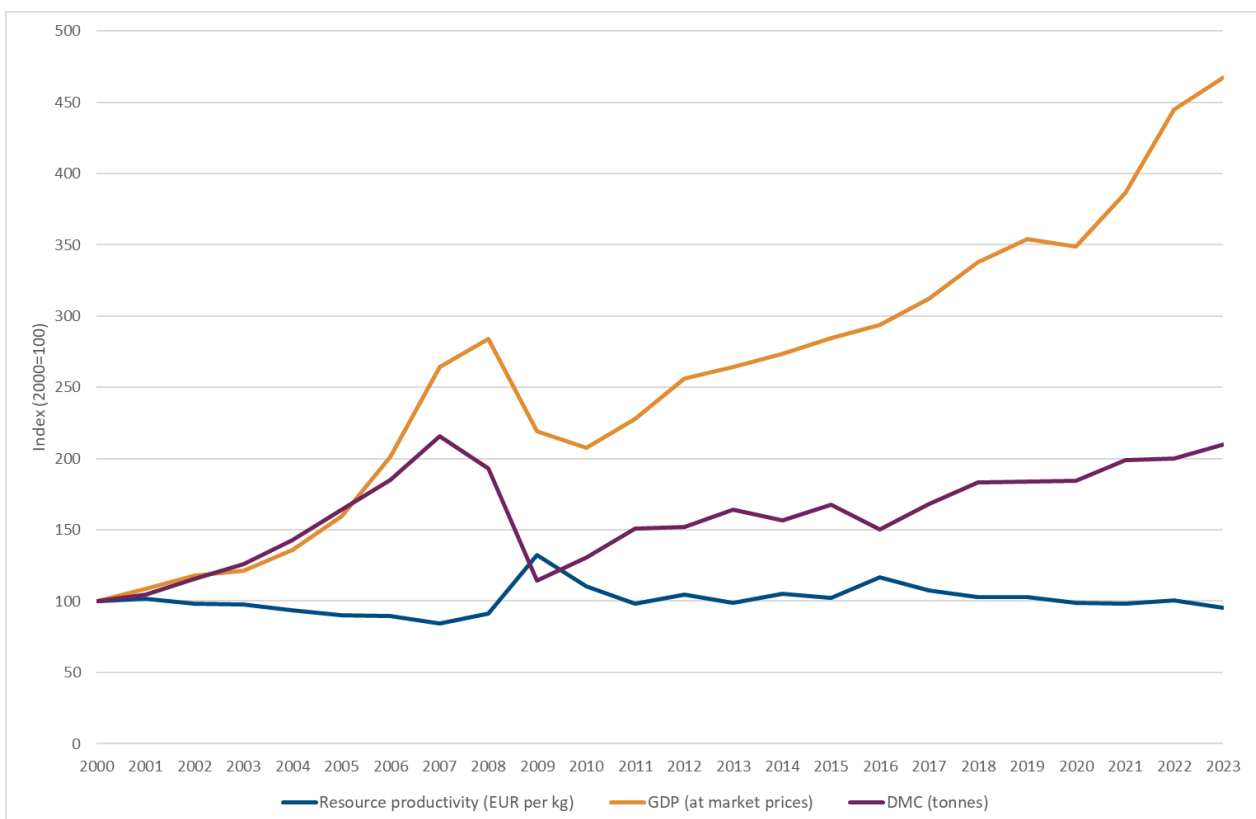
Source: Eurostat (2024) [env_ac_mfa] (accessed 21 August 2024)

Figure 4 Resource productivity (gross domestic product/domestic material consumption), EU27, 2010, 2019 and 2023, EUR per kilogramme



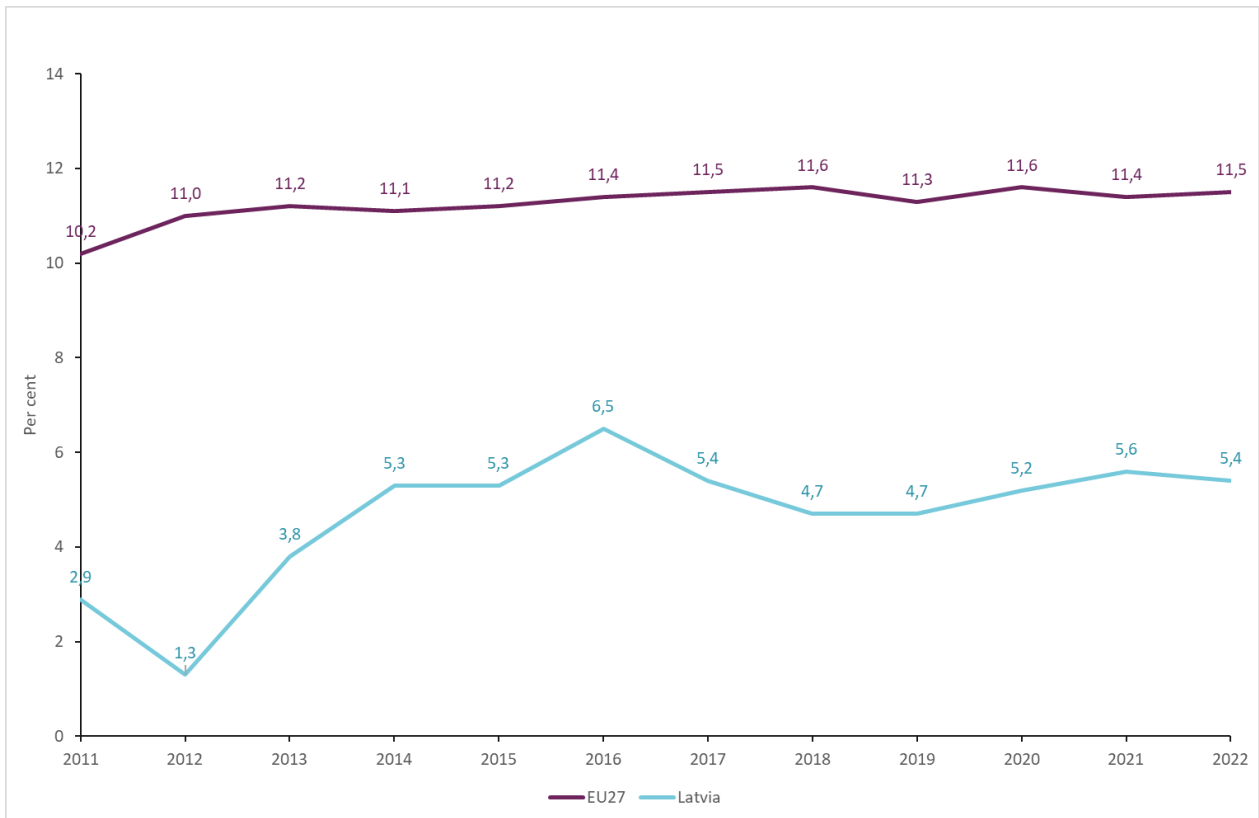
Source: Eurostat (2024) [env_ac_rp] (accessed 21 August 2024)

Figure 5 Gross domestic product, domestic material consumption and resource productivity trends, Latvia, 2000–2023, index (2000=100)



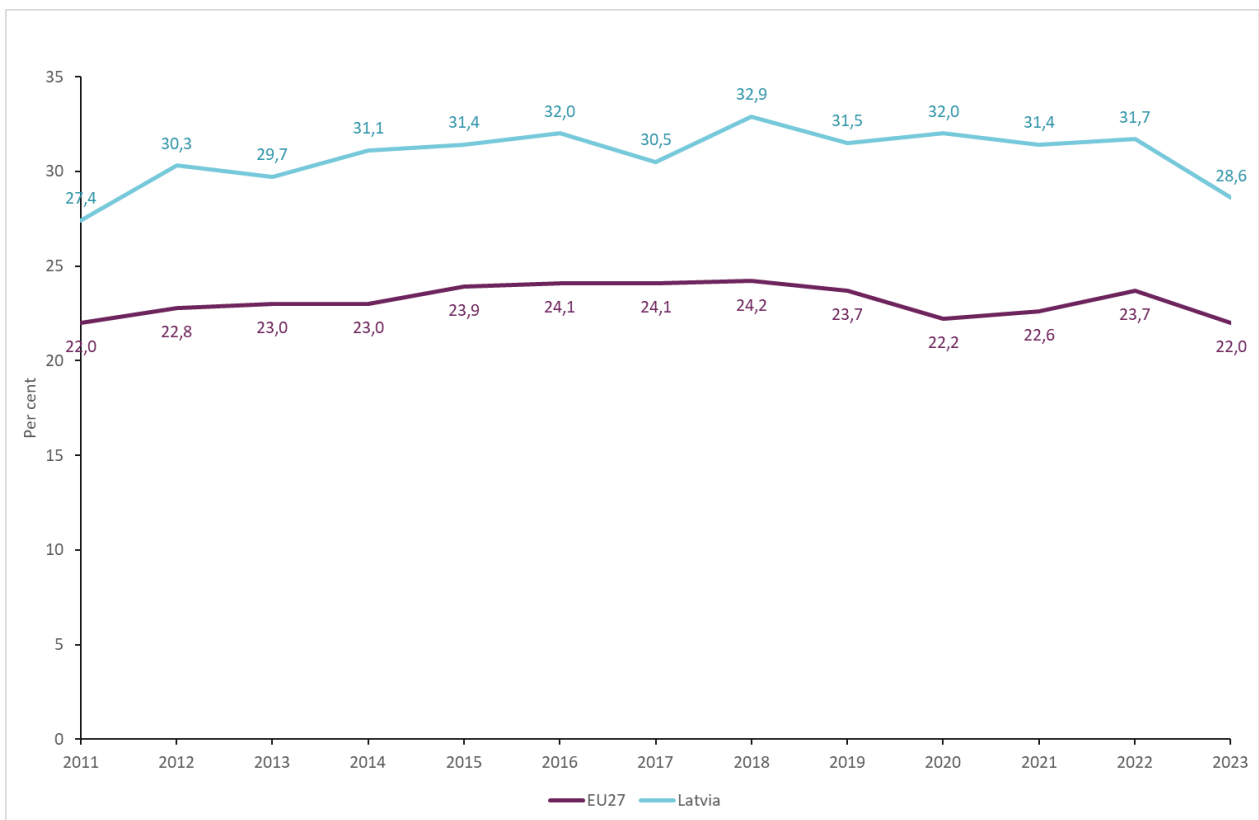
Source: Eurostat (2024) [env_ac_mfa], [env_ac_rp] & [nama_10_gdp] (accessed 21 August 2024)

Figure 6 Circular material use rate in Latvia, 2011–2022, per cent



Source: Eurostat (2024) [env_ac_cur] (accessed 21 August 2024)

Figure 7 Material import dependency in Latvia, 2011-2023, per cent



Source: Eurostat (2024) [cei_gsr030] (accessed 21 August 2024)

Existing policy framework

Dedicated national and/or regional and/or local strategy, roadmap or action plan for circular economy

Latvia's Circular Economy strategy adopted in 2020 is still in force. The document titled '**Action Plan for the Transition to a Circular Economy 2020-2027**'⁵ (hereafter - Action Plan) remains effective. Since 2022, several significant amendments and additions to regulatory acts related to the Action Plan have been made in Latvia to promote various aspects of circular economy. These include an appropriate separate collection of textiles and organic waste, as well as initiatives to promote the reuse of organic/biodegradable waste. An Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) system has also been introduced for tobacco products with filters. Furthermore, by December 31, 2024, EPR will also be applied to other types of plastic-containing products, such as moist wipes, balloons, fishing gear, and their waste. Since 2022, when the deposit system for beverage packaging came into effect, which ensures significant collection of the volume placed on the market, promoting recycling and reuse, the amount of plastic entering the environment has also significantly decreased. Evaluations of waste load have been carried out in 17 coastal locations, aiming to measure the impact of the deposit system on the reduction of waste left in nature, particularly for waste fractions that should be returned through the deposit system. The obtained data indicates that the introduction of the deposit system has significantly reduced environmental littering. Since the introduction of the deposit system, a reduction has also been observed in other waste fractions related to the deposit system along the coast, such as plastic and metal bottle caps, securing rings, and pieces of glass.

Currently, there are no complete 'circular cities' or 'possibly zero-waste cities' in Latvia. However, there are individual small community groups that practice or strive for a zero-waste lifestyle in their daily lives.

Circular economy policy elements included in other policies

Circular economy policy element	Included in policy
Improvement of waste and material flow accounting at the level of businesses, municipalities, and the state, using statistics for informed policy-making	Law on the Reduction of Consumption of Products Containing Plastic Since the beginning of 2022, manufacturers have been obliged to collect data on the quantity of disposable plastic-containing products or plastic-containing fishing gear launched on the market, the content of recycled plastic in specified beverage packaging, and the quantity of filters intended for use with tobacco products sold together with tobacco products per unit weight.
Improvement of material flow and process management in priority sectors: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• wood and wood-based materials in construction;• public attitudes to food consumption;• development of a food accounting system;• development of a food redistribution system;• strategies for sewage sludge management and recycling;• reduction of textile waste;• reduction of furniture waste	Cabinet of Ministry Regulation No. 712 of October 26, 2021, "Regulations Regarding Separate Collection of Waste, Preparation of Waste for Re-use, Recycling of Waste, and Material Recovery" Section 3.2 and 3.3 Implementation of separate collection systems for textile materials and organic waste
Improvement of material flow and process management in priority sectors	Natural Resource Tax Law

⁵ <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/317168-par-ricibas-planu-parejai-uz-aprites-ekonomiku-20202027-gadam> (in Latvian)

	To reduce the use of plastic packaging and single-use tableware and utensils, the natural resource tax has been increased since 2024.
Strengthening the role of municipalities in implementing Circular Economy principles.	Guidelines for sustainable utilization of construction waste for both private and public sectors (in Latvian)
Promotion of the transition from purchasing goods to using services: Implementation of green public procurement in various sectors, including food and catering services	Cabinet of Ministry Regulation No. 353 of June 20, 2017 , "Requirements for Green Public Procurement and Procedure for their Application" Guidelines for Green Public Procurement for Food and Catering Services (in Latvian)
Promotion of the transition from purchasing goods to using services: Regulations for the recycling of biodegradable waste as secondary materials.	Cabinet of Ministry Regulation No. 571 of September 13, 2022 , "Procedure for ceasing to apply the waste status to material obtained from biodegradable waste" (in Latvian)
Promotion of the transition from purchasing goods to using services: EPR system has been established for single-use plastic-containing tobacco products	Cabinet of Ministry Regulation No. 781 of December 13, 2022 , "Regulations on the establishment and application of the extended producer responsibility system for plastic-containing products". (in Latvian)
Transition from waste management to resource management Reduction of GHG emissions by appropriate management of waste.	Cabinet of Ministry order No. 46 "National Energy and Climate Plan for 2021-2030" (in Latvian)

Monitoring and targets

Assessment of circular economy performance

The European Commission has set up a [monitoring framework](#) to keep track of progress towards a circular economy. This framework provides a holistic view as it:

- measures direct and indirect benefits of 'becoming circular' and
- values the contribution of a circular economy in living well within the limits of the planet
- addresses energy and material supply risks.

It consists of **5 thematic sections** with a total of **11 statistical indicators**, some of which have additional sub-indicators. In some cases, policy targets exist which should be achieved in the future, and the indicators monitor progress towards these targets. The current monitoring framework is a revision of the original framework which was set up in 2018.

This section elaborates on the assessment of Latvia's progress in terms of observed trends over the last 5 years and what country characteristics or policy actions may explain differences between the country its performance and the average EU performance.

The Latvian Action Plan for the Transition to a Circular Economy 2020 implemented indicators to characterize the circular economy concerning:

- Material flows;
- Trade with secondary materials;
- Investment in recycling to meet material demand;
- Management of specific waste streams (e.g., recycling rate of overall packaging, recycling rate of WEEE separately collected, etc.).

The above-mentioned aspects are primarily monitored based on the Eurostat Circular Economy Monitoring framework data like the Circular Material Use Rate, material footprint or resource efficiency (GDP/DMC). It should be noted that the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, in collaboration with other institutions involved in the implementation of the Circular Economy Action Plan, is required to prepare and submit an informative report on the implementation of the Action Plan to the Cabinet of Ministers by January 1, 2029, according to the prescribed procedure.

In addition, in Latvia the volume of unsorted municipal waste collected and accepted at landfills decreases every year, and since 2018, there has been a significant increase in the volume of municipal waste recycled compared to the total volume of municipal waste collected (based on Eurostat data).

Circular economy monitoring frameworks and their indicators beyond the ones from Eurostat

Currently, Latvia is using Eurostat Circular Economy Monitoring framework data mainly.

Circular economy targets

The Latvian Action Plan sets the following targets:

- to increase material circularity to 11%
- increase resource productivity to 1.55 euro/kg by 2027.

Since 2022, Latvia has been implementing measures and actions outlined in the Action Plan to achieve the objectives of the Circular Economy, aiming for sustainable environmental development and move towards the targets set.

Innovative approaches and good practices

Examples of public policy initiatives (national, regional or local)

- ➔ *Good practice example: Taxation and economic instruments to encourage investment in the Circular Economy*

Deposit system for beverage packaging

The deposit system for beverage packaging, implemented by Cabinet of Ministry Regulation No. 519 of August 11, 2020, "Regulations on the Operation of the Deposit System"⁶, ensures significant collection of the volume placed on the market, promoting recycling and reuse, and the amount of plastic entering the environment has also significantly decreased.

- ➔ *Good practice example: Financial support programmes targeting Circular Economy*

LIFE integrated project 'Waste to Resources Latvia - Boosting Regional Sustainability and Circularity'

Since 2022, within the framework of the LIFE integrated project 'Waste to Resources Latvia - Boosting Regional Sustainability and Circularity'⁷ several best practice initiatives have been implemented.

Within this project, several action directions of the Action Plan are being implemented, such as reducing overall consumption, promoting secondary materials and their market, appropriate waste management,

⁶ <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/316731-regulations-regarding-the-operation-of-the-deposit-system>

⁷ <https://wastetoresources.varam.gov.lv/en/about-us>

and recycling. During this reporting period of the project, several best practice examples have been implemented and websites have been created.

To promote the development of the circular economy and sustainability, significant importance is placed on exchanging experiences with countries that are ahead and can provide examples of best practices. Within the framework of the LIFE integrated project, such experience has been gained, for example, by participating in the final seminar of the **Circwaste project** in Finland on October 26, 2023, and visiting the Kierrätyskeskus reuse center in Espoo and the waste collection pipeline system in the Kruunuvuorenranta area of Helsinki⁸.

→ *Good practice example: Industrial symbiosis and Institutional and regulatory arrangements to support the transition towards a resource-efficient Circular Economy*

Zero-Waste community in Cēsis⁹

A group of people who come together to reduce waste and promote sustainable resource usage in their daily lives and community. In this collaboration, the Cēsis Municipality is participating in the creation of an industrial symbiosis platform. This platform will allow companies to seek mutual collaboration and development possibilities regarding waste as a resource. Additionally, a zero-waste district or community will be established in a specific area of the city, where Cēsis Municipality entrepreneurs, who operate waste-free or offer their production waste to other businesses as resources, will work together. As part of the activity to establish and implement a food waste data collection system in Cēsis Municipality, initiatives to reduce food waste will be tested, such as last-minute markets, surplus food preparation laboratories, community food fridges, and composting. This community is still in the development stage.

→ *Good practice example: Change in consumption patterns and consumer behaviour*

Digital platform lietovelreiz.lv

A platform¹⁰ for reuse opportunities for items, as well as a place to rent or find skilled craftsmen for repairs, and obtain used items for reuse either for free or for a symbolic fee. The platform includes information/a map of places where various everyday items and goods can be repaired, exchange points for items, etc. The map can be continuously updated. In the catalog, users can find and rent various items, tools, and materials for everyday situations, including repairs. The platform also provides general information about Circular Economy principles and their significance in daily lives, as well as regular updates on the latest news/events related to Circular Economy in Latvia.

→ *Good practice example: Education and awareness-raising*

Waste audit platform atkritumuaudits.lv¹¹

The platform provides methodological materials for school and preschool teachers "7 steps towards responsible resource consumption" with the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the principles of Circular Economy, understand why these principles are important, and learn how to conduct a waste audit in their school. This includes promoting responsible resource consumption and performing a structured assessment of the waste management situation. By doing so, schools will be able to determine the amount and composition of the waste generated, which will then allow them to develop an action plan to improve

⁸ <https://kierratyskeskus.fi/en/>

⁹ <https://www.cesis.lv/lv/novads/aktualitates/zinas/vide/cesu-novada-taps-jauni-bezatkritumu-risinajumi/> (in Latvian)

¹⁰ <https://www.lietovelreiz.lv/lv> (in Latvian)

¹¹ <https://atkritumuaudits.lv/> (in Latvian)

the situation. Additionally, the platform offers workshops for schools and preschools on teaching about waste issues; other educational materials are also available.

Examples of private policy initiatives (sectoral)

Various private and community initiatives promoting "green thinking" and sustainable lifestyles are active and emerging in Latvia, thereby integrating into the circular economy cycle.

→ *Good practice example on Industrial symbiosis*

Industrial symbiosis platform sinergia.lv

The platform¹², implemented within the LIFE Waste to Resources IP project¹³, offers companies the opportunity to collaborate in seeking profitable, sustainable solutions for waste prevention or reduction. Opportunities are being created for businesses to exchange information and obtain training on new opportunities for economic development while minimising environmental impacts.

→ *Good practice example for electronics & ICT*

Broken? Don't throw it out! campaign.

The social campaign¹⁴ from 19 April until 21 May 2023 was about to inform, educate and increase awareness of the comprehension about the harmfulness of responsible electrical devices and the problem of their management. The focus was on practical options of electronic waste disposal and promotion of re-use of electronic devices. 4436 participants took part in the campaign and during the campaign 226 tons of electronic waste were collected. The campaign advertisement was shown more than 3.3 million times.

LAB! electronics repair workshop

The workshop¹⁵ plans to repair approximately 200 pieces of equipment each month. The workshop will receive electrical devices from Eco Baltia Vide partners – various companies, as well as devices brought by Latvian residents to collection points at shopping and business centers in Riga and its vicinity. Each piece of equipment will be evaluated, and those that can be repaired to give them a second life will be sent to the repair center LAB! Repaired devices will be donated to charity and offered for resale. They can also be purchased on the mentioned website www.lietovelreiz.lv. This workshop is the first in Latvia to systematically and publicly collect and provide repair/second-life opportunities for electrical devices.

→ *Good practice example for construction waste*

Construction waste sorting and exchange point NOMALES¹⁶

By setting up an exchange centre, sorted construction waste becomes valuable raw or building material. It's a free opportunity to dispose of construction waste with impurities up to 30%, in return for materials obtained from recycling; the free opportunity to donate, exchange, and take reusable building materials, repair items, interior objects, and also working electrical appliances. This is the first time and place where a person, by handing over specific quality construction waste, can obtain soil or gravel obtained through

¹² <https://sinergia.lv/> (in Latvian)

¹³ <https://wastetoresources.varam.gov.lv/en/about-us>

¹⁴ <https://www.ecobaltiavide.lv/blog/vislatvijas-elektro-talka-nodotas-2269-tonnas-elektrotehnikas/> (in Latvian)

¹⁵ <https://www.ecobaltiavide.lv/blog/otra-iespeja-elektroiericem-darbu-saks-elektrotehnikas-remontdarbnica/> (in Latvian)

¹⁶ <https://www.ecobaltiavide.lv/blog/otra-iespeja-elektroiericem-darbu-saks-elektrotehnikas-remontdarbnica/> (in Latvian)

recycling in exchange. Visitors to this site will be able to clearly see how construction waste is transformed into further usable resources, and it will be the first platform in Latvia where both parties - waste producers and potential users of these resources - will be able to meet and exchange goods. All donated goods will be placed and purchased on website www.lietovelreiz.lv.

MANAI VIDEI – the mobile app and electronic platform

A self-service portal¹⁷ allowing residents of Riga and adjacent areas to request the removal of construction waste from a specific waste manager, while also enabling payment for the service. Such a platform is the first to easily, quickly and legally dispose of waste through a self-service portal. Residents may apply for the removal of both large and construction waste or, if the amount thereof is small, to transport it to one of their closest addresses in Riga.

➔ *Good practice example for packaging*

Seminar “Design and recycling of sustainable packaging”

A seminar¹⁸ was organized on 13 April 2023 at Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies to educate society and especially entrepreneurs. The seminar was devoted to packaging sustainability issues. During the seminar, the recommendations of the World Packaging Organization “Packaging design - for packaging recycling” which are translated into Latvian were presented and are available online. Recommendations will be a useful guide in the responsible choice of materials for new packaging or replacement of existing packaging.

➔ *Good practice example on new business models*

Exchange points for still usable goods

The private sector is evolving and utilizing various technologies to incorporate specific types of waste into product manufacturing, such as producing pallets from wood and textile waste or recycling various composite materials (outdoor decking) into new products (material for road construction). Additionally, **exchange points** for used goods have been established in various locations, such as the Ķīvītes landfill site in the South Kurzeme region and the Pavāru māja restaurant in Līgatne. In the territory of the landfill Ķīvītes, the **goods exchange center Krāmu kambars**¹⁹ accepts various household items from residents - dishes, baskets, goods for children, and various tools that are in good, usable condition. Thus, residents are encouraged not only to separate waste but also to reuse household items, repair them, or pass them on for use by others, thereby extending the product life cycle.

In the territory of the Pavāru māja restaurant, a **goods exchange cabinet**²⁰ has been set up where residents can donate kitchen and other items that they no longer need but could be useful to someone else. This is the first known restaurant to offer such an option.

Nature and technology park URDA

The nature and technology park URDA²¹ also operational, inviting residents (educational institutions, companies, and interest groups) to learn about important environmental issues, offering licensed educational programs, research trips to the Daibe landfill, various events, and campaigns. Various learning opportunities are available for residents, including workshops on composting organic waste and waste sorting. As part of the learning process, students/pupils perform experiments in the lab, learn to work in the team and collaborate, as well as go on the nature trail to study and learn. Also offered are educational

¹⁷ https://cleanr.lv/clean-r/life_projects/iedzivotaji-var-erti-un-atrivoties-no-buvgruziem-un-lielgabarita-atkritumiem/ (in Latvian)

¹⁸ <https://www.packaging.lv/lv/2023/04/seminars-par-ilgtspējiga-iepakojuma-parstradi/> (in Latvian)

¹⁹ <https://liepajasras.lv/kramu-kambars/> (in Latvian)

²⁰ <https://pavarumaja.lv/en/sustainability>

²¹ <https://www.urda.lv/en/about-us/about-urda>

research trips and waste sorting workshops for adults. The aim of URDA is to provide support mechanisms for schools, universities, and municipalities by offering nature science-based educational content and infrastructure, knowledge enhancement, and competency development to ensure improvement in the quality of life for individuals and society, as well as regional sustainability.

→ *Good practice example for textiles*

Style-textile campaign

During the campaign²², which was part of a public awareness campaign for separate waste collection within the LIFE Waste to Resources IP project, nearly one and a half tons of textile waste were collected in six textile sorting containers placed in the "Style Alley" in the capital city of Riga. In total, 174 tons of textiles were collected during the campaign. The amount of textile waste sorted and donated during the campaign increased by 15 % compared to the month before the campaign. These results demonstrate the willingness of Latvian residents to sort textiles more and more carefully.

The way forward

Identifying and addressing barriers and challenges

One of the barriers hindering the development of the circular economy is people's attitudes towards consumption. It is difficult for citizens to change their habits and adopt waste-sorting practices, especially when there is insufficient infrastructure available. This issue can be addressed through public education (see sections "Circular economy policy elements included in other policies", "Innovative approaches and good practices - Examples of public policy initiatives (national, regional or local) and Examples of private policy initiatives (sectoral)), which has been actively pursued and enhanced since 2022 using various tools, including regulatory measures, to raise awareness among citizens. Changing habits and attitudes among both citizens and the private sector takes time.

The Action Plan addresses the identified issues and tackles them with specific action directions, such as Action Plan provision No. 7 – public involvement, information, and education on circular economy issues. Therefore, it can be considered that the Action Plan addresses these issues, but still sufficient time is needed for the changes to take effect.

Future policy plans

In Latvia's National Development Plan for 2021-2027²³, aspects of the Circular Economy are integrated into several priority objectives, such as achieving productivity growth and economic development through innovation resulting from the Circular Economy, as well as improving quality of life through sustainable resource use. The development plan outlines a specific action direction for transitioning to the Green Deal, which is based on applying the principles of the Circular Economy - including material recycling and reuse; society's growing desire to use natural capital more intensively and sustainably; improving energy efficiency; reducing anthropogenic pollution through available or new technological solutions for economic diversification; using waste as raw materials; and ensuring societal and environmental health. Currently, the National Energy and Climate Plan for 2021-2030 has renewed and now entered into force. The plan aims to introduce principles of the circular economy like reduction of the amount of waste going to landfill, promoting the preparation for re-use, recycling and recovery of different types of waste, and implement waste prevention measures.

²² <https://www.fold.lv/2023/06/parstrades-kampana-stils-tekstils-magic/>

²³ <https://www.mk.gov.lv/en/national-development-planning>

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