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Ministry of Culture Republic of Latvia

CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES
IN MEMBER STATES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CULTURAL POLICY IN LATVIA

NATIONAL REPORT

REPORT
OF EUROPEAN PANEL
OF EXAMINERS

RIGA
1998

The National Report "Cultural Policy in Latvia" was prepared in 1995 – 1996 by a group of specialists at the Academy of Culture, led by the rector Dr. phil. Peteris Lakis, in co-operation with representatives from the unions of creative professions (Viktors Avotins, Ruta Caupova, Janis Stradins, Imants Ziedonis) and officials of the Ministry of Culture. In 1997 the revision of the text was supervised by Peteris Bankovskis in co-operation with Ieva Lesinska, Aivija Everte and Ilmars Slapins.

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Preparing the report for publishing, the actual information and data on the current situation in culture process and legislation are included.

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Foreword

What is culture? In a wider sense, it is the way of life of a society or a group of people that has formed in a particular period of time as a result of the interplay among various forces and relationships. More narrowly defined, culture consists of a conscious production and consumption of certain conventional symbols: theatre, fine arts, literature etc.

It is the objective of cultural policy to determine the way of action for the state and its institutions to promote public participation in culture and its administration, as well as public support for and popularization of cultural events.

There are many questions regarding culture and cultural policy matched by an unlimited number of responses determined by the requirements of a particular period or place and, as such, often contradictory or even mutually exclusive.

At this time a new culture and a new cultural policy of the budding Republic of Latvia are being born. In the seven years since the restoration of independence enough has been accomplished to make this Report possible.

The legal basis for culture and cultural policy is presently under construction. The essentially important Law on Cultural Institutions is just adopted. It will help to restructure and rearrange the system of cultural institutions, organizations and interrelationships created to fit the needs and designs of the USSR, a state that no longer exists.

In fall 1997 the Law on Cultural Endowment was passed. In May, 1998 a new non-profit state share holding company started operating introducing new tendencies in the way of thinking of our society. The state budget resources for culture projects will be distributed through competition by democratically chosen specialists of different branches.

The first significant steps toward regionalism in cultural policy have also been made. Public inertia and other, often non-objective factors have brought the reforms in territorial and municipal administration to a nearly complete halt. The first municipal theatre to be administered according to the new regional model, is established in Liepaja. The new universities established in Valmiera and Ventspils will do much to revitalize the cultural scene in these towns and within a short period of time they are certain to become the intellectual centres of their respective regions.

The current reforms would be unthinkable without the steady efforts of my predecessors. I would like to thank the previous Ministers of Culture, Mr. Raimonds Pauls, Mr. Janis Dripe, Mr. Ojars Sparitis and Mr. Rihards Piks. I am also grateful to Chairman Mr. Christopher Gordon, Rapporteur Ms. Dorota Ilczuk, Ms. Tuulikki Karjalainen, Mr. Carl-Johan Kleberg and Ms. Hilde Teuchies, as well as to Ms. Ritva Mitchell, the European Council program advisor, for their good advice and invaluable assistance in preparing this report.

As a result of this co-operation an objective and profound evaluation of our work is carried out. The National report stimulated us to start the implementation of National program "Culture" aimed to become a working program in our sector till 2010.

Ramona Umblija
Minister of Culture
Riga, October 1988

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Methodology

This report on Latvian national cultural policy was prepared in 1995 and 1996 and revised in 1997 by a group of researchers at the Latvian Academy of Culture, in co-operation with the Ministry of Culture. During this period, the Ministry of Culture organised two conferences to discuss methodological questions and current problems in the cultural arena. From the very beginning, a unified methodology for the report was worked out, which, at the same time, allowed individual authors a certain liberty of style as dictated by the specific content of their material.

As the report was being prepared, particular attention was paid to three areas specified by the European Program for National Cultural Policy Reports:

- cultural policy concerning financing of creative work;
- the democratisation of culture, particularly the decentralization of decision making;
- the creation of equal opportunity for all segments of the population to participate in cultural activities.

In preparing this report, the experience of earlier reports from other nations, as well as recommendations from European experts, were taken into account without losing sight of what is unique to the Latvian context.

This report largely reflects Latvian cultural policy since 1990. Although significant changes began in Latvia, as in the other two Baltic States, as early as 1988, cultural policy changes were still fragmentary in character. At the same time, the report includes a general survey of the cultural situation in Latvia during the last century and examines the historical traditions of several aspects of cultural activity as it bears on continuity of culture over time.

The main objective of this report is to provide an analytical survey of cultural policy development in the period from 1990 to the present, examining the main problems in the cultural process. The report certainly does not cover all spheres of cultural policy, only the most significant ones, both in the historical and present-day context.

The report was prepared striving to consider the following methodological principles:

- to identify those tendencies characteristic of the transition in cultural policy that are likely to prevail in the foreseeable future, embracing both the national and the international aspects of culture;
- to combine a functional and a structural approach. Keeping in mind the need to analyse individual areas of cultural policy, the principles of a functional study of culture and their influence on the understanding of cultural policy as a whole have not been neglected;
- concerning the financing of both creative work and the preservation of cultural heritage, it is essential to not lose sight of the economic context of the transition period. The implementation of cultural policy is directly influenced by the situation in other spheres of social life;
- among the most important criteria for the assessment of cultural policy is the interest people show in cultural processes and the degree of participation in amateur activities. Furthermore, it is important to consider both certain changes in traditions and the dynamics of the socio-political reality that, in

recent years, have greatly modified people's attitudes toward the process of culture. Culture has lost its largely compensatory function to protect national identity and is acquiring a new status in society.

The report was written making use of these and other, possibly less general, principles. Its material was derived from three main sources:

- historical documents and information found in literature;
- social statistics on various aspects of cultural policy;
- assessment and analysis by experts.

Upon examining particular problems, e.g., the issue of participation in cultural activities, data from sociological surveys was also used. Often, however, analysis was made difficult by the lack of reliable statistical material, both pertaining to the Soviet period and to the present day. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that there was enough empirical material to give a general idea about cultural policy in Latvia.

1.2. Structure

The structure of the report was determined both by the universal factors inherent in any cultural policy analysis and the peculiarities of Latvian cultural process, as well as by the aforementioned methodological principles.

Chapter 2 deals with the problem of Latvian national cultural identity. Several factors contribute to the special significance of this issue: the role of culture during the 700 years of foreign oppression, problems of a multinational society, and the complications of the present moment as Latvia strives to become a member of the European Union.

Chapter 3 presents a brief survey of the political, economic, and social changes that have taken place from 1988 to the present. During this period the social reality has undergone fundamental changes as a newly independent state, with its own cultural policy, has come into existence.

Chapter 4 gives an overview of the Latvian cultural situation in the 20th century: under the Russian tsars, through the first twenty years of independence and World War II, and during the period of Soviet occupation. This historical perspective aims to provide a better understanding of how cultural policy in the reconstructed independent state of Latvia has developed.

Chapter 5 surveys the general development of legislation in the area of culture after the restoration of independence. For the analysis of individual laws, please see the appropriate subject headings.

Chapter 6 reviews the responsibility for the development of culture as it is assumed by various agencies: the Parliamentary Commission, the Ministry of Culture, other ministries, municipalities.

Chapter 7 traces the structure and extent of culture financing and examines the tax policies aimed at stimulating individual sponsorship of culture. Scarce as they are, the available funds are mostly routed toward the maintenance of cultural infrastructure.

Chapter 8 examines the infrastructure of professional art and art industry including the role of mass media and aims to show the counterbalancing effects of the current economic crisis and the development of private initiative in particular branches of culture.

Chapter 9 characterizes main branches of cultural industry: book publishing and film industry.

Chapter 10 gives a brief overview of the mass media and cultural periodicals, their role and activities.

Chapter 11 focuses on the pyramid of culture education in Latvia that is designed to serve a double purpose: to produce professional artists and to provide opportunities for a wide segment of the younger generation to get a basic education in art and music and to learn cultural values.

Chapter 12 deals with the non-governmental infrastructure of culture organisations, which functions to express the democratization of culture. It examines the historical role of the creative professional unions in both stimulating artistic creation and developments in the society at large and reviews the activities of the Culture Foundation and other institutions.

Chapter 13 details the most pressing problems relating to national cultural heritage, its preservation and incorporation into the wider cultural context under conditions of economic crisis, denationalisation and privatisation. The functioning of a library network is also discussed here.

Chapter 14 addresses an issue in the implementation of cultural policy that is one of the most important criteria for assessing its effectiveness: the legal and social provisions for creative work, including copyright protection and social guarantees for artists.

Chapter 15 outlines the development of minority culture. Considering the complicated ethnic situation in Latvia, the principle of cultural autonomy and its legal protection is of particular importance.

Chapter 16 discusses the participation of society in cultural life and its active (e.g., amateur theatre) and passive (e.g., book buying and reading, attending theatre performances and concerts) forms.

Chapter 17 gives an overview of the international cultural ties of both governmental bodies and other organisations that have experienced a pronounced development since the restoration of independence. Financial, organisational and other problems Latvia faces as it prepares to incorporate its national culture in the European cultural environment are discussed here.

The structure of this report generally reflects the peculiarities of the model of cultural policy that characterise this aspect of social life in independent Latvia.

2. THE IDENTITY OF LATVIAN NATIONAL CULTURE¹

• THE BORDERS OF BORDERLESS WINDS •

2.1. Agreement on the meaning and fate of small structural units

The first meaning of the word culture (*cultura*) is **caretaking, amelioration, improvement**. So this word signifies a certain **degree of perfection**, and hence a scale of values.

Speaking about the cultural identity of my nation and its possible dialogue with other cultures, I would like to keep to this original meaning: to facilitate understanding. Culture is a set of improvements that a people (humanity, nation, community) has made and accumulated as it evolved. That is what we have in mind when we talk about all the ancient cultures: Sumerian, Egyptian, Inka, Aztec, Greek and Roman. The goal of culture is a happy community of people.

All the improvements in the life of a person are the consequences of his mental activity. A great part of this activity is directed toward **improvements** of a material nature, toward the perfection of technology, so it is usually known as material culture. The rest, which does not have such a clearly stated material goal and makes its **improvements** known in spiritual life, goes by the name of spiritual culture.

In this process of improvement, the integration of cultures can be understood as the process of process. It is a course of mutual amelioration. That is how it should be. We hope and believe that we are already on that course.

The agreement is, first of all, strategic: the members of the European Union have reached a common understanding that the new system should keep within itself small structural units without assimilating them, without fusing them with the common symphony of interests. That is the lesson we learn from the law of resistance: a wooden lath can be broken while a box of matches of the same thickness and wood will not break. All the geo-historical unions of nations have collapsed and perished for a single reason: instead of nurturing their small, component, structural units they have thoughtlessly tried to assimilate them, thereby violating one of the essential "formulae of strength".

As soon as a strategic agreement on structural politics is reached, there arises a mutual trust: confidence that "small improvements" can bring about "an improvement of the whole". The culture of a people/nation that hitherto has felt self-sufficient and understood itself as self-determining and containing itself within a certain peculiarity, now senses its mission to enter and "**improve in the world**". The philosopher and classic Latvian poet, Janis Rainis, authored the following lines:

"Encased in a fragile shell,
the soul joins the eternity of nature..."

In political terms, today this thought can be interpreted as the wish and demand to increase the role of small nations in the strategic structures of Europe. The President of

¹ An essay, written by outstanding Latvian poet, culture adviser to Prime – minister of Latvia, Imants Ziedonis.

Latvia, Guntis Ulmanis, brought this up in his address to the United Nations in 1994. Arnolds Spekke, scientist, writer and Latvia's current ambassador to Italy, insisted on it as early as 1948. His thesis was that a time was coming "when those small and big nations hitherto ignored by the powerful and the wise have taken and continue to take the floor and experience the joy of creation; those nations that, in keeping with the views of a late Roman emperor were designated "the spare sector of humanity" should be taken into account from time to time". Arnolds Spekke has conducted research into the cultures of the small nations (Latvians included), arguing that they "have followed a different pattern of mutual influences, a rhythm of generational inheritance, quite unlike that of some other European nations". This unique rhythm should be given a chance to express itself openly, in a way beneficial for all, and to set itself apart from the global entanglement and confusion.

At the moment, it is the attendant thought at all levels of society. In 1993, the Pope philosophically assessed the contribution of nations by saying that a nation is something "that possesses its own autonomy for the common good". Likewise, the worth of society is established through the worth of individuals.

The President of France, Jacques Chirac, interprets the role of nations within these All-European structures in the following way: "Our nations have inherited old and rich cultures and languages. This variety has many advantages: through dialogue and through the exchange of views it will stimulate communication."

At this time, I am most interested in the guaranteed survival of my nation. First, how sympathetic to this end is the redress offered to the Latvian nation by the world community of **nations**? Second, what balance of power for the Latvian nation is envisioned by world **states**? Third, in what equilibrium and agreement do the brightest minds, **personalities**, most prominent humanists see the place and role of the Latvian ethnic and political nation? (Not necessarily in that order.) Latvians live along the line of confrontation between East and West, occupying a space diffuse in the political, demographical and philosophical sense; a space where the assessment and evaluation of our nation by the participants tends to be quite diplomatically evasive. One could choose to trust this evasiveness or not to do so. Our historic experience has taught us caution, because the Latvian nation has been placed in a critical demographic situation. The deportations of hundreds of thousands of innocent people to Siberia during the years of Soviet assimilation, the escape of the better-off Latvians to the West, the destruction of all the prosperous farms through forcible collectivization, the eradication of the best young people through conscription in the occupation armies: all this has virtually destroyed the Latvian middle class. Of course, it was all done in a purposeful way and, paradoxically, "a systematic annihilation of the identity of the Latvian state and nation was begun at a time when the rest of the world celebrated the victory over Nazism; thus the Latvian land and people were victimized by both the Nazi and the Communist regimes." That is how President of Latvia, Mr. Guntis Ulmanis, has put it. He also reminds us that no other country lost almost 40% of its population during World War II; no other European country has seven cities where, as a result of post-war russification, the indigenous population has become a minority. Today new demographic forces have swiftly and freely moved into this rarefied space. For the most part, these are Russophile forces that lay claim, by means of various forms of demagoguery, to nothing less than full political rights. These forces use the European emphasis on human rights as a shield, so as to keep open the option of dictating — perhaps in the not too distant future — the political tone in Latvia, with the hope of transforming that country into a Russian satellite. All this should be kept in mind when we talk about Latvian cultural identity. Culture, understood as a **quality of national self-confidence**, can achieve safety only in a politically guaranteed space.

But Latvian culture today is not a culture of complaint, despite the fact that the world is undergoing a process of marked erosion of national values. This erosion is

caused by objective factors: the increasingly ephemeral understanding of life; a heightened sense of entropy; amplified pluralism, boundless relativism and anarchy, as well as sectarianism in man's search for God. In Latvia, all these factors have been intensified by the philosophical unpreparedness (after long years of Soviet disorientation) attending our encounter with the intense and free flow of new information.

This manufactured environment quite naturally stimulates the rise of nihilism at home: national values are being discredited. In addition, the processes that are being hastened in the name of the European idea often tends to contain a methodological error; i.e., in pursuit of this idea – which should be executed in three stages: provocation, information, orientation – the proper sequence is consciously (demagoguery) or inadvertently (carelessness) neglected: the crucial information stage is left out. In practical terms it looks like this: the world community is roused to the possibility of establishing a new cultural unity of nations and, without providing an analysis of the national cultural values (and thus withholding information), without creating a depository of enriching common cultural values, an orientation process is launched (e.g., standardizing the colour of apples in the Pan-European Christmas market; attempting to standardize the varied natural features of our Latvian countryside in accordance with the requirements of the European tourist etc.) A politician or a folk philosopher finds it easy to parrot the terms “common human values”, “update”, “integration” if he has not the vaguest notion how these abstractions relate to the existence of a specific nation.

The local, particular varieties of national nihilism express themselves in a similar fashion: alive to the idea of the European Union, the nations orient themselves to survival in the rich circle defined by the new values, forgetting to form a picture of their own contribution and to establish elements of their own national values in the common value repository.

Having said all this, I venture to add yet another definition to the many explanations of what is culture: **culture is a quality of self-confidence**. And only as a quality of self-confidence can it hope to enrich other cultures.

2.2. Nameable or unnameable identity? The accessibility of values

There still remains the question whether national cultural identity can be named if, with good reason, it has been established that by and large national identity is irrational, metaphysical and elusive.

I am a poet and am well aware that poems neither yield to translation into prose, nor can they be grasped in any review in their entirety. At the same time, what happens between two lovers on a honeymoon can be expressed in no love poem. Nor the feelings of a believer at the moment when God reveals Himself. That is the presence of the Big One, the state of irreducibility, the riddle of existence — you name it. And yet love has its own schools and teachings, and they can and have been expressed. They appear in the biblical commandments. We live in the tangible world (yes, that too), we live in the world of conventions and norms, in the world of agreements. And for that reason there exist laws and their formulations, and they will continue to exist while there is the human race and society. They are part of national cultural identity as well: they can be known, evaluated and used. If we do not know them, in our negligence and carelessness, we commit a sin against the evolving reality. Mental activity can be registered to a certain level of perceptibility. It is important for us to **harmonize** our terms, perceptions and preconceptions so that we can know what to defend, with whom to be friends and what shall **make us happy** in this world. In this age of transcontinental openness and global opportunity, the culture of each and every nation

should be prepared to declare itself, to make itself visible, readable, indispensable and to a degree also "available", "attainable", "possessible" and "learnable". And that means that these national values should appear in international circulation at least partially translated, named and marked — so that they can be seen and heard. In a system of linguistic or any other signs.

2.3. Idiosyncrasy. The closed and open circles of culture

A nation's potential for survival is determined by its material, social and spiritual welfare. When the first two prevail, our capacity for civility is manifest. As we emphasise the latter two, it is culture we are talking about. Within the fields of civilisation and culture a nation possesses values of a more genuine, inherent, idiosyncratic and original nature, as well as those of a more integrated, internationalised, reflexive character. Provisionally we can speak of at least two layers or circles of values: those that are unique and idiosyncratic, and those that have arisen as a result of international dialogue. One could call these "values of monologue" and "values of dialogue", respectively. While these layers could be characterized with more exactitude, their degree of integration will ultimately remain ill-defined. All the same, it is necessary to make the values of an individual nation visible to and attainable by that society as it evolves. In this respect, it is notable that we customarily speak only of the four great freedoms offered by the European Union: a free flow of capital, tax-free goods, services and labour. The **cultural/political** future of Europe is rarely discussed.

Contrary to common misconceptions, the more idiosyncratic values of a culture are not always found in its most archaic features. One sign of Latvian idiosyncrasy is the white stork. People respect this bird, they offer help in its search for suitable nesting places, and the possibility that someone might hunt or kill a stork is inconceivable. One cannot imagine the Latvian landscape without stork nests in trees, on top of posts, water towers and even the chimneys of abandoned houses. The fact that this bird chooses to live in Latvia (with the greatest density of stork nests in Europe) can only be explained by the biological and scenic variety of Latvian landscape and by the healthy state of its ecology. At a time when the environment of European countries becomes ever more homogeneous and barren, this wise bird has found in Latvia the most advantageous conditions for its well being. It does not mean, however, that the white stork has been a permanent fixture of Latvian landscape. Among Latvian folksongs, noted bearers of an almost encyclopedic record of our people's life ways, there are but a few where the name of the stork is mentioned alongside that of other birds. This means that the density of stork nests, as a sign of Latvian identity, is a phenomenon of recent history. One may contrast this newer symbol with an older one, the swastika. This basic element of Latvian ornamentation has gained recent recognition only because it was claimed by Nazi ideologues, whereas in the past it was universally recognized as an archetype of a near-mythical age. Consider the Badajan Tajiks from Tajikistan, living in the Pamir mountains on the border with Afghanistan. A small ethnic group, these Tajiks were turned down as volunteers at the outset of World War II by the Red Army, and only because they arrived at recruitment offices dressed in knit kneesocks decorated with swastikas.

Another idiosyncratic Latvian symbol is our national hero, Lacplēsis. Originating in the archetypal world of fairy-tales, he was actualized and honoured as our "main hero" only in the last century when the writer Andrejs Pumpurs, responding to geopolitical necessity, sought to advance the cause of Latvian liberty by publishing his epic poem of the same name. Lacplēsis, son of man and she-bear, is a figure from the ancient totemic world. He is joined by Kurbads, the Mare's Son, who may be an ancient remnant of the

globally recognizable centaur myth. In the mythical sense, he is better rooted than Lacplēsis, seemingly more acceptable today than Lacplēsis who, as one who kills living creatures, is perhaps an ecologically dubious individual. Such aggression is rare in Latvian folklore, where man appears tolerant, pantheistic, a harmonious and caring part of nature. Why did the nation suddenly need a hero with the grasp and strength of a marine soldier? After all, folksongs touch upon themes of war and warriors only with reluctance; the harshest characterization of warriors is reserved for a few quatrains:

Winds blow over the hill
Churning water in the lake;
My brother rides off to war
Locking his heart up in a stone.

Latvia lacks those heroic epics, replete with bloody battles and cruelties, that are common among many other nations. There is no glorification of revenge, nor apology for violence. So whence arose this need for a larger than life athlete, a warrior who can hold his own and even claim victory in the cruellest of battles? My answer is simple. Lacplēsis was born from our sense of being geo-politically endangered. Andrejs Pumpurs, as a young poet and officer in the Russian-Turkish war, was witness to the scope and cruelty of world battles. He produced his epic poem "in world likeness", complete with a hero to symbolize the national defence force, an embodiment of national self-confidence and strength. In the 19th century, ideas of national romanticism swept across Central and Eastern Europe. The stronger and wiser among the activists of enlightenment, as counterparts to the great world heroes, put forth their own. In Latvia, suffocating for centuries under a colonial yoke, national self-confidence had matured to the point that it could mobilize forces necessary for its national survival. And as both East and West posed twin threats of assimilation to this newly self-confident nation, wunderkind Lacplēsis sprung forth. From that point on this figure grew in tandem with the fight for national survival. It was in this century that Latvian poet Rainis confronted him with a whole new set of problems: "Change upward!" and introduced an intellectual figure Spidola (the Luminous One) into his diplomatic staff. Spidola is the one who made and still makes the slow moving, imposing Lacplēsis jump, transform, bring himself up to date. There is no doubt that even today Spidola is the one to explicate Lacplēsis' dual situation in terms of European ideas, while the demographic survival of the Latvian nation is, at this moment, under greater threat than ever before. But meanwhile, perhaps the collective unconscious of the nation has born another, more modern figure, one that could awaken the national spirit, one that would not be quite as witch like as the provoking Spidola (it is she whose sorcery made the teachings of socialism appealing to quite a few Latvian intellectuals at the turn of the century and caused great harm to the nation), one not quite as **dialectic** as she; a figure who would show a new awareness of the world, think in **tripolar** categories, be "trialectically" grounded and capable of rousing the nation to common action rooted in the trinity of the material, the intellectual, and the spiritual.

2.4. Cultural identity means living

Identity means "sameness". Comparison needs two sides. And the two sides are represented by our present, our present being and our understanding of that being, our convention, our agreement. Our cultural identity is found only in that which is, lives, wants to live and flourish. It exists and will continue to exist without our attempt to define it. Yet it will flourish and become richer if the intellectuals and, first of all, the social scientists and humanitarians, from their point of vantage, are capable of seeing how the two circles of culture overlap: the limited local culture and the free flowing pan-culture of indeterminate boundaries. That will only be possible if the wise induce,

deduce, integrate, appeal, tend and transcend; if they dislocate, encyst and insist, pragmatize and finance; if they don't drink or eat themselves to death. Moreover, if they find the names for all these processes, values, models and methods for communication.

Many characteristics of identity are so commonplace that one is hard put to see any value in them. Today we call our fellow citizens by their last names, many of which are in the diminutive. This linguistic idiosyncrasy finds its expression in folklore as well. In no sense is it meant to disparage or detract: it is to show respect and express one's pleasure. *Ozolins zemzaritis*, literally translated, would be "little oak of little low branches", yet what is meant is no puny sapling but a huge tree of 6 or 7 meter circumference. One says *Daugavina* of the largest Latvian river, the Daugava. In folksongs, "my father's little lands" cover the territory of several districts. God is always referred to as *dievins* instead of *dievs*, yet it by no means signifies a little souvenir figurine. Even a drunken husband (*viris*) is accorded tolerance by his wife when she says *virins*.

This phenomenon stems from an originally benevolent world view. To this day there are areas in Latvia, notably Kurzeme, where commonly respected, popular people are referred to in the diminutive without irony or derogation. Where else in the world would you find so many diminutive men in power? We have Kalnins, Lagzdins, Berzins, Krastins. The chairman of the Latvian Olympic Committee goes by the name of Baltins ("the little white one"). Our greatest artists are Purvitis ("little marsh"), Kalnins ("little hill"), Berzins ("little birch"). The first name of the editor of our leading daily is Sarmite; the editor of the leading literary magazine Marite; the leading critic of music, Vizbulite. Since the days of the appreciation of his poetry, Latvian ambassador to Russia, His Excellency Janis Peters is still commonly known by the diminutive form of his name, Janitis; Latvian Ambassador to Finland Anna Zigure as Annina. And there are ministers and leaders of parliament factions: Putnins, Celmins, Cimdins. How did they come to occupy such high posts? It is not a grammatical anomaly. It is a quality of thinking, the manifestation of the deepest, inborn levels of national identity. It is an expression of a loving philosophy. And it would seem to me worth knowing that somewhere in the Baltic there exists such a way of thinking.

In 1991, a conference on ethnological issues took place in Moscow organised by the USSR Academy of Sciences. The participants emphasized the higher level of political culture in the Baltic region (at that time, they still considered the Baltic states *their* Baltic region), maturity of the national intelligentsia and readiness of the national movements to produce clearly stated programmes. The Soviet society was forced to admit as much. After 50 years of chauvinistic denial, it had become an incontestable fact. But Arnolds Spekke, our ambassador to the 1930's Italy who later became a leading emigration politician in the U.S., noted a prevailing attitude towards the cultures of the small nations: "At the P.E.N. Congress in Venice I heard the small nation literatures characterised as *moins connues*. It is understandable, given the great difficulty involved in approaching the traditions of the small nations and their languages that tend to be archaically complicated, like Latvian. It is not us, but them who are the clear losers in this situation. Each and every small nation, *ipso facto*, has to work harder in this world, but it every so often happens that this necessity and hardship turns out to be privilege."

I would once again like to refer to the quotation from Rainis: "Encased in a fragile shell, our soul joins the eternity of the world... The soul does not know its own greatness. But time will come and it will know also the unknown." To get information about this Latvian unknown, this Latvian X, one should start with what can be seen and acquired; with what can be given and taken, felt and enjoyed. One should start with the liveable. Cultural identity is living. That simple. It could be the traditions that wholly or in part are still living today, or the application of inherited things and shapes, symbols and rites in everyday life. It could be mythical, metaphysical formulae for which the modern man feels some atavistic or saving future need. It could also be the tested values of classical art or the contemporary creativity of contemporary personalities: cultural identity exists only so far as it refers to the present.

The main point of this article is that both local and pan-European cultural politics should do everything possible to demonstrate the cultural idiosyncracies of each nation **visibly**, in the quality of mutual exchange and to our mutual benefit.

A beautiful, visible example can be found in the buildings by the famous Latvian-American architect Gunars Birkerts. When asked if he felt something Latvian in himself, in his way of thinking and activities, he replied: "I've always felt I'm a Latvian architect... But it is not a feeling I myself could identify. Others have named it "the Baltic flow". The destiny of an architect is to know his own history and culture and his personal genetic and ethnic origin."

This essay is not a systematic study but rather a set of proposals. I point to a number of singular values, apart from the ones mentioned above (Lacplēsis' ability to subsist and defend culture in a politically dual environment; the affectionate diminutive in folksongs; the national power of concentration in a song festival hymnic chorus; small scale, ecological tourism in a land of storks), that are present in Latvia (and only there) and that are capable of enriching European society. Among these one could mention the great number of landscape variations in one square kilometer of Latvian land; the Midsummernight's festival, Jani, with its unique melodies and fertility rites already absent in the Dionysian festivals of other nations. Another is the Latvian custom of drinking birch sap in spring and making beverages from it to be consumed in the months of summer heat. Yet another is book publishing: the huge editions of poetry books (up to 35 000 copies for a nation of 1,5 million) and the great number of choirs among which about a dozen have won top prizes at international festivals. From the 18th century on, world construction specialists have been aware of *Pinus rigensis*, the unique Latvian pine whose wood is considered superior for construction. One has to mention the *Latvju Dainas*, eight thick volumes of Latvian folksongs — laconic quatrains that, among many other things, contain essential formulae for building one's character, formulae that are useful not **still** today, but **particularly** today. One of these appears to advise us to build personality on four cornerstones: vigour, wisdom, beauty and strength; no personality is complete or harmonious if at least one of these components is missing; they should all be present simultaneously and impervious to any outside influences. *Latvju Dainas* is probably the only collection of ancient epic fragments that has not been translated into world languages and submitted to international research, a collection that is unique in its Sanskritic timelessness and presentation of encyclopedic information in a surprisingly modern way.

Last but not least, there is the Latvian language, one of the last two leaves on the Baltic language branch that has retained its ancient ties with Sanskrit and deep, philosophically harmonious word meanings. For example, consider the word *razenais*, used to denote "a man of culture". *Razenais* has a whole range of meaning: "strong, fertile, well-to-do, rich, effective, controlled, persistent..." *Razenais* is a principle of guidance, empathy and assistance.

The formula "a political nation" is meaningless if it does not incorporate the riches offered by the notion of "an ethnic nation". Politics is less than politic without an understanding of human values; a nation is less national if it does not see and respect its inherent ethnic origins. This ethnic initiation in no way contradicts the great futurist objectives: gene engineering, floating cities, three dimensional television, electronic daycare, genetic code or voice as a replacement for fingerprints, a global information network, etc., etc.

A person who has been raised in a multicultural world finds that the circle of borrowed values is a more gratifying field of study. It is so because it is more convenient, more accessible to a wide international public. The basic notions have been included in the classic school curricula, they have been learned and are commonly known. They draw an international audience, are often part of the agenda of important conferences, have been discussed in a wide body of literature. Being convenient and communicable,

they invite debate and reflection and attract a wider circle of researchers. One instance is the *art nouveau*, or *Jugendstil*, architecture and its regional expression. It is commonly agreed that Riga is a convincing *Jugendstil* city. As the 800th anniversary of Riga's founding draws nearer, it has become a favourite conference subject, as has the so-called "green architecture" in Latvia, its parks, roadsides, country lanes and landscapes surrounding country estates, or the phenomenon of Latvian song festivals that take place on an unprecedented scale (choirs of up to twenty thousand singers under the guidance of world class conductors). The list of cultural idiosyncracies does not end here. The aforementioned are just a few of the more visible ones. The whole range is quite impressive but it is – yes, confined, in the same sense that a gulf attracts surfers from around the globe. It is as confined as an ocean stream that nevertheless bears its own unique name. It can be likened to an ocean breeze on the line where the earth meets the sea: never the same at the time of sunset and sunrise. Why should we always assume that all that we have has been brought by impressive winds from faraway shores? There are winds originating in Latvia that can be felt elsewhere. Winds are born in Latvia as well. And we live within the borders of our peculiarities. Even if they are the borders of borderless winds.

3. THE PRESENT POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SITUATION IN LATVIA

3.1. Political situation

All of Latvian intellectual culture, has been undeniably influenced by the change of political power in the country that occurred in the late 1980s and early 1990s. It developed in three stages:

- the early signs of a new national democratic power and a crisis in Soviet power;
- the stage of diarchy, or dual government (its essence was a conflict over the legitimacy and in-legitimacy of power);
- the creation of a new, independent state and its international recognition, liberalisation of social relations and the initiation and development of new economic and social structures.

This new political power arose out of the Latvian movement to achieve independence and a democratic society. The chief aim was liberation from the USSR and restoration of an independent Latvian state. The course of this movement was to a great extent determined by the political character of the Soviet Union itself — its imperialism and communist totalitarianism. A fight for independence seemed to offer the only hope that Latvian people could be saved from extermination, or assimilation into a “new kind of human community” — the Soviet people. It also gave the only reasonable hope that a liberal democratic political structure could be formed in Latvia, given the unlikely prospects for democracy in the Soviet empire, at least in the foreseeable future.

The creation of a national democratic movement in Latvia was determined by a certain balance between centralising and decentralising tendencies in the economic and political life of the USSR, as well as by the particular values prominent in the minds of the Latvian people. In the Soviet Union, the tendency toward centralisation in economic, political and ethnic relations was dominant. However this tendency, based largely on ideological and economic structures, and influenced by the mechanisms of repression, could not entirely outweigh the decentralising forces at work in society. In Latvia, these forces were driven by a different, often opposing set of values to those of the vulgar, populist ideology of Soviet imperialism. The importance of the individual, the value in democracy, the benefits of a free economy, driven by historical awareness of Latvia's political, social and economic experience during the period between the two World Wars, were values that helped to produce a generally negative attitude toward Soviet ideology and practice among the Latvian people. This system of countervailing values re-emerged as the political conditions in Soviet Latvia were liberalised, leading to the creation of a national, democratic independence movement in the late 1980s.

From 1987 the idea of national independence became more and more influential in Latvia. At the beginning it was mainly influenced by memories of Stalinist repression of the Latvian people, and by the aspiration to renew national symbols. The idea of national liberation was from the start associated with an effort to democratise Latvia. First, it was based on the democratic principle that a nation has a right of self-determination. Second, it sharply criticised the maintenance of Soviet power through repression. These emerging values offered a basis on which to integrate wide sections of the population.

Mass movements, especially if their aim is not to change the political system by force, are often undertaken by the intellectuals, at least at the stage where goals, organising ideas and means are being developed. The importance of this group to the independence movement in Latvia arose not only as a consequence of the need to develop a conceptual criticism of the existing political and social realities. The intellectuals, mainly representatives of arts scene had played a key role in the preservation and maintenance of Latvian culture and values, and hence the survival of the specifically Latvian people, during the long years of political, social, economic, ideological and even physical oppression visited this small nation over the centuries. As such, the prestige of the artistic "intelligentsia" was very high when the independence movement began. This made its influence greater as the first conceptual criticisms of Soviet socialist reality appeared, including revelations about the destructive consequences of the Molotoff-Ribbentrop pact. It is unsurprising that members of this stratum not only helped to form the Popular Front in Latvia, but went on to active roles in the new state institutions emerging from the political upheaval.

In the autumn of 1988, the Popular Front was formed. This organisation won the 1990 parliament elections in a political and ideological struggle with the *nomenklatura* of the communist party and Interfront, a counter-movement organised by Soviet imperial forces. This election made possible the May 4, 1990 declaration of the Supreme Soviet of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic "On the Renewal of Independence of the Republic of Latvia" Thus began the period of transition toward the *de facto* renewal of independence for the Latvian Republic that was to end with a convention of the Parliament of the Republic of Latvia (Saeima) and a renewal of Constitution in full scope. Thus the foundation was laid for a state of diarchy. On one hand, the newly elected Parliament started work, exercising its legislative power and creating its own institutions of executive power. However, that power lacked any practical, physical force and Latvia's independence was not officially acknowledged by any other country. On the other hand, a branch of the CPSU and State Security Committee of the USSR (KGB) continued to act in Latvia, and units of the Soviet army, which had taken part in the election of the Supreme Soviet, were still stationed in the state. In other words, lawful democratic changes in the state were hindered by the opposing activities of Soviet political and military power. The renewal of an independent Latvian state was possible only because the USSR partly collapsed following the unsuccessful putsch in August, 1991. At this time, the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Latvia declared that the transition period was over and Latvia's state independence was renewed *de facto*. This was soon acknowledged by most countries of the world. In 1993 the Fifth Saeima was elected.

In the first years of Latvia's independence, the first phase of democratic change has been completed, i.e., political freedom has been regained, system of political parties has been more or less established and stabilised, democratic elections have taken place and no essential violations of human rights have been observed. However, the second, deeper phase of democratic development has only begun in recently. It is for this phase to establish democratic relations in various non-governmental social institutions, to make information maximally and freely available to all citizens, to allow each citizen to make a full, free and conscious political choice according to his or her own interests, and to see such practices and values extended throughout the public sphere and among the citizenry. No doubt it will take some time before we reach such a situation.

While there are clear signs of a developing western-type democratic political consciousness in Latvian society, these are mixed with aspects peculiar to the transition period underway. For example, there has been a sharp reduction in the degree of active political involvement overall when compared to what was typical during the movement for national independence and democratic government. This is especially true of the educated strata, intellectuals, in particular that portion professionally engaged in cultural activities. During the period of national upheaval, much of society was united by common

values, i.e., state independence and liberation from totalitarianism. Now that these aims have been achieved, at least in the public mind, Latvian society has started to look for new integrating values. All these factors contribute to the dynamic condition of present Latvia society.

3.2. Transition from socialist economy to free market economy

The years of Latvia's state independence have been characterised by efforts to move from a planned socialist economy to a free market economy. Initial steps to restructure the economy have been made, largely through legislative initiatives, and executive action. Privatisation has been the hallmark of this first stage in the transition to a free economy. After the election of the Fifth Saeima in 1993, attempts were made to institute liberal policies both in economic strategy and tactics. At the first stages, the pace of privatisation has been comparatively slow, and has been characterised by some violation of established legal standards. These violations hindered state economic development. Nevertheless there have been certain successes in the promotion of free market economy, especially in monetary politics and in macro-economic stabilisation.

The absolute value of the gross private sector output was 66% in 1997 and it continues to increase. Privatization of big state enterprises is due to be finished in 1998. Economic growth is characterized by these two figures (July 1997): GNP (per capita) – 1 060 USD; foreign investment (per capita) – 314,4 USD.

General economic situation influences progress toward implementation of state cultural policy. Cultural financing is not adequate, either at the state or the municipal level. The situation is complicated by the fact that during the years of Soviet power state financing for cultural needs was also not sufficient. That is why it is now necessary to invest a great deal of money in cultural infrastructure, for example, to reconstruct the National Opera House and to build the new National library.

In 1996, however, new trends have appeared that seem to point to certain stabilisation and even improvement in the overall economic situation. The rate of growth of the gross domestic product has somewhat increased; inflation has been reduced and, according to the Bank of Latvia, may not exceed 9%. The government is trying to promote foreign investment. In 1997 a non-deficit budget was adopted and, in the first nine months, successfully implemented. Nevertheless, success of the reform process is as yet measured by improvement in just a few macro-economic indicators. Positive change in the living standards of the population at large is yet to come.

3.3. The formation of new social strata

Economic change has altered the social structure of Latvia. In the transition period, the most significant cause of new social stratification is stratification of income levels. With the small exception of a few privileged individuals, the population as a whole was equally poor in the socialist period. Three quarters of the population lived in a kind of stable poverty while the remaining quarter consisted of a small, unstable middle class and an even smaller wealthy elite (compromised of communist party highest corporate body, the so called *nomenklatura*, military personnel and people prominent in the shadow economy). The majority of the low income population, however, did not live below the minimum necessary for survival.

The first steps made toward a free market economy caused a sharp, sudden stratification in Latvia, as it did in all the other post-socialist countries. There is a very large group of poor people, the exact size of which varies according to the method of

assessment and the information source. With the poverty line officially defined as that income level minimally necessary for the survival of one adult, about 70% of Latvia's population presently lives below the poverty line. A considerable drop in income has occurred among disabled people, pensioners, large families with children, the unemployed and in several professional groups — workers in state enterprises, teachers, scientists, medical and cultural workers. The middle class remains rather small and lacks influence on the course of economic and social life. On the other hand, a vigorous new, well-to-do elite has developed, one, which manages to concentrate in its hands reasonable financial, economic and political power. Under such conditions, with old economic structures nearly at a standstill and new ones only in the process of formation, a large part of society is in need of social protection in order to ensure minimum survival conditions (practically limited to buying food and paying rent). The situation is only made worse by the fact that social mobility is also quite limited.

Poverty is a significant barrier to activities that can promote human dignity. Lack of wealth creates problems in education, health and recreation. On top of this, such a sudden and sharp social stratification works against the formation of humanitarian, integrating values in society. It also deforms the existing, unstable system of values, often directing human interest toward the narrow concerns of everyday life, where problems of material survival dominate.

The demographic situation is very complicated. About every fourth among Latvia's inhabitants is retired. Birth rates continue to drop; in 1996, it was two times lower than in 1986. While mortality rates are still high for 1996 and the trend of negative population growth continues, they have dropped compared to 1995. It is however important to observe that present birth rate is lower than in the period of World War II.

3.4. The ethnic and confessional structure in Latvia

For centuries, Latvia has been a multinational society. For many years Russians, Jews, Poles and members of other ethnic groups have been living alongside Latvians on our territory. Their specific proportionate numbers and importance in our society have obviously undergone changes in this period.

Table 3.1. shows that in the middle of the 1930s Latvians exceeded three quarters of the whole population. After World War II the national demographic mix changed radically – the number of Latvians decreased, traditional ethnic composition of the population of Latvia changed, as well: proportion of Germans and Jews decreased, while in the result of migration the number of Russians, Belorussians and Ukrainians increased essentially. There are no accurate data for the post-war period. According to information provided by the Committee of Statistics, from 1951 to 1990 the number of inhabitants in Latvia arriving by migration increased by 342.7 thousand persons. Because of a deliberate and organised Soviet russification policy, Latvians came to comprise approximately half the total population. Post-war migrants entered Latvia primarily to work in industrial enterprises or in the service sector, there was a large number of military, KGB personnel and communist party functionaries. The immigrants usually settled in the large cities of Latvia. As a result, by 1989 the number of Latvians in the 8 largest Latvian cities was less than half the total population in these urban centres. Although there were no open ethnic conflicts during the Soviet period, since these were not tolerated by the totalitarian regime, relations between Latvians and non-Latvian migrants were strained, particularly in everyday life. These strains were mostly due to differences in historical experience, values and mentality, but were exacerbated by the social privileges assigned to migrants, especially in housing.

In the post-war era, a peculiar situation arose in the public use of language in Latvia. The use of Latvian gradually decreased. While its use continued in the spheres of

The ethnic composition of the population of Latvia
(in thousands)

Nationality	1935		1959		1979		1989		1995		1996	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
Total population	1905.9	100	2093.5	100	2502.8	100	2666.6	100	2529,5	100	2501,7	100
Latvians	1467.0	77.0	1297.9	62.0	1344.1	53.7	1387.8	52.0	1385.0	54.8	1377.8	55.1
Russians	168.3	8.8	556.4	26.6	821.5	32.8	905.5	34.0	829.6	32.8	816.0	32.6
Belorussians	26.8	1.4	61.6	2.9	111.5	4.5	119.7	4.5	102.5	4.0	100.4	4.0
Ukrainians	1.8	0,1	29.4	1.4	66.7	2.7	92.1	3.5	75.3	3.0	73.6	2.9
Poles	48.6	2.5	59.8	2.9	62.7	2.5	60.4	2.3	56.3	2.2	55.4	2.2
Lithuanians	22.8	1.2	32.4	1.5	37.8	1.5	34.6	1.3	32.6	1.3	32.2	1.3
Jews	93.4	4.9	36.6	1.7	28.3	1.1	22.9	0.9	12.2	0.5	11.2	0.5
Gipsies	3.8	0.2	4.3	0.2	6.1	0.2	7.0	0.3	7.4	0.3	7.5	0.3
Estonians	6.9	0.4	4.6	0.2	3.7	0.1	3.3	0.1	3.0	0.1	2.9	0.1
Germans	62.1	3.3	1.6	0.1	3.3	0.1	3.8	0.1	2.1	0.1	1.9	0.1
Others	4.4	0.2	8.9	0.5	17.1	0.8	29.5	1.0	23.5	0.9	22.8	0.9

education, culture and everyday life where Latvians came into contact with each other, in state governing institutions the only language was Russian. Sociological investigations made in the late 1980s showed that while 98.5% of Latvians knew enough Russian to communicate in that language at any time, only 18.1% of those in non-Latvian ethnic groups used the Latvian language to communicate on any occasion.

Nevertheless situation needs not to be dramatised. In 1991 73% of the Latvia's population voted for independence while Latvians constitute only incomplete 55% of population. In fall 1997 69% of total number of children started to attend first grade in elementary schools with Latvian as the language of instruction.

At the same time only 10% of non-citizens who according to the acting Law of Citizenship would appeal for Latvian citizenship in due time have done it.

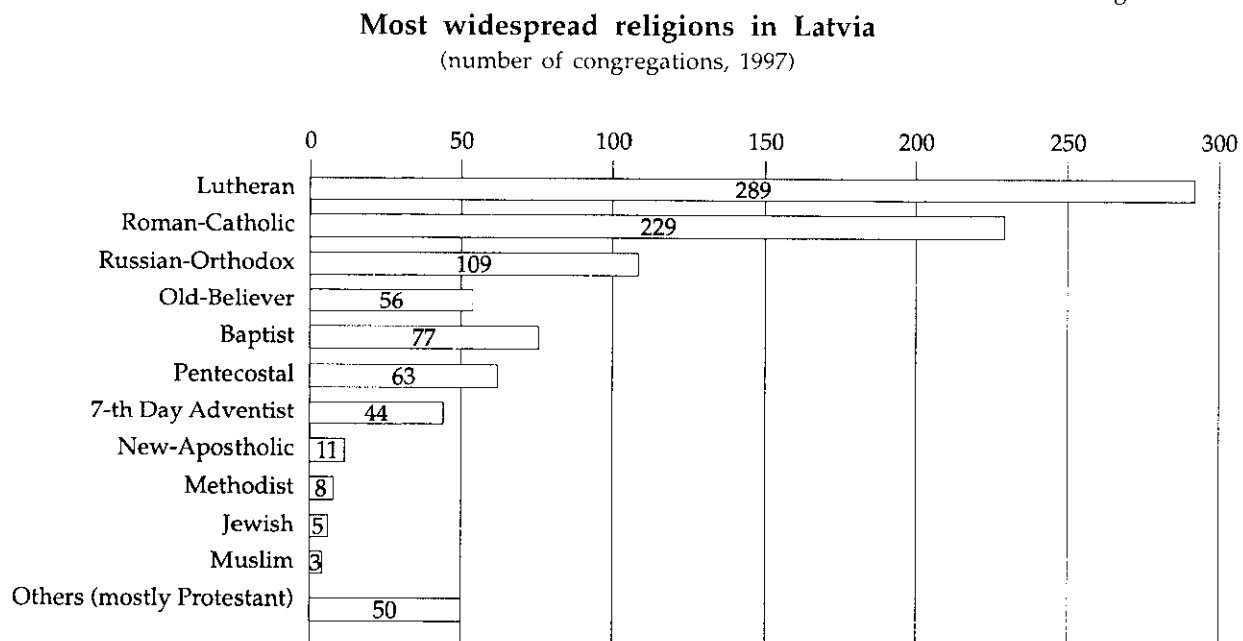
Ethnic minorities had to a great extent lost their self-confidence. This is suggested by the census carried out in 1989. Only 27% of Poles, 31% of Belorussians, and 49% of Ukrainians, respectively, acknowledged their native languages as their own. The rest regarded Russian as their native tongue. The goals of russification and sovietization had been achieved. Up to the end of the 1980s there were no schools for minorities in Latvia. The first school to be opened on the former territory of the USSR was a Jewish school, followed by Ukrainian, Polish, Estonian and other schools and classes for ethnic minority groups. During the past five years the principle of cultural autonomy has had an undeniable influence on social life. Yet ethnic self-confidence is only now on the rise.

During the past seven years some non-Latvian immigrants returned to their ethnic homelands. This has increased slightly the relative proportion of Latvians in the total population. However, the ethnic structure of Latvia has not changed significantly and, as a result, Riga is at present the only capital in Europe in which the number of ethnic natives fails to exceed 40% of the total population.

It is apparent that in the next decade the most important question for Latvian development is: will Latvia become a dual community state or a unified state embracing several ethnic minorities within one national community. The latter is the alternative of choice if the social and cultural development of Latvia is to proceed unhampered. Yet much depends on the course of democratisation and naturalisation in Latvia, the practical capacity of foreigners to integrate, the development of the principle of cultural autonomy, as well as Russia's foreign policy towards Latvia.

For better understanding of Latvian social structure religious scene also should be mentioned. Currently (September, 1997) in Latvia there are registered 937 religious congregations.

Figure 3.1.



4. DEVELOPMENT OF LATVIA'S CULTURAL SITUATION IN THE 20TH CENTURY¹

4.1. Under the Russian tsars

As a part of tsarist Russia, the present day territory of Latvia was split among three Baltic provinces: the southern (Latvian) part of Vidzeme, Kurzeme, and Latgale or Inflantia (part of the Vitebsk province). Although Latvians had become a nation, which further consolidated during the period on national awakening (1850s through the 1870s), cultural life in Latgale followed a pattern of development that was different from the rest of Latvia. In the so-called Baltic provinces, particularly in towns, culture developed under the influence of German Protestantism, whereas in Latgale it did so under the impact of Polish Catholicism, thus there existed a pronounced gap between the two parts of Latvia. In the rural areas the traditional peasant culture, with its peculiar ethnography, folklore and popular traditions, predominated representing the ethnic heritage of the Balts. This heritage found its expression in the works of the representatives of national awakening: Krisjanis Valdemars, Krisjanis Barons, Atis Kronvalds, Juris Alunans, Fricis Brivzemnieks, and others. They not only raised the scorned language of the people to an honourable position, but also started to collect folk songs, the precursors of national literature, which were among the richest and most ancient in Europe. The immense number of folk songs collected by Barons were being published since 1894.

In towns (Riga, Jelgava, Liepaja, Cesis) German culture enjoyed a dominant position represented by the Baltic German minority (5% of the total population). German traditions in music, architecture, philosophy, and art were cultivated. The Baltic Germans enjoyed relatively close ties both with Germany and St. Petersburg, then the capital of Russia. The Baltics possessed comparatively old traditions in theatre and opera (in Riga since 1785), a well developed concert life (House of the Black Heads, Musse), higher educational establishments (Tartu or Dorpat university shared by the Baltic countries where, until the process of russification started in 1889, the language of instruction was German; the Riga Polytechnic Institute), and various associations.

Contrary to the narrowly nationalistic view that held that the Latvian peasant culture and that of the German city dwellers developed independently and, to a great extent, remained alien to each other, the natural interaction between the two has been recognized in present-day Latvia.

Thus, choral singing and the Song Festival tradition (the First All-Latvian Song Festival took place in 1873 in Riga), which played an unifying role throughout Latvia's existence as a nation, developed, to a great extent, under German influence. This influence was further evidenced by seminaries for native teachers founded by Germans (e.g. Janis Cimze seminary). In the Baltics (except in Latgale) serfdom was abolished half a century earlier than in the rest of Russia. Education and school traditions were much older and literacy was more widespread than anywhere else in Russia. It should be noted that it was through a collaboration between the local German architects and architects of Baltic extraction that the famous Art Nouveau style developed at the turn of the century. Baltic German clergymen stimulated the development of Latvian literature, which later came to be influenced by translations of German classics (Juris Alunans; the 1896 translation of Goethe's *Faust* by Rainis). Thus Latvian national culture developed as a synthesis of an old ethnic heritage and Western influences.

¹ Chapter written by academic Jānis Stradiņš.

The cultural situation in Latvia was positively influenced by the fact that the Baltics were regarded not only as a trade and industrial transit area between Germany and Russia, but as a culture zone as well. It is also obvious that, during the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, Latvian national culture gained much from Russia. The first professional Latvian composers, classics of national music, the first painters and sculptors all received their formal training in St. Petersburg. The 10th All-Russian Congress of Archaeology (1896) was held in Riga, as were the first Latvian ethnographic exhibition of beautiful folk costumes and the first Latvian picture show. Many outstanding Latvian scientists and intellectuals have studied and worked not only in Dorpat, but also in St. Petersburg, Moscow and other Russian and Ukrainian centres.

The beneficial influence of Russia, however, was counteracted by forced russification, a feature of Alexander the Third's reign, that caused opposition in Latvian society. To a degree, the same was true of the Baltic German cultural policy, which tended to impede the development of local culture and caused stress. This social and national strain, the double yoke that held the nation between two grindstones, had a radicalising effect on Latvian society and made Marxist and Bolshevik-Leninist ideas more attractive. This led to a social explosion, the revolution of 1905, which was a culmination of the struggle for national liberation, yet, at times, found its expression in exaggeration and violence (burning down country estates, destroying cultural artefacts, etc.)

After a bloody suppression of the revolution, a ten years period of calm set in. During this time, notable success was achieved in the development of economy and culture. On the other hand, quite a number of Latvian intellectuals (Rainis, Aspazija, Skalbe, Akuraters) were forced into political exile: to Switzerland, the Scandinavian countries and elsewhere. To some extent, this helped to broaden their perspective.

During this period, there appeared an inclination toward Scandinavian cultures that remained pronounced throughout the 20th century. With the help of Russian and German intermediaries Latvian literature and art overstepped local boundaries. Of special importance is the collection of Russian translations of Latvian literary works by Maxim Gorky and Valery Bryusov. Unfortunately, these translations were published in 1916, at the height of World War I, therefore their popularity remained limited.

When evaluating the situation of Latvian culture within the confines of Russian empire, it is important to note, however, that the crown did nothing to promote it. Its formation entirely depended on the enthusiasm and patriotism of the Latvian activists. The Riga Latvian Association (founded in 1868), with its commissions for drama, science, book publishing, history, and language, played an important unifying role. Especially during its early years, the society favoured the development of Latvian culture in general and the humanities in particular (at first on an amateur level); it organised summer conferences for writers and "explanatory sessions" on various questions, and was instrumental in changing Latvian orthography from Gothic to Latin script. In 1869, under the auspices of the Riga Latvian society, the first Latvian theatre was founded, to be followed by a private opera company. Similar societies were organised by Latvians in the rural areas; they carried on active cultural work in the country and in provincial towns. The first patrons from the ranks of wealthy Latvian businessmen appeared already during the tsarist period, among them Augusts Dombrovskis. He founded an abstention society in a working class suburb of Riga, which provided free room and board to a number of Latvian writers, artists, and composers. Janis Misins, a self-taught man, in 1885, started a unique collection of books, newspapers, and other printed works in Latvian and about Latvians. His collection later formed the core of a Riga library now bearing his name.

Similar cultural undertakings, on an even greater scale, were carried out by the Baltic Germans, also via private institutions that developed extensive cultural activities in towns and in the country. In Riga and in the provincial towns, minority cultures (Russian, Polish, Lithuanian, Estonian, etc.) became increasingly more visible. The cultural situation in Latgale developed along slightly different lines: under the Polish influence and in the

spirit of Catholicism; but there too national awakening, with elements of local patriotism, was on the rise. Cultural development in Latgale was hampered by the prohibition against printing in the Latin script, which was proclaimed after the suppression of the Polish revolt and continued in force until 1904.

With the outset of World War I this period in Latvia's history came to an end. The war affected Latvia much more than its neighbouring countries, because for two and a half years (1915-1918) Latvian territory served as a war theatre for two of the warring countries, Russia and Germany. Most of Latvia's industrial enterprises, as well as many schools, were evacuated; a large part of Latvia's population became refugees. For a time (during the first months of 1919 in Riga, and then, from 1919 to 1920 in Latgale), Stucka's communist regime ruled in Latvia. During this brief period, along with progressive and avant-garde experiments of the so-called "proletarian culture," "bourgeois culture," already devastated by war, suffered some further losses.

Yet the period of World War I and the fight for freedom had also a positive effect on Latvian culture. The refugees in Russia brought about a second "national awakening" marked by strong cultural initiatives and a profusion of literary works and giving rise to the idea of, first, Latvia's autonomy and then, independence. This idea found its clear expression in the Proclamation of Latvia's Independence on 18 November, 1918. The fight for freedom was successfully completed, and Latvia's independence internationally recognized, in the years 1920-1921. During the twenty years of independence, cultural life in Latvia could be founded on a new, national and European, basis.

4.2. The period of independence (1918-1940)

Although Latvia gained its independence at great cost – the country was in ruins and very poor, particularly during the early years, and experiencing a deep demographic crisis – political independence and people's enthusiasm revolutionised cultural life and placed it on a new foundation. For the first time, there emerged a conscious and purposeful approach to cultural policy. Its first features had already appeared in exile. In the summer of 1917 in Dorpat (Tartu), the first congress of Latvian teachers discussed the possibilities of founding a university, protecting historical monuments, setting up centralised archives and museums, publishing historical sources and works by outstanding authors, and launching a school reform. All these ideas were carried out, some on an even greater scale than planned, during the first few years of Latvia's existence as a republic. The efforts to do away with the cultural patronage of Russia and Germany, however, neither conflicted with respect for universal human values, nor did they lead to narrow provincialism and self-isolation. The broad world outlook of the leading cultural figures, poet and thinker Rainis chief among them, as well as familiarity with the cultural achievements of other nations during the early part of the 20th century so dramatic in the fate of Latvia proved an excellent safeguard against both nihilist tendencies and nationalist euphoria.

The first Latvian higher educational establishment, the University of Latvia, was founded as early as 1919 on the basis of the Russian-German Polytechnic Institute but offering a full university course. It comprised 12 departments or faculties (philosophy, law, history, Protestant and later also Catholic theology) where academic and research work was carried out. The teaching staff at the new university was mostly drawn from Latvians who had returned to their native country from the "first intellectual exile." Because of the cultural monopoly of the Baltic Germans and the Russian policy of russification they had to start their academic careers outside Latvia, primarily in Russia and in Ukraine, but some also at Western European universities. Towards the end of 1919, the Latvian Conservatory and the Latvian Academy of Art were founded, both headed by outstanding artists educated in St. Petersburg, Jazeps Vitols and Vilhelms Purvītis. A democratic school

policy was adopted that in the beginning was greatly influenced by the social democrats. It was characterised by a wide autonomy extended to the national minorities and an encouragement of vocational education (People's University of Riga, People's University of Latvia, Latgale People's University, Murmuiza People's University and others). A private German higher school, the Herder Institute, a Russian Scientific Institute, as well as several teachers' institutes (in Riga, Rezekne, Daugavpils, Cesis, Jelgava) were founded in 1921. The Latvian Parliament, the Saeima, confirmed the constitutions of the largest among these between 1923 and 1927.

In 1919 the State Archives were founded, and the newly opened State Library joined the rich Municipal Library of Riga founded in 1524. Along with the State Museum of History (1920) and the State Museum of Art (1920), the Latvian Open Air Museum (1924) was established on Lake Jugla after the model of the Skansen in Stockholm with the aim of preserving the traditions of folk architecture and ethnography.

Regulations were laid down and a Managing Board for the protection of cultural monuments and a Repository of Folklore were established. These and similar institutions (e.g. the Riga Polytechnic Institute) had worked on a private basis or under the auspices of rich municipalities (primarily Riga) before Latvia gained independence, but in the very first decade of independence the maintenance of cultural establishments and promotion of culture fell to the state. The National Opera, the National Theatre and the somewhat eccentric *Daile* Theatre were all founded by means of large state subsidies.

Hence such institutions as the Riga Latvian Society, while continuing to function (in 1932, for instance, the scientific commission of the RLS even acquired the status of the first, albeit still private, academy of sciences — *Academia Scientarium Latviensis*), lost a great deal of their former significance. A special, though not decisive, role was taken on by private sponsors (e.g., architect Morberg's donation to the University, the philanthropic activities of publishers Gulbis and the Benjamins family and a number of industrialists). Of a much greater importance was the Latvian Culture Foundation established on the initiative of Karlis Ulmanis, Latvia's first Prime minister. An important achievement of the cultural policy of this period was the introduction of Latvian culture to the world at large via translations of literary works into German, Polish, French, and other languages and attempts to stage plays by Latvian authors abroad (these productions, however, did not gain wide popularity). Efforts to create a Baltic "intellectual entente" and to orient the society towards the Nordic culture met with partial success and signalled a shift away from the German and Russian influence that, at the time, was considered politically and ideologically undesirable. Translations of Scandinavian novels became very popular; conferences of archaeologists, historians and hydrologists from the Baltic Sea countries took place. Some serious effort was expended in bringing Latvian culture to Belgium, France, Great Britain and Switzerland. Beginning in 1934, Congresses of Intellectual Cooperation among the three Baltic countries were organised and were a clear indication that their cultural ties were much closer than the political or economic ones. It is important to note that during this period, there was a marked cultural orientation towards Western Europe and the Nordic countries, while avoiding closer ties with Germany, especially after Hitler's accession to power. Cultural contacts with Russia were also limited, both because of its Communist ideology and self-isolation, and were maintained primarily by leftist intellectuals. The vast majority of their counterparts in Russia, who had chosen to remain there after Latvia gained independence, were killed during Stalin's purge in 1937.

During the parliamentary period (1920-1934), the Latvian cultural policy was quite democratic and showed great tolerance toward the minorities. It also promoted, albeit not vigorously enough, the cultural regeneration and integration of Latgale. While its influence was perhaps not as central as during the tsarist era, Riga still maintained its role as a Baltic metropolis merging various cultures, including the dynamic activities of émigrés from Russia and the continuity of Baltic German traditions. Riga was still a

multicultural city, although the Latvian element was becoming increasingly visible.

The emphasis was shifted after May 15, 1934 when, as a result of a bloodless coup led by Prime Minister Karlis Ulmanis, an authoritarian regime was established in Latvia. While the work of cultural institutions was not disrupted and even new ones were established, they sooner or later had to conform to the ideology of the new regime. Former associations were united and their activities streamlined, later "chambers," after the Italian pattern, were introduced. Limitations were placed on the cultural autonomy of minorities, and the concept of a "Latvian Latvia" gained prominence. Under the authoritarian regime, construction took place, both in Riga and in the provinces, on an unprecedented scale, including public buildings, schools, and hospitals. After the Freedom Monument was unveiled on November 18, 1935, numerous monuments for Latvian freedom fighters went up in many other places; the monumental Brethren Cemetery commemorating the war dead was completed. To revise the views on Latvian history advanced by Baltic German historians, new studies, to be conducted in the spirit of "truth and nationalism," were encouraged. Institute of History Studies, which was to become part of the planned State Academy of Sciences, was established in 1936. A Language Repository cropped up along the already existing Folklore Repository, and published a whole range of historical sources. Ulmanis' government did much to promote science and education by establishing foundations for scientific research and university studies. All this contributed to what could be called the first steps toward a "scientific policy" in Latvia.

During Ulmanis' time, book publishing flourished as did libraries, especially school libraries, which benefited from Ulmanis' much publicised "friendly appeal" to Latvians to donate books and objects of art to their former schools. While attempting to set literature and art on the course of positivism and nationalism, and encouraging glorification of the leadership principle, the regime was quite tolerant of other tendencies, which yielded diverse works, some frankly modernist and urbane.

Public opinion continued to function and, in fact, had enough authority to influence and correct quite a few instructions issued by overzealous functionaries not only in regard to Latvian art and literature, but also to public monuments of Baltic German culture. Thus it successfully opposed the exaggerated demand of "dismantling the remnants of the castles once built by German oppressors and transforming them into cowsheds and stables for the Latvian peasants." True, a *Kulturkampf* of sorts arose with the Baltic Germans over the preservation the architecture of Old Riga, which was supposed to be demolished and monumental buildings and vast squares constructed in its place, and over the fate of cultural artefacts collected by local German societies and deemed to be turned over to the Board for Monuments and the State Archives. This even caused a political strain in the relations with Hitler's Germany. Finally, in the fall of 1939, all Baltic Germans left Latvia as a result of implementing the secret protocols of the Molotoff-Ribbentrop pact.

In 1937, Ulmanis founded the Fatherland Award, drawn annually from a special fund to mark outstanding achievement in science, literature, or art. Although the process of selection was somewhat prejudiced, and final say in the matter rested with the "Leader of the Nation", four times the prize was awarded the recipients were truly deserving and had made permanent contribution to Latvian culture.

Among the most positive features of the independence period were the frequent study trips to countries of Western and Northern Europe; the many guest performances (in the form of concerts, lectures and the like), and contracts with famous artists who performed in the National Opera — as a result, Latvian culture gained a European context and perspective. At the same time, the state did much to support and promote local traditions: Song festivals, study and making of ethnographic clothing, registration of old buildings with characteristic national traits, and even incorporation of these traits in modern architecture.

It was during this time that a stable foundation was laid for the development of Latvian culture incorporating European traditions yet coloured by discernible national traits. The rapid cultural development of the 1920s is cause for admiration, even though not all accomplishments of that time deserve unanimous praise or acceptance today.

4.3. World War II

World War II painfully affected Latvia, even more so than World War I, because it signalled an end to Latvia's independence. During the following forty-five years its development was marked by its status as one of the constituent republics of the Soviet Union. During the war, many cultural treasures were destroyed, and the loss of the greatest part of the intelligentsia was devastating. In 1939, the German Balts were repatriated to Germany; part of the Jewish population was exterminated in the Holocaust; a great number of Latvian intellectuals perished during the reprisals instigated by the successive totalitarian regimes (Stalin's and Hitler's) while, at the end of World War II, a considerable percentage of the population went into exile to escape communist repression.

Under a secret agreement concluded on August 23, 1939 by Stalin's Soviet Union and Hitler's Germany, Latvia was relegated to the Soviet sphere of influence. Repatriation of German Balts followed. It involved a large number of scientists, teachers, and other intellectuals. On June 17, 1940, the Red Army marched into Latvia. After a mock election the so-called People's parliament convened and duly voted to ask for Latvia's incorporation into the USSR as one of the 16 Constituent republics. Sovereignty guaranteed to the new Union republic by Stalin's Constitution was purely nominal.

Cultural life gradually came to be altered to fit the Soviet model through russification and imposition of the Stalinist canon and requirements. Yet the first year of occupation was too short a time for the change to be thorough as the great majority of the old intelligentsia, teachers and artists were still in place and did not easily yield to re-education.

All private property, including that of cultural value, was nationalised. The "bourgeois" associations and the Culture Foundation were closed down, while the basic structure of higher educational establishments, schools, theatres and other cultural institutions remained intact, but programs and repertoires were changed. All cultural activities were subjected to control and censorship. The cultural autonomy of national minorities was much more limited than under Ulmanis' authoritarian regime; only Russian and Latvian schools and cultural establishments functioned in the full sense of the word.

The number of Latvian intellectuals who took an active part in the process of sovietization was relatively small and confined to a handful of Communists and leftists; others were apathetic or temporising. Many of those in the intellectual professions, including teachers, were dismissed from work, a number were arrested. On June 14, 1941, the first mass deportation to Siberia took place affecting many well known intellectuals.

All these developments shifted the public sentiment to favour the Germans whose influence and culture had been traditionally regarded with certain distrust: a large part of the Latvian population greeted the invasion of Hitler's troops, in late June 1941, as liberation from Communist oppression and an end to the "Year of Terror."

The German occupation that lasted from 1941 to 1944 in most parts of Latvia, and, in Kurzeme, till May 8, 1945, however, soon dispersed any illusions as to a renewal of Latvia's independence and flourishing of its culture under German tutelage. Germanization of the Baltic States was part and parcel of Hitler's strategy; the only question was to the degree it should be carried out: *Eindeutschung* or *Germanisierung*; yet under wartime conditions these plans were neither implemented, nor openly declared, unlike the genocidal policies against the Jewish population. Many outstanding Jewish cultural figures, intellectuals and teachers perished in the Holocaust. Communist

collaborators from among the Latvians were also killed or subject to severe repression.

With the aid of certain compromises, Latvia's pre-war cultural establishments managed to continue functioning. Several departments of the University of Latvia (now known as *Universität zu Riga*) as well as other higher educational establishments where Latvian was the language of instruction, the Opera House and theatres remained open; so far from the front lines, both concerts and art exhibitions could take place. During this period, quite a few notable works of literature, art and theatre were produced, many books and journals were published, all subsidised by the cultural institutions of the so-called Latvian Self-government, installed by the occupation authorities. There were, of course, attempts to popularise Nazi theories of race and Aryan civilisation, to promote German oriented culture and the concept of a common destiny for Latvians and Germans based on the ethnic origins and history of the Latvian nation, yet they cannot be said to have had much effect on Latvian cultural life and education.

In the summer and autumn of 1944, with the Soviet Army approaching, a large number of scientists, cultural figures and educational workers sought asylum in Kurzeme or fled directly to Germany or Sweden. As Nazi Germany surrendered and Kurzeme fell to the Soviet Army, another great number of Latvians left, around 270 000 persons in all. Although a number of them returned to their native country (particularly those from the Soviet occupied territories), more than half of the refugees remained in the West thus laying the foundation of what is known as the "second intellectual exile." This designation seems appropriate for the Latvian cultural situation, as the greatest part of the emigrants belonged to the middle class, and to the intelligentsia, who were forced to seek a new life in the West, while trying to keep their Latvian identity and hoping for imminent political change in the Baltics. Those hopes were spurred by the fact that Western Allies (the USA, Great Britain) had not formally recognized the incorporation of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union (though they accepted the *de facto* situation resulting from World War II). Thus Latvia lost nearly one half of its intelligentsia, primarily its intellectual elite while those who remained in their homeland tried to find possibilities to continue working in the field of culture and education.

4.4. Under Soviet occupation

The cultural situation in Soviet occupied Latvia followed the pattern ubiquitous throughout the Soviet Union: it surrendered to communist totalitarian doctrines, underwent periods of torpid Marxist dogmatism and short lived liberalisation. The multinational Soviet culture was characterised by forced unification and internationalist class approach, slightly mitigated by the formula "national in form, socialist in content," which allowed for preservation of certain values of national culture. Another formula, "Art belongs to the people," at times made possible a modicum of democratisation, yet also brought about vulgarisation of culture, which was most pronounced in Zhdanov's directives of 1946-48 concerning literature and music. The "struggle against bourgeois nationalism" and the thesis about "the existence of two cultures in one" further limited the part of national cultural heritage that was officially deemed worth preserving.

The early post-war period in Latvia witnessed a direct suppression of intellectuals while during and after Khrushchev's thaw it took both more refined and less obvious forms. Officially not part of cultural policy, certain tendencies of russification became evident, yet, particularly in the cultural sphere, concealed antagonism against excesses of unification, internationalisation and eradication of national traditions and cultural heritage was also on the rise. While the conditions in Latvia were less favourable than in Estonia and Lithuania, this passive resistance became more open following Khrushchev's thaw, in the 1950s and 1960s as a new generation appeared on the cultural scene. Poetry, the fine arts, theatre, song festivals, and other spheres of culture became the arena where most

battles for national identity were fought.

The most important success of that period is that the very notion of Latvia and Latvian culture survived and totalitarian ideology failed to become the decisive factor in the consciousness of the nation. Latvian remained the language of instruction in schools and universities and was spoken in other cultural establishments; national culture even continued to develop, albeit within the limits drawn by the regime. Along with the radio (established in 1925), state television began transmissions in 1954 with a comparatively large number of culture programs whose quality improved after the TV centre was built in 1979; the Riga Film studio, founded in 1940, gained international fame with its documentaries. In terms of book publication, Latvia held second place among the Soviet republics (after Estonia) in per capita editions. Most of the publications were in Latvian; among them were such valuable editions as the collected works by Rainis in 30 volumes (academic edition), several encyclopaedias, works in archaeology and others. Libraries were comparatively well stocked, particularly the State Library and the Fundamental Library of the Academy of Sciences, yet their collections in the humanities were far from complete and the State Library remained housed in less than suitable premises. New museums, including Rainis Museum of History of Literature and Art, the Museum of Natural History, the Museum of History of Medicine, as well as many memorial museums were opened, the total number reaching 75 state museums and including the restored 18th century residence of the duchy of Kurland built by Rastrelli. Many historical and cultural monuments including St. Peter's church in Riga were restored and inventoried. Some new noteworthy monuments were erected, for example, the memorial for Nazi martyrs built at the site of Salaspils concentration camp.

Ethnographers were busy at work: the Society for Protection of Nature and Historical Monuments was founded in 1959; folklore groups and folk art developed, including manufacture of stylised national dress and pottery in the traditional design of Latgale and other regions, and research of folk music, all under the auspices of Emilis Melngailis Folk Art Centre. While heavy ideological dues were extracted by the regime, the traditional Song festivals nevertheless became a powerful expression of national unity; choirs and dance ensembles that eventually carried Latvia's name well beyond the borders of the USSR, were organised and subsidised by the State. As early as the 1970s many informal folklore groups were formed, which became a means of national self-expression and protest — those were persecuted by the regime. Popular music appeared on the scene, with the most popular representatives Raimonds Pauls and Imants Kalnins.

Culture was financed from surplus, and the Ministry of Culture was among the poorest and least prestigious; nevertheless, the state subsidies were sufficient to develop the Opera, to maintain the existing Latvian and Russian theatres and establish new professional companies in Daugavpils and Valmiera, as well as the Musical Comedy, the Youth and Puppet theatres in Riga. Since 1947 the best theatres of Moscow and Leningrad and other outstanding Russian companies gave guest performances in Riga reciprocated by Latvian performances in Russian cities. During this period, construction of the new *Daile* Theatre was completed, and foundations were laid for a new theatre house in Valmiera. Latvian opera and ballet companies gave successful performances, organ music concerts at the Dome cathedral became famous throughout the Soviet Union.

Writers, artists, composers, cinema workers, architects and journalists loyal to the regime were united into officially sponsored creative associations that maintained a degree of autonomy from their parent associations at the Union level and lent financial aid, often in the form of state commissions, to a variety of creative projects, in return demanding works favourable to the regime. At the same time, these associations consolidated into organisations that more or less openly opposed the regime: this became particularly evident during the period of the so-called "third national awakening" when the extended plenary session of the Writers Union, on June 1-2, 1988, became the signal for an open struggle for national liberation.

The work of a number of Latvian intellectuals was bestowed with high honours by the Soviet regime: the linguist Janis Endzelins, painter Indulis Zarins, as well as the sculptors and architects of the Salaspils memorial received the Lenin Prize; Stalin Prize (later the USSR State Prize) and, in 1957, Latvian SSR State Prize were awarded to several others whose high quality work was deemed acceptable to the regime. At the same time, art and literature of semi-dissident content appeared. Strict censorship practices, however, hindered the development of a number outstanding cultural personalities (Vizma Belsevica, Janis Pauluks, Ojars Vacietis, Auseklis Bauskenieks and others).

Throughout this period, the Latvian State University continued to function as a centre of humanities (linguistics, philosophy, journalism), albeit also adapted to Soviet ideology. New higher educational establishments appeared, and Latvian remained the language of instruction in all but a few of them. In February 1946, the State Academy of Science of the Latvian SSR was founded. Formally, it was an independent from Moscow and comprised several humanitarian institutes (the Institutes of Language and Literature, History, Economics; later the Institute of Philosophy and Law was added). The State Fundamental and Misins libraries and the scientific publishing house *Zinatne* were established. Research in such fields as archaeology, ethnography, folklore, and history of the language did much to preserve Latvian national culture and further its development. Yet regional cultural variety was largely neglected. The original culture of Latgale with its unique dialects suffered, as did the culture of the Livs (the smallest indigenous ethnic group in Latvia), whose re-animation, begun in the 1930s, was taken up anew only during Gorbachev's perestroika. The cultural development of national minorities: Poles, Jews, local Russians (incl. Old-believers) was suppressed. Russian culture developed mostly in the context of so-called Soviet culture and was invigorated by numerous guest performances by popular Soviet actors and musicians.

During this period, the official culture in Latvia developed as an integral part of the Soviet culture and was to a large degree isolated from Western influences. Works of authors acceptable to the regime (also Latvian classics) were translated into Russian and languages of the other Soviet republics and published outside Latvia in huge editions (the novels by Vilis Lācis were particularly popular). Latvian popular composer Raimonds Pauls was phenomenally famous all over the Soviet Union. Literature and Art festivals featuring a particular republic took place in Moscow and other cities of the USSR, yet they were often formal and ostentatious.

Beginning with the 1960s, and particularly during the perestroika, Latvian arts and crafts were exhibited in Western Europe, Latvian professional and amateur choirs gave guest performances and regularly won top prizes at international competitions. Since the 1970s, Latvian scientists took part in international congresses and conferences; several such events were also held in Riga. All these activities, while often replete with elements of Soviet propaganda and strictly controlled and even manipulated by the authorities, nevertheless helped to open a crack in the Iron Curtain.

A measure of increased vitality and freedom into Latvia's cultural life was instilled by Gorbachev's perestroika whose beginning coincided with the 150 anniversary of Krisjanis Barons (the man who single-handedly gathered and sorted hundreds of thousands of Latvian folksongs) and a powerful surge of national awareness in Latvian society that was beginning to stir from its apathy. In 1987 the Latvian Culture Foundation was established as a local branch of its All-Union parent organisation and an alternative to the official Ministry of Culture; it initiated a number of grassroots cultural projects (e.g., a program designed to preserve the unique cultural environment along the Daugava, a project to compile a list of Latvian place names, the Spidola culture grant program, etc.). The Foundation was the first Latvian institution to declare sovereignty, in May 1989, from the USSR institutions. The "Singing Revolution" in Latvia had begun enabling it, over the next few years, to peacefully separate from the USSR and regain its lost independence. The Latvian intelligentsia, and the national culture, which had survived the harsh decades

of occupation and kept its orientation to values of European humanism, gave a powerful impetus to the non-violent national liberation movement.

4.5. The phenomenon of Latvian émigré culture

Parallel to cultural process in occupied Latvia, a vigorous cultural life developed also in exile whose core was constituted of the political émigrés who had found shelter in Sweden and Germany after the war. Before 1949, most cultural events took place in West Germany; even a Baltic University was established in Pineberg near Hamburg. Later, as the DP camps were dismantled, the émigrés dispersed to the USA, Canada, Australia, Great Britain and South America. Although most of 150 thousand refugees were without Fatherland and almost without any means, they were quick to adapt to life in their host countries, while preserving their national identity and an unusually strong feeling of patriotism. The sense of national identity was passed on to children and grandchildren thus ensuring continuity, stability and high quality of cultural life that can be regarded as a truly unique historic phenomenon. Notable success was achieved in book publishing and historical research that was carried out by outstanding professionals whose books on Latvian history were to have lasting importance.

To this day, regular Song festivals are held, especially in America and Australia; several amateur theatres are active; émigré artists present their work both in group exhibitions and one-man shows. Many eminent Latvian writers, composers and artists continued working in exile, although their work, during the Soviet period, did not reach Latvia at all or was subject to severe restrictions; a new generation of writers and artists have reached their maturity in exile; journals, almanacs on culture, literature, and art, as well as two encyclopedias have been published. A number of first and the second generation Latvian scientists, architects, engineers, and doctors have won international acclaim. In the years since independence was regained, they have been of much needed expert assistance to Latvia. Established in 1968, the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies (AABS), has been active in promoting the idea of unity of the Baltic States and nations, and engaged in research of their cultural heritage in the Western world. The development of Latvian émigré culture owed much to practices of self-initiative and cultural patronage. Cultural activities were often financed by the Culture Foundation founded by the World Association of Free Latvians (PBLA) in 1968, which established its own National Award (after regaining independence – PBLA Award) presented annually for outstanding merit in the field of culture.

This émigré culture was not purely nostalgic: it was instrumental in safeguarding the idea of Latvia's independence, its cultural traditions and in promoting continuity of culture as the Latvian state was being restored in the years 1990 to 1991. As early as the Gorbachev period, and especially after Latvia regained independence, the rich cultural heritage accumulated in exile became freely accessible to Latvians in their native land, whereas formerly the cultural links between Latvia and its sons and daughters abroad, limited as they were, had been manipulated and controlled by the Soviet regime and, more or less openly, by the KGB.

4.6. The cultural situation in Latvia after the renewal of independence

After the restoration of independence, the cultural life in Latvia is still undergoing transformation and is not devoid of certain contradictions. On one hand, compared with the years of communist rule, culture can develop freely and there are no obstacles to an

open expression of national identity either for Latvians or Latvia's minorities. On the other hand, during this transition period, as ties with the giant empire are broken and the former socialist planned economy is restructured according to free market principles, culture is undergoing a financially difficult period. State and municipal subsidies have dramatically decreased; high prices and restitution of property have led to the closure of many state managed cultural objects — libraries, museums, etc. (one should note, however, that in 1995 the Saeima passed a law exempting a number of cultural, scientific and educational establishments from privatisation). Salaries of culture professionals have dropped even relative to the low level maintained during the Soviet period. State patronage has ended, yet private sponsorship is slow to fill the gap.

Notwithstanding all these difficulties, new large scale projects do develop: there are many new private publishing houses that, among popular books, publish serious literature; the number of art exhibitions is unprecedented; renovation of the Opera house has been completed and a project drafted for a new building to house the collection of the National Library; several monuments commemorating the struggle for freedom have been repaired or erected anew to replace those destroyed by the Communists. The 800th anniversary since Riga was founded, which falls in 2001, will be commemorated by building an authentic replica of the historical House of the Blackheads destroyed during the war.

Higher education has undergone substantial changes, a greater emphasis on humanities chief among them. New higher educational establishments have opened, including the Academy of Culture (1990). Research in humanities has, to a great extent, relocated to the University of Latvia and other universities. The Academy of Sciences has also undergone radical changes: since 1992, it functions as a "staff" Academy like those in the West; many prominent scientists have been elected honorary members both from Latvia and abroad, including outstanding émigré and foreign scholars and cultural personalities. A number of former institutes of the Academy have been incorporated into the University of Latvia while some have become independent. Research conducted there is free from totalitarian dogma and bias. However, the number of researchers has decreased because of critically low pay. State financing of research is among the lowest in Europe comparable to that of Romania and Albania and lower than in Estonia and the post-totalitarian states of Central Europe.

This period of transition is also marked by an increased presence of commercial culture. Latvian cinema has virtually collapsed. Commercialisation of cultural life is on the rise. Art exhibitions and literary works, on the other hand, testify to an increase of elitist tendencies. Because of low pensions and high prices it has become progressively more difficult for the older generation educated people, especially those living in the country, to gain access to cultural values. Creative associations no longer receive state subsidies, and that has had a painful effect on the older generation artists and writers.

These negative elements, however, do not overshadow the positive tendencies. Representatives of the younger generation boldly claim their own. Many of them have been educated abroad in Western Europe and in Nordic countries and are engaged in a serious search for national and European identity. Cultural enterprises are stimulated and, to a lesser degree, financially supported by non-state structures, such as the Culture Foundation, the Academy of Sciences, the Riga Latvian Association and entirely new institutions: the Soros Foundation–Latvia, Goethe Institute and British Council.

In 1995, the Saeima ratified a document that can be considered as blueprint for cultural strategy in Latvia – "Main Cultural Policy Postulates of Latvia". It is too early to claim that it is being put into practice. A substantial part of the society is understandably anxious about the future development of Latvian culture. Yet historical experience allows us to proceed with cautious optimism.

5. LEGISLATION IN CULTURAL POLICY

After adopting the Declaration of Independence in 1990, the Supreme Soviet of Latvia began to construct a new system of laws. For a while, many laws and state activities associated with the Soviet regime continued to function with certain adjustments. At present, however, great attention is paid to working out new legislative norms. Laws must answer the requirements of the contradictory social reality associated with the period of transition, as well as the legal standards of a democratic society coordinated with requirements of the European Convention. Given conditions in Latvia in this period, it is unsurprising that new laws in the political and economic spheres took priority. Nonetheless, the Latvian Supreme Soviet adopted several laws regulating the cultural sphere. These laws formed the basis for legislative influence on those aspects of cultural affairs which, during the Soviet period, had not been regulated by precisely formulated laws, and created a basic legal structure for that sphere of social life. The following laws were among those adopted: "On the Press and Other Mass Media" (1990); "On Archives" (1991); "On a Free Development of Latvia's National and Ethnic Groups and their Rights to Cultural Autonomy" (1991); "On Protection of Cultural Monuments" (1992); "On the Work of Radio and Television" (1992); "On Social Organisations and their Associations" (1992); "On Latvia's National Library" (1992); a collection of statutes "On Copyright" (1993). During the Fifth Saeima these legislative activities decreased somewhat, although that body also adopted some new laws that regulate the functioning of cultural infrastructures, particularly its financing (e.g., "On Taxation of Lotteries and Games of Chance" (1994)). In the period extending from Independence to 1995 the Main Cultural Policy Postulates of Latvia were established. During the Sixth Saeima the law "On Museums", as well as the law "On Compulsory Deposition in Libraries of One Free Copy of All Printed Material" are passed.

The Ministry of Culture is currently preparing several other laws in support of key cultural institutions in Latvia. Some of them will probably be adopted by the present parliament (the Sixth Saeima). These are: the law for culture institutions¹, aimed to become the "umbrella" law for culture, which will divide responsibility for the maintenance of activities of culture institutions between the state and municipal governing bodies; law for Cultural Endowment², the law for libraries³, the law for the National Opera, the law for creative professions, the law for the sponsorship and mecenatism, the films' law, the law for joining the Convention of Rome.

At present, Latvian legislation is not sufficiently well established and defined, and this of course bears upon cultural policy as well as other matters of public interest. The aims of cultural policy legislation include establishment of a legal and institutional means to reflect and include all elements of the population in the manifold forms of cultural development, creation of means to secure healthy cultural infrastructures, maintenance of cultural traditions, protection of newly created values, establishing social support for those people who are professionally involved in the creation and reproduction of cultural products, and the formation of a legal basis for the involvement of non-governmental institutions in the financing of cultural activities.

In December 1993, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science responded to the demands heard from various segments of society and especially from experts on culture, by deciding to support the formation of basic guidelines for culture and to carry out an official document pending adoption on the state level.

¹ Adopted in 1998.

² Adopted in 1997.

³ Adopted in 1998.

To provide information on the full range of available options in solving problems of cultural policy, as well as to highlight processes of transformation in various areas of culture, state appointed experts group led by Imants Ziedonis drafted a proposal entitled "The Main Cultural Policy Postulates of Latvia". To provide a wide range public discussions, the aforementioned document was published in various periodicals and distributed among artists, intellectuals, public organisations, political parties, cultural institutions and other state and public bodies both in Riga and in the provinces. The survey generated about 200 responses, many of which entailed detailed proposals both concerning general principles of state cultural policy and more specific issues.

The survey served as confirmation of the widely held view that state support is necessary for developing the system of cultural education, promoting creative work and preserving the cultural heritage. Several proposals focused on the need to decentralise decision-making processes, generation and distribution of cultural financing. Most of the proposals were later reflected in the document defining the basic principles of state cultural policy.

While working on this document, Swedish, French, Dutch and Austrian reports on national culture produced within the European Council's Review Program were studied. These reports largely promoted principles characteristic of The Architect State Cultural policy model.

In August 1994 Latvian representatives participated in a seminar organised by the Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs, "The Cultural Responsibility of the State". When various aspects of cultural policy of the Baltic States, Poland, Russia, and East Germany were compared with Swedish, Finnish, Norwegian and Danish policies, it became evident that all of these post-socialist states that are seeking to institute their cultural policy reform have largely chosen to follow the Architect State Model. Another conclusion drawn at the seminar was that the principles manifested in the draft project correspond to the concept of cultural policy as practised in the Northern part of Europe.

In October of the same year, the Project was discussed at a gathering of creative intellectuals attended by the President. Several among the speakers were rather critical of the document, pointing out that the definitions of the cultural responsibility of the state are too broad and declarative, whereas the tasks of the executive bodies have been left ambiguous and regulations pertaining to the forms of financing of culture have not been spelled out.

In late 1994, after the reconstitution of the Ministry of Culture, the Department of Cultural Policy was established and charged with finalising the draft project. In this process, the objectives of cultural policy were further explicated. The priority of cultural education received added emphasis. Experts at the Ministry of Culture also prepared various supplements in the form of statistical surveys and graphs, which helped to gain a better perspective on the situation in individual areas of culture.

On May 31, 1995, this final draft was discussed by experts at the conference "Culture in Changing Latvia." The document was approved for submission to the Parliament.

On September 28, 1995, following a rather heated debate on the state of culture in the nation, the Saeima adopted the basic principles of cultural policy in the form of an official document reflecting the common interests of both the state and the public in the area of cultural policy.

6. MANAGEMENT OF CULTURAL ACTIVITY AND ADMINISTRATION OF ITS INFRASTRUCTURE

Management of cultural activity and the administration of its infrastructure in Latvia is carried out by an administrative system parts of which remain in a stage of development and re-organisation. In what follows, the joint structure of this system of management and co-ordination is depicted. The Parliament (Saeima), institutions of executive power, state administrative bodies at various levels, and municipal, non-governmental and public consultative institutions form the elements in this joint structure. Plainly, some parts of the system do not exist, remaining as yet in the planning stages, and certainly some further changes in the plan for this system may occur.

In the legislative branch, problems of culture are addressed by the Committee of Education, Culture and Science. Its principal function is to adjust particular draft laws to the basic outline of cultural policy adopted by the Parliament, and to develop laws incorporating draft materials prepared by the Cabinet of Ministers, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education and Science, and individual MPs. Since Latvia has joined several international conventions, it is necessary to amend some of the adopted laws to make them comply with their requirements. It is the Commission's responsibility to collaborate with the Ministry of Culture and individual experts and regularly review cultural policy, oversee the implementation of adopted laws, and publicise respective legislative norms.

This chapter will only address particular elements in the management of cultural activity — chief trends and functions in the work of the Ministry of Culture, the structure ensuring implementation of policy decisions, the main thrust of municipal efforts in the cultural sphere, as well as the basic functions of the National Council of Culture. The most significant tasks of other management levels and elements will be reviewed when discussing particular branches of culture.

The Ministry of Culture is the institution, which creates state cultural policy and co-ordinates its implementation. Methodologically and practically, the actions of the Ministry of Culture simply reflect state cultural policy goals ratified by the Saeima. These goals are:

- to preserve, popularise and actively enliven Latvian cultural heritage as an expression of national identity;
- to ensure democratic and decentralised development of cultural activities in Latvia;
- to further the development of diverse cultural institutions, create new cultural organisations and centres, and involve all kinds of institutions, people's groups and individual persons with cultural interests in raising the quality of cultural products and the general environment of intellectual and artistic activity;
- to promote the full realisation of any person's cultural interests and needs.

The assigned functions of the Ministry of Culture are:

- to collect and analyse information on cultural activity and on cultural education throughout the country;
- to develop a strategy to promote cultural activity and associated educational endeavours;
- to prepare draft laws and amendments for presentation to the Cabinet of Ministers and Parliament;
- to prepare culture budget projections and to analyse the stability of state budget resource distribution in the sphere of culture;

- to oversee theatre, music, the cinema, visual arts, museums and galleries, book publishing and libraries, as well as non-professional and folk art, and to co-ordinate their development;
- to amass and preserve cultural heritage, to ensure access to that heritage and its integration in the activities of social life;
- to control financing and activities of national and other state institutions of culture;
- to ensure the proper, mandated use of resources from the state budget assigned to the sphere of culture through control of resource distribution;
- to maintain competent and accurate accounts and bookkeeping and to prepare financial reports in accordance with legislative mandates;
- to be in charge of the implementation and co-ordination of state policy in the sphere of culture throughout the territory of Latvia, in collaboration with municipalities, public institutions, and groups of people and individual persons concerned with culture;
- to provide institutions of culture and culture education with appropriate management tools;
- to control the way institutions of culture and cultural education observe the laws and regulations applicable to them and their activities;
- to create a cultural policy linked to foreign affairs, i.e., to prepare and conclude treaties of collaboration with ministries of culture in other countries, to keep to these treaties, and to implement projects of cultural exchange;
- to co-ordinate cultural policy laws with the requirements of European conventions and recommendations of the White Paper and to ensure their introduction in practice.

During the transition period since independence, the structure of Latvia's Ministry of Culture has been changed several times in hope of optimising the implementation of state culture policy. In 1996, the Cabinet of Ministers accepted amendments in its decision of 1994 "On Regulations of the Ministry of Culture". According to this governmental directive, the structure of the Ministry of Culture is as figure 6.1. shows.

From the political point of view, the Minister of Culture is responsible to the Saeima for the situation in the sphere of culture and cultural activity in the country. With democratic traditions yet to take root, political responsibility has an arbitrary character at present and this general situation in the state has an impact on activities of the Minister of Culture as well. Given the widespread lack of political responsibility, the implementation of administrative functions by the Minister of Culture is made more difficult.

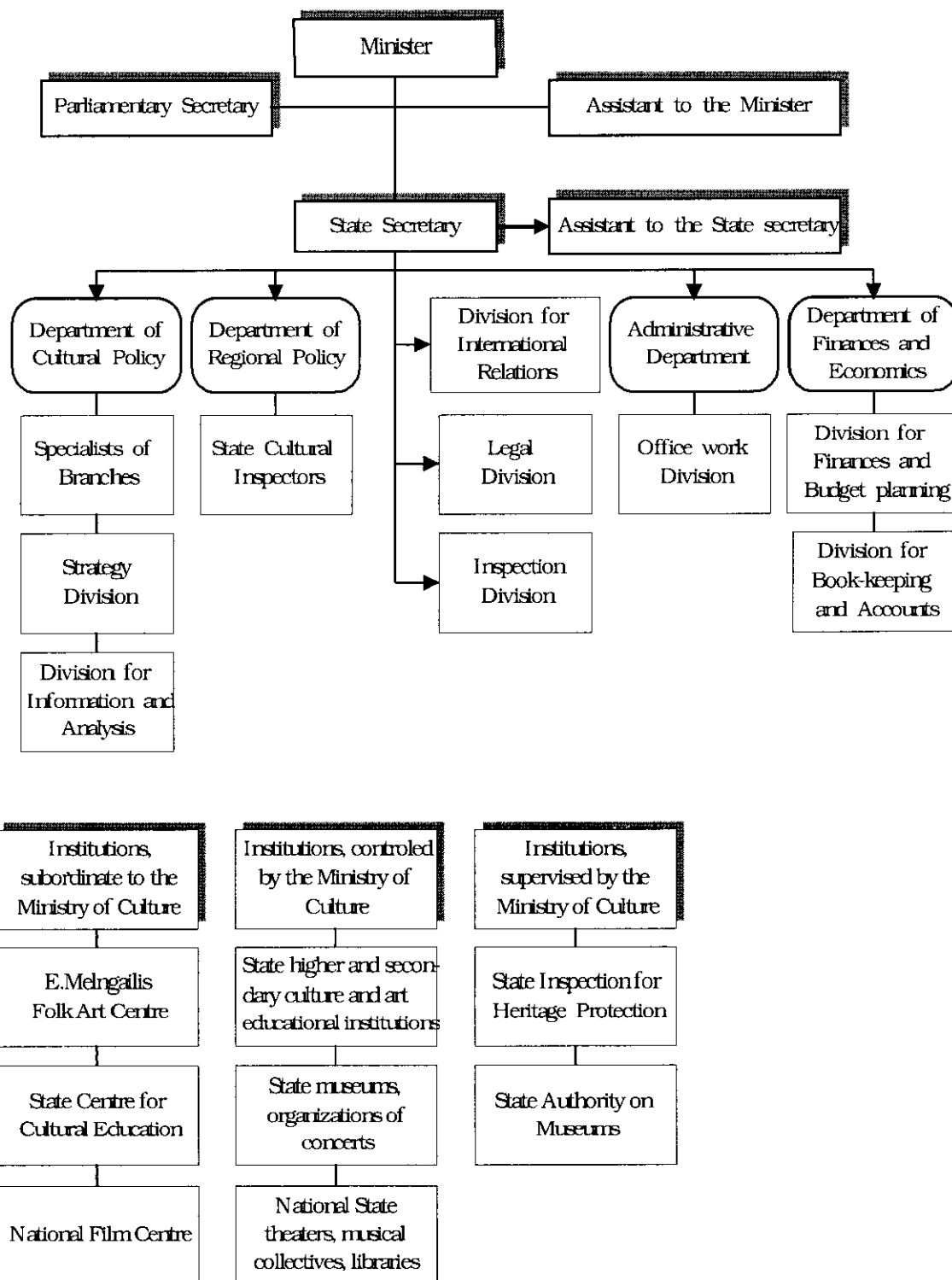
The State Inspection for Heritage Protection and State Authority on Museums (since 1998) are under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture. This institution independently carries out its state functions by legal mandate and is responsible for their implementation, while the activity of the inspection and authority is supervised by the Minister.

The Emilis Melngailis Folk Art Centre, the National Film Centre and the State Centre of Cultural Education are subordinated to the Ministry of Culture. These establishments implement state functions entrusted to the Ministry and are responsible for their realisation. They may be established or dissolved by the Cabinet of Ministers, which may also ratify the regulations of these establishments, thus subordinating them to the Ministry of Culture. The managers of these establishments are subordinated to the Minister.

The following institutions are under the authority of the Ministry of Culture: two libraries, the Latvian National Opera, the Latvian Concert agency, National Symphony Orchestra of Latvia, State Academic choir "Latvia", seven dramatic theatres, seven museums, one museum-reserve, the Latvian Association of Art Museums, three academies, ten colleges and five schools, as well as Cultural Endowment.

Figure 6.1.

Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia (1998)



Late in 1995, the National Council of Culture was founded as the public advisory structure for the Ministry of Culture and all other institutions of contributing to the determination of state culture policy and to cultural activities aimed at preservation of national identity.

The chief tasks of the National Council of Culture are as follows:

- to promote public participation and responsibility for the cultural life of Latvia, to further co-operation between the state, public institutions and individuals;
- to participate in evaluating the situation of culture, in defining the strategy and priorities in the fields of cultural heritage, production and education;
- to promote the further development of legislation in support of cultural heritage and activity through the preparation of draft bills and other legal instruments.

The National Council of Culture has only just begun its work, but in the nearest future can be expected to make a significant constructive contribution to the implementation of cultural policy.

Other ministries, those in charge of specific cultural institutions, also take some part in administering the infrastructure of culture. A number of museums are under the authority of these ministries — the Latvian Melioration and Agriculture Museum, the Museum of Agricultural Technology, and the birthplace of the former President of Latvia Karlis Ulmanis are all in the charge of the Ministry of Agriculture; the Ministry of Education and Science takes care of the Museum of Nature and the Museum of Sports; the Ministry of Defence supervises the Latvian Museum of Warfare; the Ministry of Interior, the Fire Museum of Latvia; the Ministry of Welfare, the Latvian Museum of Medical History.

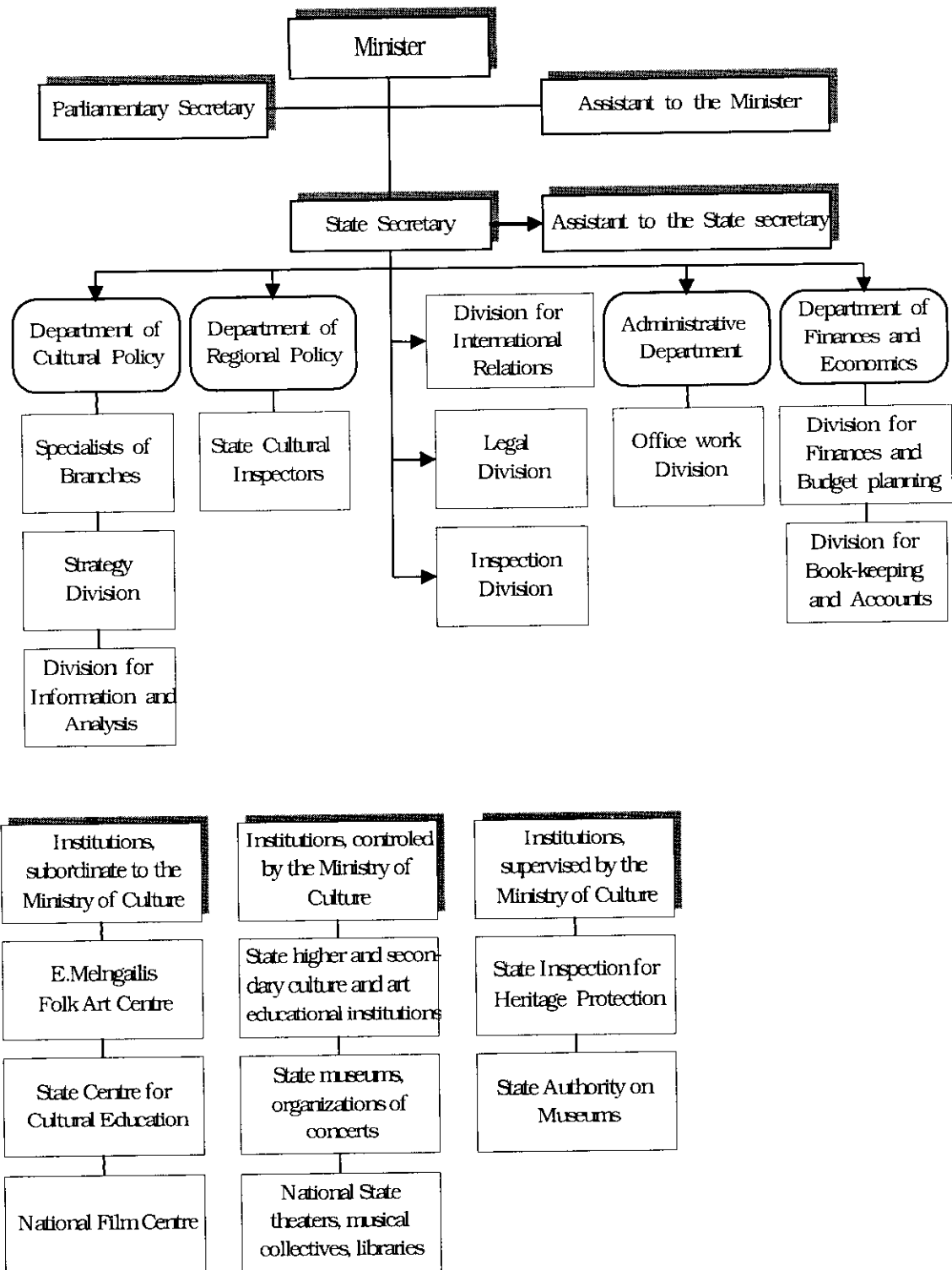
Within the limits of its competence, the Ministry of Education and Science takes part in the management of the establishments of cultural education. The Minister of Education and Science represents the interests of higher educational establishments for cultural education in the government. It is true that for the time being the authority spheres of the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education and Science regarding establishments of culture education have not been fully defined. In hope of putting these and other fields of interest in order during the present transition period, it would be desirable that other ministries, in particular the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, should get more directly involved in organising cultural activities.

In Latvia, municipalities are also concerned with policy in a certain sphere of culture. Falling under the administrative authority of municipalities, both in cities and regional areas, there are urban and regional palaces of culture and culture centres; municipal theatres and workshops; professional and amateur music ensembles; art, history and other museums; libraries; art and music elementary schools and studios supervised by municipal councils of culture. Municipalities are obliged to guarantee the activity of their culture establishments that deals with protection of cultural monuments and natural objects of regional significance. These functions and responsibilities are defined in the legislative bill "On Municipalities" adopted in 1994.

Before 1992, culture departments and centres in every region and city of Latvia were funded in a centralised way from the state budget and directly subordinated to the Ministry of Culture. Since 1992, the procedure for funding municipalities changed and, depending on the resources at their disposal, municipalities are responsible for ensuring the financing of the cultural infrastructure under their care. This initiated an ongoing process of decentralising the administration of cultural activities, with growing emphasis regional control.

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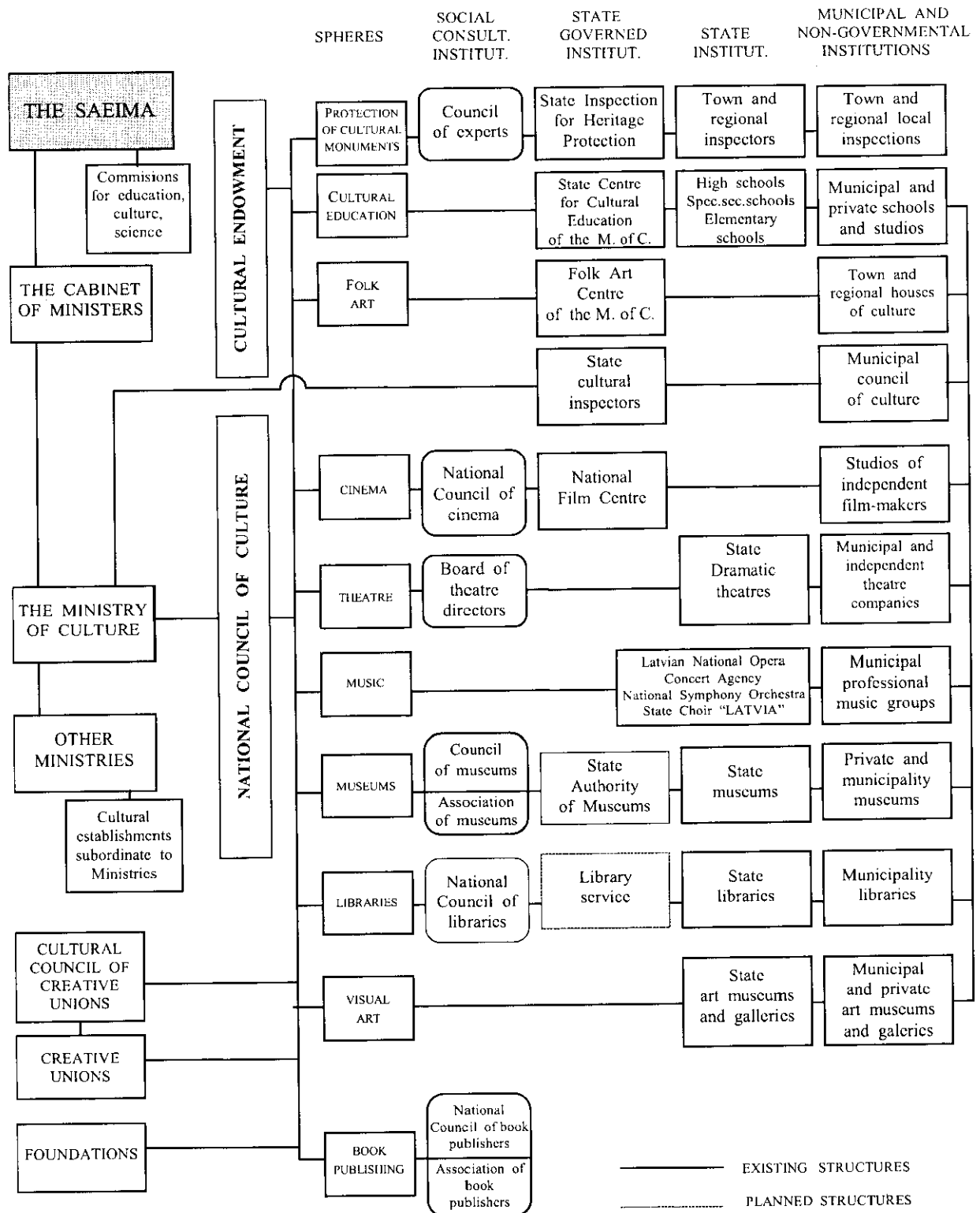
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Figure 6.2.

Structure of supervision, subordination and co-operation of cultural processes in Latvia (1998)



With respect to culture management, the chief state inspectors mediate between state and municipal spheres. They are charged with implementing state cultural policy in the regions and cities of Latvia and are agents of the Ministry of Culture appointed by the Minister of Culture after the proposal for a given appointee has been reviewed and approved by the respective municipality. Cultural inspectors have the following main responsibilities: to analyse the activity of cultural establishments on the territory of the respective municipality or regional territory; to forecast their further development; to solve problems associated with preservation and use of cultural heritage; to control, in co-operation with the Latvian Culture Foundation, all institutions concerned, public organisations, individual persons, all creative activities in the sphere of regional culture and art, as well as the creative activity of amateur ensembles and artists; to assess the actual use of resources assigned by the state budget for specific areas of cultural activity; to find necessary financial resources for furthering professional and amateur art.

In the present situation, the Ministry of Culture guarantees the salaries of inspectors, while other expenditures are not financed. Providing for these financial needs depends on particular decisions of the municipalities; e.g., if the municipality does or doesn't contract with the inspector to perform a specific set of functions. The majority of municipalities have concluded such contracts, but their content differs as there is no uniform system in this respect. Alongside their duties as representatives of state culture policy interests, and in performance of contracted functions specified by municipalities, inspectors of culture also help establish relations between municipal managers and those in charge of cultural institutions.

At present, the extent of municipal involvement in the implementation of state cultural policy goals is determined by two factors. First, financial resources differ among various municipalities. In most cases, given the countrywide economic crisis, the material and organisational support rendered by municipalities toward ensuring cultural activities is not sufficient. Second, the subjective attitude of the leading municipal figures towards the significance of cultural activity is of immense importance. This attitude is decisive in determining the degree of responsibility a given municipality takes for social and cultural activities and their development in its territory, since there are still no strict regulative legal norms defining the responsibility of municipalities in the sphere of culture.

At present, reform is underway at the municipal level regarding the management of cultural assets and activities. It is difficult to foresee the results. Given that both democratisation and the decentralisation processes have been going on in Latvia only for a few years, the solution to the aforementioned problems may take an extended period of time.

7. FINANCING THE ACTIVITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE OF CULTURE

The amount and structure of financing is one of the most essential problems for the maintenance of cultural activities. Funds granted through the state are the actual tool by which the state and society become directly involved in these activities. Recent patterns of cultural financing in Latvia reflect the general transition from a planned economy toward that associated with a free market. Moreover, the prevailing liberal policies are not always adequate for the present social situation. This is why the structure of cultural financing differs from those found in the Netherlands and Finland, notable for their relative stability. Let us consider the current situation in this sphere in Latvia.

For various reasons, it is best not to begin the study of culture financing in Latvia by turning to the period prior to 1993. The hyperinflation of 1991, followed by instabilities associated with the gradual restoration of the national currency (the lats) and a number of organisational changes in the management system for cultural activities, make the first two years of the transition period an unwise time to begin our observations. 1993 should be viewed as the first relatively stable period in Latvian cultural financing, and hence our claim here apply to the period from this year. In Latvia, the financing of culture is mainly drawn from three sources: from part of the state budget, from financial resources of local governments (municipalities) and from the private sector, mainly through the activities of various foundations.

Table 7.1.

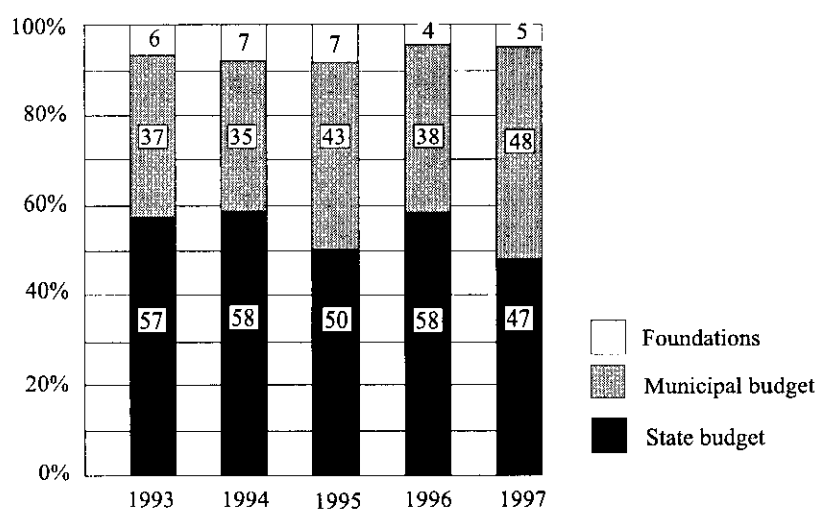
Financing for culture from various resources (1993–1997)

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
State budget	9 181 905	13 171 655	14 045 000	19 560 177	15 341 867
Municipal budget	5 906 278	7 904 835	12 026 838	12 847 058	15 790 000
Foundations	932 000	1 658 048	1 864 250	1 210 821	1 745 246
Total	16 020 183	22 734 538	27 936 088	33 618 056	32 877 113

The state budget includes special income generated by the cultural institutions themselves from the sale of tickets and payment for other services. This inclusion is motivated by the fact that such income depends on the use of cultural infrastructures owned by the state. The financing by foundations includes only direct support to cultural activities. A small part of culture financing is also included in the budget of some other ministries.

Figure 7.1.

Financing for culture from various resources (% , 1993–1997)



It is evident that with respect to financing, at least, support for cultural activity rests almost exclusively with state and municipal institutions. Non-governmental sector support as yet is insignificant, chiefly coming from the Latvian Culture Foundation, the Foundation for Creative Work, and the Soros Foundation-Latvia. The highly limited private sector involvement is the result of a number of factors. First, the economic development of the private sector in Latvia has a very brief history, and instability has been its hallmark during the transition period. Second, given the role of the so-called "shadow economy" arising out of the old and new black market, much of the actual domestic profit is hidden from state taxing authorities. This means that there is no interest, as one finds elsewhere, in the reduction of taxes which might legally result from sponsorship of cultural undertakings. Third, as will be evident when we consider the activities of social foundations, the existing tax system insufficiently promotes financial support for cultural programs. Fourth, the tradition of cultural patronage has not developed as a trend among private entrepreneurs in Latvia at present.

Expenditures in the budget of the Ministry of Culture reveal the character of state budget-based financing of cultural activities. In the Ministry of Culture budget the following divisions have been arbitrarily marked: culture (maintenance of culture infrastructure – libraries, museums, theatres, concert agencies, as well as means for cultural activities); cultural education; investments; special means; cinema; cultural management; scientific research.

Table 7.2.

**The divisions for culture financing in the total budget
of the Ministry of Culture (% , 1992–1997)**

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Culture	53.2	38.4	33.8	33.5	41.5	44.0
Cultural education	26.8	30.3	30.7	34.4	38.8	26.7
Investments	10.4	22.0	28.0	23.8	10.3	17.7
Special budget	4.7	6.3	4.2	5.0	5.7	5.5
Cinema	3.4	2.0	2.2	1.8	2.0	4.3
Cultural management	1.5	1.0	1.0	1.4	1.5	1.6
Scientific researches	-	-	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2

In this difficult period of transition, municipal support for the process of culture is limited by the financial resources at their disposal. On the average, 7 to 13% of their budget is marked for this purpose, however, converted into money, this amount is not large. This financing helps to maintain the regional cultural traditions and activities of amateur artists.

Possible financing for cultural activity depends, first and foremost, upon the total revenues available in state and municipal coffers. Under present economic conditions, these revenues are inadequate to address known problems in the social sphere: health care, education, and culture, to say nothing of positive financing for new developments in this area.

In this situation, financing for culture is applied chiefly to maintain cultural infrastructure and pay employee salaries, as well as for payment of the social tax. The salaries of people employed in the field of culture is not only less than the average salary of those working in state and municipal institutions, but several groups of cultural employees (at museums, libraries) earn less than the real subsistence minimum.

Table 7.3.

State budget of Latvia (in million lats, 1993–1997)

	Revenues	Expenditures	Deficit	Surplus
1993	410.1	412.6	2.5	-
1994	561.3	599.2	37.9	-
1995	355.1	445.2	90.1	-
1996	903.2	936.6	33.5	-
1997	1060.8	946.7	-	114.1

The budget for culture from 1992 to 1995 has incessantly increased in absolute figures. To assess the real financial situation, however, one must take into account the dynamics of inflation.

Table 7.4.

Dynamics of inflation (% , 1992–1997)

1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
958	35	26	25	17.6	8.4

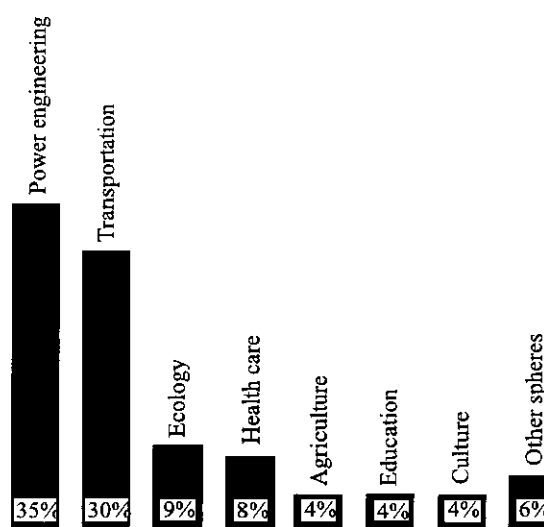
The dynamics of inflation are given in material entitled, *Latvia. Review of the National Development, 1996*, prepared by the UN Development program. There it is pointed out that “although inflation is still decreasing, macroeconomic stabilisation measures have not been sufficiently co-ordinated with economic reforms, in order to decrease or “cushion” the social consequences of the transition period.” These consequences fall on the cultural sphere as well: one must admit that cultural financing in the period under discussion is, at best, holding steady.

In this most difficult economic situation the attitude of the country’s political elite toward cultural activity is of importance and this should be reflected in the cultural expenditure part of the total state budget. A certain legally fixed percentage might sufficiently ensure financial support for the prospective development of cultural activity.

To a certain extent, the political and economic strategy of any state is revealed by the distribution of its investment priorities. In 1995, the Government of Latvia defined the investment plan for the period of 1995–1997.

Figure 7.2.

State investment plan (1995–1997)



The total amount of planned investment comprises roughly 3% of the gross national product (two thirds of which must be made up of loans from abroad, one third from resources in the state budget). Considering the absolute value and associated dynamics of the gross national product of Latvia in recent years, this shows that investment in culture is too limited to ensure preservation in the face of the real financial needs of Latvia's cultural infrastructure, to say nothing of overall cultural development.

In a period of transition, investments in the national economy should be high on the government's list of priorities. And yet the need to stimulate the development of our society's mental potential and positive changes in the system of social values is underrated.

In recent years, Latvia has experienced various economic shocks. These have negatively influenced cultural financing both through revenue deficits, and through the growing, and understandable concern for all and only that which would contribute to material and physical survival. In 1995 there was a bank crisis involving about 20 000 enterprises and 200 000–250 000 private persons. Future financing of culture is also influenced by the fact that in the early 1990s the economic policy of the government resulted in a groundlessly large budget deficit, both interior and exterior.

In this situation, deficit-free budget adopted by the present government is well motivated, yet it creates serious problems for financing of culture. However, the chosen tools for achieving this objective are one-sided. It is evident in the current financial crisis experienced by the theatres and concert organisations.

It is true that the planned decrease in the Ministry of Culture budget for 1997 compared to 1996 is chiefly linked to changes in the form of financing. Salaries for the teaching staff at music and art schools and for leaders of folk art amateur groups of local subordination will be realized in 1997 by means of subsidies from municipal funds. And yet the financing in nearly all other positions will not suffice to compensate for inflation. This means that in real terms, the fiscal resources of cultural institutions will continue to diminish.

The system by which the budget and fiscal distribution is drawn up is classical: the Ministry of Culture summarizes the expressed needs of cultural institutions and prepares its proposals for the Ministry of Finances. These requests are analyzed by the Government and the Parliament (Saeima). The budget for culture passed by the Saeima is usually smaller than the requested one: in 1995 the financial resources allotted by the state were 69% of the financing requested (this does not refer to all culture budget positions). Great differences between requested and allotted resources can be seen in several spheres of culture: children's music and art schools received 99% of the financing requested, while museums received only 49%.

Although discussions at various levels of government are held in the course of working out and adopting the annual budget, this activity has not been sufficiently developed. A constructive, continuing dialogue would be needed, one involving the political elite, clerks from the Ministries of Finances and Culture, managers of cultural institutions, officials in charge of managing cultural policy, and artists. Such a dialogue would increase the chances of optimal resource distribution even under conditions of limited financing. This would constitute the practical implementation of certain fundamental requirements in stated cultural policy. In the process of financing culture, better co-ordination of activities by government institutions and municipalities is also necessary. All this could further the solution of practical matters concerned with ensuring the cultural activities from the financial aspect and would also produce a most notable ideological effect developing of a well-coordinated, well-considered system of responsible attitude in culture tended to democracy and decentralization in the financial sphere, as well.

The solution to these financial problems is of particular importance in carrying out two strategic tasks: first, to promote maximum participation of the public, including its

most needy members, in cultural activities (both through active engagement in amateur art activities and in more passive forms of support, such as spectating); second, to create and preserve those objects of cultural infrastructure which have great national value. In pursuing such projects, the state should make more effort to involve the society at large, given their great expense, and should exercise better control over expenditures to ensure optimal use of state resources.

Given the overall national economic development picture through the year 2000, one can hardly expect more state and municipal financing for culture in the years approaching the millennium. It is important to adapt oneself to conditions in the transition period through optimal use of financial resources. This can be achieved by developing better cultural management, and through more rational use of resources.

8. PROFESSIONAL ART

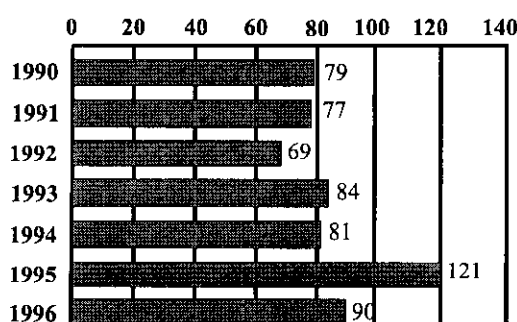
8.1. Visual art

At present, in the sphere of visual art the state has taken upon itself the responsibility for preserving cultural heritage. Much less attention is paid to the creation of new artefacts and their distribution. This situation is undoubtedly determined by economic changes in Latvia, and the change of public stereotypes. However, one must admit that cultural policy in this sphere is still being formed. There are several institutions in Latvia which have been organising the primary displays of visual art — exhibitions, symposiums and open-air workshops in the 1990s.

The activity of state institutions is mainly manifest in organised events developed through the system of the Association of Art Museums. This association embraces five state museums and one exhibition hall. The museums receive finances for the organisation of exhibitions from the state budget. It is true that part of the money for this purpose is earned by the museum activities themselves. The organisational activity associated with these exhibitions is conducted by the Artists' Union and its members.

Figure 8.1.

Number of exhibitions organised in state museums (1990–1996)



State institutions also support international activities. From 1990 to 1996, this support has mostly materialized in taking part in joint events of the Baltic and Northern countries, exhibitions of museum collections abroad, etc. Among them the international project *Ars Baltica* should be mentioned specially – it is enlisted in the joint artistic events' program of EU, EC and UNESCO.

Exhibitions are also organised by the Artists' Union, notably, the annual national exhibitions (spring and autumn), as well as the traditional Art Days during which various exhibitions and other art related events take place. Symposia and other activities are organised throughout the country. The Artists' Union has two galleries, where 42 exhibitions took place in 1994, 45 in 1995, 46 in 1996 and 48 in 1997. Members of the Union have founded about a dozen non-profit organisations and groups, which are also actively helping to organise exhibitions, to promote the participation of their colleagues in forums of state significance and in competitions.

Financing for these activities comes from sponsors, as well as from state budget, and are apportioned to various programs by competition. In fact, financing is very modest. Private galleries also take part in organising competitions. About ten galleries have already reached an important status in the cultural processes. They regularly organise expositions of works by Latvian artists, and some of them try to organise activities abroad. An Association of Art Galleries has been formed which, together with several other galleries, organised an exhibition in 1995.

At present, conscious marketing in art and the building of traditions has only just begun. No exclusive contracts have been made with artists as yet. Aid from sponsors is found with great difficulty, although in some cases a comparatively stable co-operation has been formed. Taking into consideration the socio-economic situation in Latvia and the resulting restricted demand for art objects, the state could help by creating a market for artefacts.

Municipalities also help to organise events, mainly in the museums owned by them, but also in schools and elsewhere. This process is becoming more and more important in Riga as well as in other towns.

Individual artists and their groups have taken it upon themselves to autonomously organise various events. In this respect, quite a significant role is played by professors and teachers of the Latvian Academy of Art, *B-13*; the Association of Russian Artists; Union of Art Photographers and the Association of Professional Photographers. Creation of first private museums and sites should be mentioned, among others – museum and modern arts centre in Pedvale, owned by the artist Ojars Feldbergs.

Notwithstanding many exhibitions, open-air workshops, and symposia that have taken place in Latvia during the 1990s, it is clear that an intensified state cultural policy, specifically manifested in the sphere of visual art, is necessary. As well, support should be given to alternative art activities (for example, participation of the Artists' Union in the Nordic Studios etc.) so as to include them in cultural affairs. In order to meet this goal, it would be necessary not only to solve conceptual problems in the visual art field, but also to ensure implementation of the law "On Public Organisations and their Unions". This law has in mind that creative organisations should obtain financial means through concrete, earmarked subsidies so that one could plan various activities and guarantee their outcome, as well as pay the managers and trustees of art activities. A constructive support by state institutions is necessary in order to cultivate important traditions of Latvian culture in the sphere of visual art and to include it into the context of European culture.

More specifically, they should seek integration of artwork in the environment; support private initiative in the form of gallery information centres, especially outside the capital; work out the guidelines for the creation of a Contemporary Art Centre in Riga; promote the flow of information both locally and internationally by participating in preparation and publishing of books on art and culture; survey the activities of those Latvian artists who reside outside of Latvia; take active part in large scale cultural projects, e.g., *Ars Baltica*, *Kaleidoscope*, projects of Nordic co-operation; popularize Latvian art abroad by supporting the participation of Latvian artists in international exhibitions.

8.2. Theatre

The chronicle written by Henricus Lettus declares that the first theatre performance in Riga took place in 1205. During the following centuries Riga spectators were exposed to the many forms of theatrical performance then popular in Western Europe. In the second half of the 18th century, a German theatre house was established in Riga. The first amateur Latvian performances took place in the first half of the 19th century. A professional Latvian theatre was founded in the second half of that century. Its main sources were the traditions of Western European theatre and the heritage of Latvian folklore.

A professional Latvian theatre began to flourish with the inception of an independent state after the First World War. In 1919, the National Theatre and the National Opera began operating, in 1920, the Daile Theatre. By 1931 there were six Latvian theatres working in Riga, in addition to two German, two Jewish, two Russian, one Polish and one Lithuanian theatre. Several theatres did successful work in other Latvian towns — in Jelgava, Liepaja, Daugavpils, and Ventspils. The state, along with

municipalities, the Latvian Culture Foundation and other organisations, provided financial support for these activities. The leading theatres had reached a high artistic level, co-operating with artists in both Western Europe and Russia. The activities of these theatres were intensive and the interest of spectators great. During the 1929/1930 season the National Theatre gave 348 performances attended by 231 608 spectators, while the *Daile* Theatre gave 370 performances attended by 195 248 persons. The National Opera was equally active.

During the years of Soviet power, Latvian theatre traditions were maintained and renowned Latvian theatres continued their work. While some of these ceased to exist (particularly minority theatres), other, new theatres came into being (the Youth Theatre, the Puppet Theatre, the Musical Comedy). Theatres were financed from the state budget and, while artists' salaries were not high, troupes tended to be large. This sphere of art was also influenced by Soviet ideology, as was apparent in the choice of repertory and in the political censorship affecting stage versions of plays. Nonetheless, theatre was not only an important component of culture but to some extent carried out political functions, by helping to maintain national self-confidence and public sentiment in opposition to the ruling ideology.

During the early 1990s the radical changes in society cancelled any political or ideological influence on theatrical activities. At present no restrictions exist in the choice of repertory or artistic means of expression. However, at a time when the society's system of values and the social and material climate are changing, it is not easy for the theatre to find a new cultural paradigm. Possibly, the search has only begun, as attempts are made to combine traditions of the Latvian theatre with the latest trends in theatrical art. The complicated situation for theatre in society can, to a certain extent, be revealed by statistical measures of its activities.

Table 8.1.

Activities of theatres (1990–1997)
Number of performances in State theatres, 8.1.A

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
National Theatre	522	515	501	472	424	445	473	449
National Opera	184	86	77	104	94	61	142	146
Daile Theatre	628	512	410	388	381	354	367	451
New Riga Theatre	-	-	-	140	250	303	207	205
Russian Drama Theatre	346	234	318	285	212	264	256	216
State Puppet Theatre	670	580	521	561	459	457	475	471
Valmiera Drama Theatre	240	286	251	202	254	303	268	263
Liepaja Theatre	357	341	246	228	198	219	239	230
Daugavpils Theatre	-	36	83	87	88	75	110	139
Riga Musical Comedy	233	266	115	158	186	177	-	-

Audience (in thousands), 8.1.B

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
National Theatre	297.7	297.2	214.5	202.2	211.0	212.5	200.6	173.5
National Opera	116.5	39.0	30.0	29.1	38.2	30.0	77.1	100.7
Daile Theatre	310.7	246.7	221.0	199.0	175.0	155.1	163.3	164.2
New Riga Theatre	-	-	-	8.3	29.0	22.1	21.2	18.2
Russian Drama Theatre	146.2	115.2	109.0	114.1	77.8	84.5	81.4	62.1
State Puppet Theatre	240.8	226.2	133.0	117.0	74.0	61.7	58.7	57.7
Valmiera Drama Theatre	62.2	67.7	57.6	32.7	18.0	23.1	18.6	37.7
Liepaja Theatre	105.3	110.2	44.9	51.4	34.7	38.5	38.5	37.0
Daugavpils Theatre	-	2.6	6.4	5.6	7.0	8.0	15.2	24.8
Riga Musical Comedy	92.6	85.7	27.4	20.2	32.0	25.2	-	-

The building which houses the National Opera was being restored until 1995. In the Valmiera Drama Theatre only the small stage was working, but the Riga Musical Comedy was liquidated by 1995.

Although by 1995 the number of new stage productions compared to 1990 had slightly increased, there is an obvious tendency for the number of performances to decrease. This process is also the cause of a decrease in the number of spectators.

It must be admitted that in the past few years, theatre attendance has not been very high. Lately, however, it has become more stable and even a certain increase of spectators has been noted. Statistical indices show that there is quite a difference in attendance at different theatres. This proves that the general status of theatre in society is important, but so are the particular successes and failures of individual artistic troupes, and how well their administration markets their theatrical work.

In 1997 there are 9 state financed theatres active in Latvia (incl. National opera)¹. State financing covered 43% of their expenditures and amounted to 2 115 911 lats, while income generated from sale of tickets and other economic activity amounted to 2 316 018 lats. In their attempts to stay open, in 1996 the theatres generated a combined debt to the state in the amount of Ls 548 634. Problems are caused also by the low pay received by stage professionals: in 1996 the average monthly salary was Ls 73.

Notwithstanding certain economies, including reducing the number of actors in many theatres and associated measures, such efforts could not entirely offset the effects of inflation and increased costs for utilities. Financing new productions has become increasingly complicated. Although ticket prices are not high compared to those in Europe, they barely fall within the purchasing power of the Latvian population and an increase in prices will not yield any substantial economic effect. Unclear legal status of theatres hinders their self-initiative, as well.

In fall 1997 the creation of the new law on culture institutions has been started.² This law in particular will define also the legal status of the theatres. In accordance with aforementioned draft law, theatre's status as the National institution will be applied only by special law.

The conception of theatre development is going to be perfected. A transition from the present financing system to the next is foreseen. In several respects the new plan strives to approximate practices in Western Europe designed to ensure theatre infrastructure. However, taking into consideration the complex financial situation in Latvia, it might be necessary for the state to take upon itself much of the responsibility for successful development of theatres since they all have unique artistic characteristics that determine their place in cultural life. In some cases it may be necessary to prolong the transition to this new conception of theatre development.

As recently as in fall the restructuring of the Liepaja theatre, in the fall of 1997, was the first major step in improving the functioning of Latvian theatres. The aim of this re-organisation is to hand over the theatre to the local municipality. The plan foresees several sources of financing: from the state budget, from the Liepaja municipality, from the special fund, from the regional budgets (also due to special commissions) and, of course, from theatre revenues. By the governmental bill this theatre is handed over to the Liepaja municipality. The director of the theatre is appointed by the City council. In accordance with trilateral agreement among state, municipality and theatre's administration, state financing will be provided for the new productions, but municipal financing – for current expenses.

The same reorganisation is planned also for the other regional theatres. Possibilities of organisation of purely municipal theatres with divided state and municipal financing are being analyzed.

¹ At present there are 8 state financed theatres, because in fall 1997 the status of Liepaja theatre as State theatre was changed to municipal one.

² Adopted on 15 October, 1998.

The state should also make the following improvements in the field of theatrical art: 1) although the system of education for professional actors has been successful, there should be more state support to involve them in international exchanges; 2) a better social support system for actors should be worked out.

8.3. Music

Up to now, concert activities within the framework of state cultural policy were organised by Latvia's Philharmonic, which both invited foreign artists and promoted concerts by Latvian artists abroad. There were five artistic groups at the Latvian Philharmonic — the National Symphony Orchestra of Latvia (LNSO), the Latvian Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra, the State Academic Choir *Latvija* (VAK), the Latvian Philharmonic Trio (LF Trio), and the State Dance Ensemble *Daile* (VDA *Daile*). The concerts took place in several halls, mainly the *Liela Gilde*, Wagner's Hall, the concert hall at Dzintari, and in the Riga Dome Cathedral as specified in a contract signed with the Riga Museum of History and Seafaring on the use of its premises.

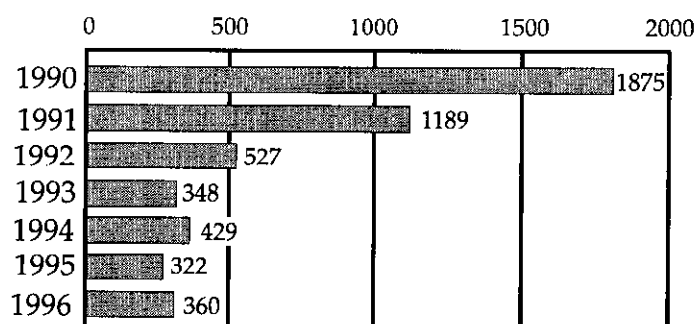
The Philharmonic has organised several important festivals: the international festival of organ music *Rigas Doms*, the Week of Music by J.S. Bach, the Chamber Music Days in September, and has taken part in the preparing and running of the Festival of New Music. LNSO gives concert series for children and young people; those concerts are very popular and well attended.

Because of financial and economic problems, the number of concerts has decreased from 1875 in 1990 to 360 in 1996. The audience has decreased correspondingly.

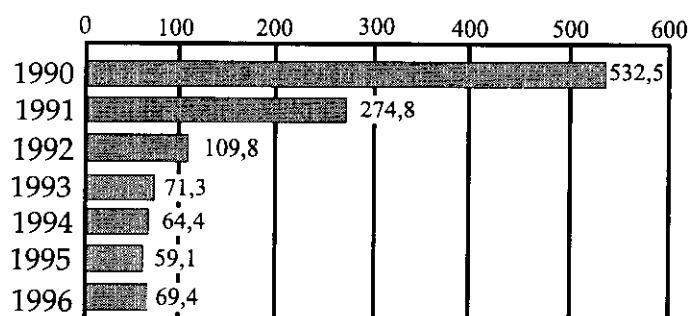
Figure 8.2.

Activities of the Philharmonic Society (1990–1996)

Number of concerts, 8.2.A



Audience (in thousands), 8.2.B



The insufficient financing by the state budget, as well as the inability of municipalities to take on the financial load, prevents the Philharmonic from organising concerts in provincial cultural centres and lectures for school audiences outside the capital. As a result, many among the young generation have never attended a live performance. In 1995, only 34 concerts were given in smaller towns of Latvia, in 1996, their number was 55. State donations are primarily used for paying salaries. Income generated from other activities (e.g., leasing of premises) goes for maintenance of infrastructure. The financial state of the Philharmonic is not improved by income from concerts, which is not high (in 1996, 76 988 Ls), and under the present standard of living and income levels in the population at large, it would be difficult to increase ticket prices. A part of this income is used to finance concerts: state support in this area of activities is extended only within the framework of individual target programs, and it is insufficient.

It must be noted that the traditions of concert activities of the Philharmonic abroad have been kept alive. In 1996, 71 concerts were given in other countries.

After the restoration of independence it became possible to invite guest artists to perform in Latvia. Out of the 360 concerts organised by the Philharmonic in 1996, 204 featured either local or foreign guest performers, or were given by them.

In 1997 the commission was set up to evaluate the organisational structure and financial arrangements of the Latvian Philharmonic. The Commission concluded that the unwieldy structure inherited from the Soviet period, the organisation of its work and financial activities are outdated and cannot meet contemporary requirements. The conceptual framework for reorganisation was established and its implementation started. The aim of the reorganisation is for certain institutions to acquire independent legal status and the creative and financial independence necessary for quality of their artistic endeavour. Non profit state companies with limited liability, the Latvian National Symphony orchestra, the State Academic Choir *Latvija* and the Concert Agency have thus come into existence. These institutions are to receive state subsidies for the realization of their creative programs, as well as for the maintenance of their infrastructure. By means of a competition a new executive body of the Concert Agency was selected and a new model for its activities established. Among its priorities are a restoration of concert activities in the provinces and the implementation of a youth education program in music. It is hoped that as a result, the groups of artists operating within this structure would gain more artistic freedom and financial independence and they would be more willing to assume responsibility. Introduction of modern management procedures could also produce a positive effect.

To promote the development of chamber music, a new state financed program – “Chamber music” - has been set up. At the same time, the LF Chamber Orchestra and the piano trio are placed outside the structure of the Philharmonic and are able to compete for state funding as independent bodies.

Likewise, the state dance ensemble *Daile* (established in 1968 to represent Latvian folk dancing in the former Soviet Union) is also being dissolved as its *raison d'être* has disappeared. It has been suggested that the ensemble transform into an independent company that may receive state funding for individual projects.

In the summer of 1997, a foundation for the support of the National Opera was established with the aim of supplementing financing for its creative projects and developing a program “Friends of the National Opera”.

The state offers financial support for some other kinds of concert activities, the most important of which are the Song Festivals.

Some support for concert activity comes by way of municipalities. They subsidize several artistic groups (the Riga municipality supports the choir *Ave sol*, and the brass band *Riga*, while the Liepaja municipality supports the local symphony orchestra and Daugavpils, the brass band *Daugava*).

The role of non-governmental institutions and private initiative is becoming more important in organising concerts and festivals that have become significant events in Latvia's cultural life. One should note the annual Opera Festival in the town of Sigulda, the Festival of Baroque Music in Bauska and Rundale, the Piano Festival in Liepaja, all of which have taken place for five consecutive years, as well as the Baltic Ballet Festival. By and large the activities of private enterprises tend to be sporadic, producing individual concerts and festivals mostly in the pop music genre.

9. CULTURAL INDUSTRIES

9.1. Book publishing

The first book in the Latvian language appeared in 1525 (a Lutheran service book). The first Riga printing press was established in 1588. Some decades later, Jelgava became an important book publishing centre. German cultural workers were the most active in book publishing up to the middle of the 19th century. Books published in the 17th and the 18th centuries were of great importance not only for Latvia but also for cultural history of Europe, including first publication of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* in Riga in 1781. The tradition of publishing calendars, songbooks, and ABC books began. It was by virtue of the publication, in the 17th century, of the first textbooks that Latvian serfs got their first education. About the middle of the 19th century, and during the first national awakening, a qualitatively new period in book writing and publishing began. Several publishing houses were founded that published both works of Latvian authors and the classics of world literature. From 1886 to 1890, more than 3500 books of various kinds were published in Latvia.

During the first twenty years of Latvia's independence, publishing was very active. In 1921, 635 books were published, in 1936, 1 601 with a total printing of more than 4 million copies. Toward the end of the 1930s, Latvia held second place in Europe to Denmark in the number of books printed per million inhabitants. Along with fiction, a large number of science textbooks were published. Mostly private publishing houses conducted publishing activities, although state and municipal publishing houses also existed.

In 1940, prior to the Soviet occupation, there were 479 publishing houses. During the years of Soviet power Latvian book publishing increased. From 1940 to 1966, 3 500 books were published totalling of 234 million copies. It is clear that along with important works of fiction and natural science, a great number of social and political volumes were published, including the works of Lenin (175 books), Marx and Engels (52 books), Stalin, books written by other Marxist-Leninist ideologues, as well as documents of the communist party. Many editions of poor fiction were published depicting class struggle and in praise of the Soviet way of life. At the same time, many important works of world culture, especially achievements of 20th century western culture, were inaccessible to the reader.

All publishing houses were subsidized by the state budget, their activities were strictly planned and subjected to political censorship. The financial basis for book publishing was secured within a specific ideological framework and at low prices.

With the restoration of political independence came the abolition of political censorship. The Latvian reader may read any kind of fiction, as well as a wide variety of books on social and political problems. True, along with books of cultural and historical value a large number of books strictly for mass consumption are being published. At the same time, state financial support for book publishing has rapidly diminished. State publishing houses are undergoing gradual privatization. New private publishing outfits have appeared on the scene.

During the period from 1992 to 1997 the number of books published has increased, particularly translations, but the total number of copies per book is dropping. This tendency is partly due to the skillful adaptation of publishers to market conditions. However, the economic situation in the country is the main cause. One state publishing house, *Zinatne*, remains: its activities are directed at publishing research and reference books, fiction, etc., however it doesn't receive any state support.

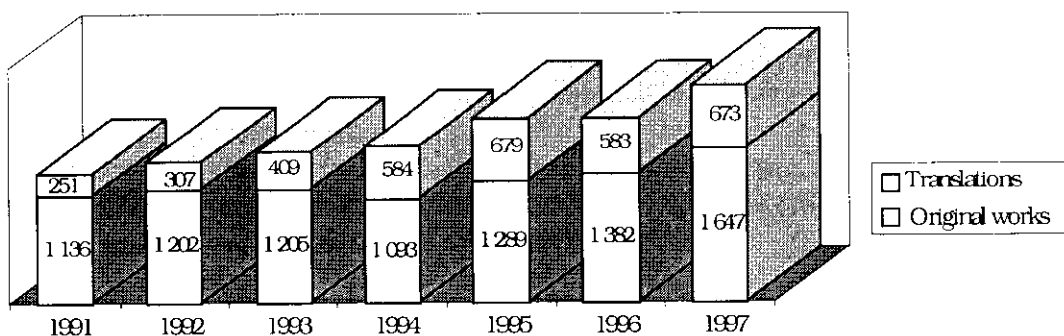
Sociological data show that there is great interest in books among the Latvian people. Books rank among the most desirable items in the average Latvian household expense budget. However, because of market conditions publishing houses have had to alter their activities, and several of them either are no longer active or have gone bankrupt.

In 1997, 2 320 titles were published whose total number of copies was 7.5 million.

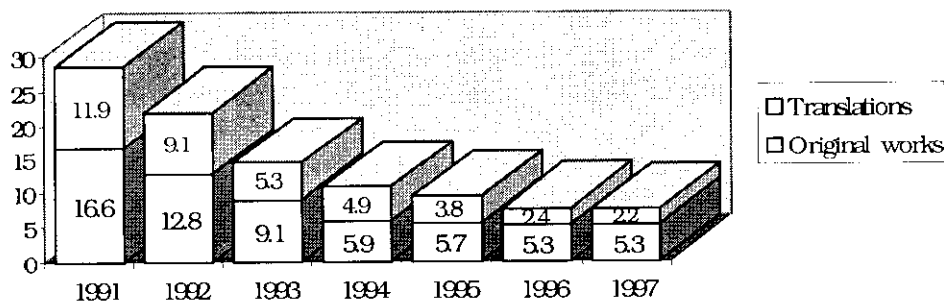
The Institute of Bibliography of the National Library collects information on published books and has established the National Bibliography, as well.

Figure 9.1.

Book publishing (1991–1997)
Number of issues, 9.1.A



Edition (million copies), 9.1.B



In 1993 a non-governmental institution, the Book Publishers Association of Latvia, was founded. In 1994 it entered the IPA (International Publishers Association). The main tasks of the Book Publishers Association are:

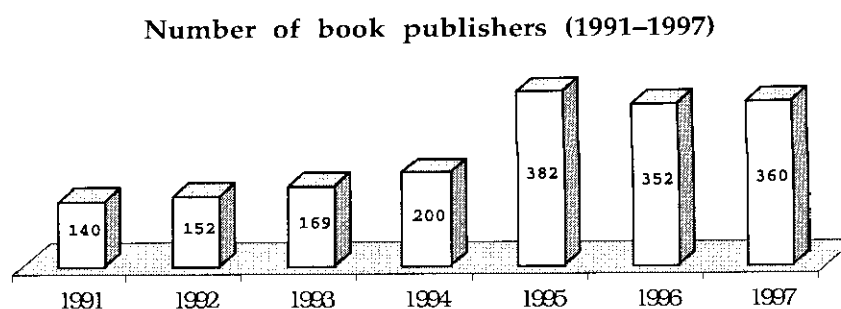
- to protect the rights of publishers to freely publish and spread printed material, in accordance with Latvian law and international legislation governing copyright;
- to represent and protect the interests of publishers with respect to society at large, legislators, state institutions, political parties, social organisations, paper producers, libraries, and merchants.

The Book Publishers Association unites only 43 publishers when the number of publishing houses is much larger. Most of these, however, publish only a couple of books a year.

In 1994 new non-governmental organisation – Association of Booksellers of Latvia has started to prepare the Catalogue on offered books (Books in Print), however, this

activity is hindered by the lack of sufficient technical equipment.

Figure 9.2.



Although these organisations has good prospects for development, it is more important to activate state institutions in this sphere of culture, to form a general cultural policy and strategy regarding book publishing. This task could be done in part by the Council of Book Publishers – in 1996 founded public advisory body to the Ministry of Culture. The most important goals of state cultural policy in the near term should be:

- to work out a survey of priority works, selecting those books which are of particular value in the broad cultural context. Important works relating to the history of civilization should be financed by the state, such as encyclopedias, dictionaries, textbooks, where the initial cost of publishing is high. At the same time the means to supply libraries with a sufficient number of books should be provided by fixing the cost of books below the market rate, so that they are available to a wide audience;
- at present, books excluded from the 18% value-added tax are textbooks, scientific publications, children's books, and first editions of original literature. Perhaps all books should be excluded from this added cost;
- to stimulate publishers to use wider the possibilities to participate in competitions of projects thus securing publishing of books about some humanitarian sciences, the history and theory of art, etc.;
- the laws applicable to book publishing should be put in order.

9.2. Cinema

The national cinema in Latvia has traditions that go back to the inter-war independence period: feature films were produced more or less regularly, and chronicles from that time are of particular interest. The state extended both considerable financial resources and moral support for the development of cinema art.

In the late 1940s, with the production of the first post-war features, the Riga Motion Picture Studio came into existence. By the 1980s it had developed into the largest studio of its kind both in the Baltic region and in Northern Europe, producing an average of eight (a maximum of 12) feature films, about thirty documentaries and forty-eight newsreels and animation films every year. In terms of organisation of production and technologies used, the quality of film making was relatively high. Latvia developed its own documentary genre (the so-called "Riga poetic documentary") that received international recognition. Feature films also played an important role in Latvia's cultural life. While regularly receiving awards at local Soviet festivals, they were almost never presented at international film forums.

The cinema industry was fully financed through the state budget: feature films, both those made for TV and for the large screen, as well as full length documentaries received funding from the common USSR budget, whereas shorter films and animations were financed from the local, Latvian SSR budget. The features produced by the Riga Motion

Pictures Studio often made a profit owing to the large distribution on the Soviet internal market. However, cinematography, like any other sphere of culture, had to meet the requirements of Soviet ideology and was subject to political censorship. Censorship not only influenced the content and artistic quality of the films, but also deprived the filmmakers and the wider public alike from access to latest developments in world cinema.

After the restoration of state independence, the Ministry of Culture, to which the National Film Centre (NFC), founded in 1991, is subordinated, has implemented Latvian cultural policy in cinema sphere. Designed after the model of the French CNC and the film institutes of the Nordic countries, the activities of the NFC consist of preparing drafts of legislation aimed at improving the industry infrastructure, allocating production grants, preserving the country's audio-visual heritage, promoting Latvian films through festivals, fairs, exchange programs etc, co-operating with international institutions in fighting film and video piracy.

The National Film Council is a public body, composed of cinema professionals (7) and civil servants of the Ministry of Culture (3). It advises the Minister of Culture and the Director of the NFC on the distribution of production grants to projects submitted for competition.

Latvian Filmmakers' Association, a non-governmental organisation, represents professional interests, manages the certification process, provides educational opportunities for qualified cinematographers, maintains and updates a data bank of Latvian films, and promotes cinema art.

The economic crisis of the 1990s had a detrimental effect on film production. State financial support was reduced and the number of films produced decreased, although paradoxically, they continued to receive recognition at international film festivals. For more than two years there were no feature films made. Latvia was forced to withdraw from the European Film Fair in Berlin, where it had maintained visibility for five years.

The worst, however, seems to be over. In 1997, the budget allocations were doubled, which, along with certain tax incentives, helped to start the production of two feature films, one entirely state financed, the other, a joint Latvian-French-German production. The 1998 budget provides for the same level of financing.¹

As an associate member of the European Union, Latvia is preparing to join the *Media II* program and *Euroimages*: to that end, it needs to make the necessary adjustments in its legislation. To promote the participation of private capital, a draft law on sponsorship is being prepared.

The privatization of Riga Motion Pictures Studio is almost complete. This former state owned enterprise is to be transformed into a shareholding company with one third of the shares to go to the state, one third - to the owner of the land and the remaining one third - to be sold at a public auction. The most valuable part of the property are the studio sound stages and the costume warehouses. The equipment, though maintained in a good working condition, is outdated.

The Riga Motion Picture Studio has experience in making co-productions and providing services to foreign film crews.

In the early 1990s several small private film companies sprang up. The bulk of their financing is drawn from state subsidies, particularly if their projects have received support from the National Film Council. Albeit gradually, alternative means of financing are being found, drawing on pre-war experience and that of neighbouring countries (Estonia).

The state run distribution system has collapsed and is being replaced by private enterprise. Both the number of movie theatres and the number of seats have sharply

¹ Unfortunately, considering the suggestion of the Ministry of Finances, the minimal sum to shoot a feature film in the state budget plan for 1999 is stroked. It demonstrates evidently, how unstable and unsafe are the possibilities of cinema branch in Latvia because of unpredictable state budget.

decreased. In 1996, the largest number of films screened, 59,4% of the total, were American productions, followed by films made in France (12,7%), UK (7,1%), Latvia (6,1%). Russia (5,1%), Norway and Sweden (1,5% each) and elsewhere (4,0%)

To be sure, the percentage of American films shown in Latvia is lower than the European average. However, if one is to compare the number of spectators, rather than the number of films, the US productions still enjoy a clear advantage. In large part, this is due to the differences of the American and European distribution systems: while the European distributor has to insist on a guaranteed minimum of screenings, the American can simply rent their copies. As a result, the European product is more costly and thus more difficult to distribute. However, Riga already has one film theatre that is part of the European Cinema network and other qualified theatres have applied for membership. It is hoped that Latvia joining the *Media II* program will improve the distribution of European films. The resolution passed by the Baltic Assembly calling for the creation of a common Baltic distribution area is a first step.

Conversely, the future of film production in Latvia can only be assured by close co-operation with the rest of Europe.

"Agenda-2000: Commission Opinion on Latvia's Application for Membership in the European Union" states that for Latvia's audio-visual sector "properly to adhere to the "acquis" presupposes an upgrading of the capacity of the programme-making industry to meet the important challenges of an adapted regulatory framework." It has been calculated that in order to meet these requirements, the Latvian film industry should receive annual subsidies in the amount of 1,9 million lats. Such support could be drawn not only from the state budget, but also through tax relieves and tax shelters, from an allocation of a fixed percentage of the excise tax, through changes in the law on sponsorship and through according a special emergency status to film industry for the next four to five years.

Such changes will demand an influx of new blood in the ranks of cinema professionals. A new generation of directors, cameramen and producers is currently getting educated at the Academy of Culture. In 1997 ten future film directors, cameramen and other young professionals collaborated on a film, making it their common graduation project. The Academy of Culture, however, is a relatively recent addition to the Latvian establishments of higher learning and its diplomas are not internationally recognized. Therefore, with the support from the NFC, the graduates will continue their training at the Film College in Ebeltoft, Denmark and at the Media Business School in Spain. Joining the *Media II* program will open additional opportunities for educating a new European-oriented generation of filmmakers.

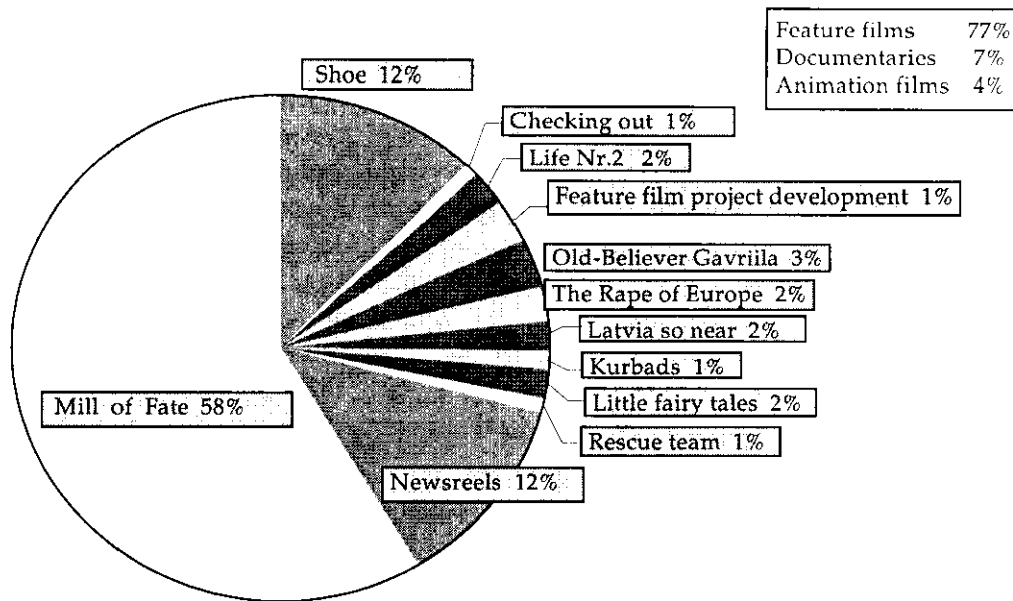
Table 9.1.

Number of films (1980, 1985, 1991-1997)

	1980	1985	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Feature films	12	7	7	2	4	0	1	1	4
Feature film projects								1	5
Full length documentaries	1	1	5	2	3	5	1	1	0
Animation films	2	2	11	10	17	25	11	7	3
Short documentaries	34	40	16	13	7	6	6	3	3
Newsreels	48	48	48	27	9	16	11	3	8

Figure 9.3.

Distribution of state film budget (% , 1997)



10. MEANS OF MASS COMMUNICATION

10.1. Periodicals

Under the Soviet system, culture periodicals, like any other kind of press, were financed by the state. Latvia had a number of periodicals and yearbooks devoted to a particular sphere of culture. The weekly *Literatura un Maksla* provided a record and analysis of activities in the fine arts, literature, music and theatre. The literary monthly *Karogs* published both original works and translations, as well as reviews, whereas the art magazine *Maksla* provided information about current events in fine arts, architecture and photography and their analysis. The magazine *Jaunas Gramatas* followed the developments in book publishing. While all of the above were published in Latvian, the monthly *Kino*, which reviewed both Latvian and foreign films, appeared also in Russian. The Academy of Sciences magazine *Latvijas Zinatnu Akademijas Vestis* had a humanities section that regularly featured publications of original research in history, linguistics and social sciences. In addition to all of the above, theatre and music yearbooks were published regularly. There were also culture pages in the largest dailies, *Padomju Jaunatne* and *Cina*. The content of the publications and their conformity to the ruling ideology were controlled by state censorship.

In the late 1980s the culture monthly, *Avots*, started publishing in both Latvian and Russian; along with new poetry and prose, it also featured works by foreign authors formerly denounced by the Soviet regime, art reviews, essays on history and, with increasing frequency, eyewitness accounts of the latest developments in Western culture. The state control had somewhat slackened by the late 1980s when several culture periodicals, e.g., *Literatura un Maksla*, *Avots*, *Karogs*, began publishing material that promoted national awareness and were instrumental in restoring Latvia's independence.

In the early 1990s all the publications established in the Soviet period were still functioning but as state financing began to dwindle and then disappeared altogether, their existence was placed under threat. *Kino* went bankrupt, *Avots* died a slow death, a while later, the culture magazine *Gramata*, a new incarnation of *Jaunas Gramatas* that published works by Latvian and foreign philosophers, historians and culturologists, also had to fold. Finally, *Literatura and Maksla* ceased to exist. The remaining periodicals appeared sporadically. A characteristic feature of this period of transition was the emergence of countless new publications - only to disappear after just one or, at most, a few issues.

As the economy grew more stable, new periodicals were established and the survivors resumed regular publishing.

At present, there are seven Latvian language newspapers and magazines that deal with culture related issues, among those, the monthly *Karogs*, the weekly *Literatura. Maksla. Mes.*, the theatre magazine *Teatra Vestnesis*, the art magazines *Maksla+* and *Studija*, the review of books *Gramatu Apskats*, the architecture magazine *Latvijas Arhitektura*; one, the literary monthly *Daugava* is published in Russian. Most of these receive subsidies from the Ministry of Culture through competition (a total of Ls 63,234 in 1997).

Both largest dailies *Diena* (in Latvian and Russian) and *Neatkariga Rita Avize* feature sections dedicated to culture, so does the weekly *Fokuss* as well as some of the illustrated monthlies, e.g., *Rigas Laiks*.

10.2. Television

Exactly like the Soviet period press, the radio and television were also financed by the state. In the 1980s there were three TV broadcast programs available to the Latvian viewer: one in Latvian and two that were produced in Moscow and broadcast throughout the Soviet Union in Russian.

At present, state funding is available only to the Public Television. The distribution of its sources of financing is as follows: 60% from the state budget and 40% from commercial generated revenue and private sponsors.

The State Television broadcasts two programs that can be received in all parts of Latvia. Program I (LTV I) is broadcast in Latvian 66 hours per week, whereas Program II (LTV II), targeted at the national minorities and various interest groups, is broadcast in Latvian, Russian, English, French, Polish and Ukrainian for a total of 49 hours a week.

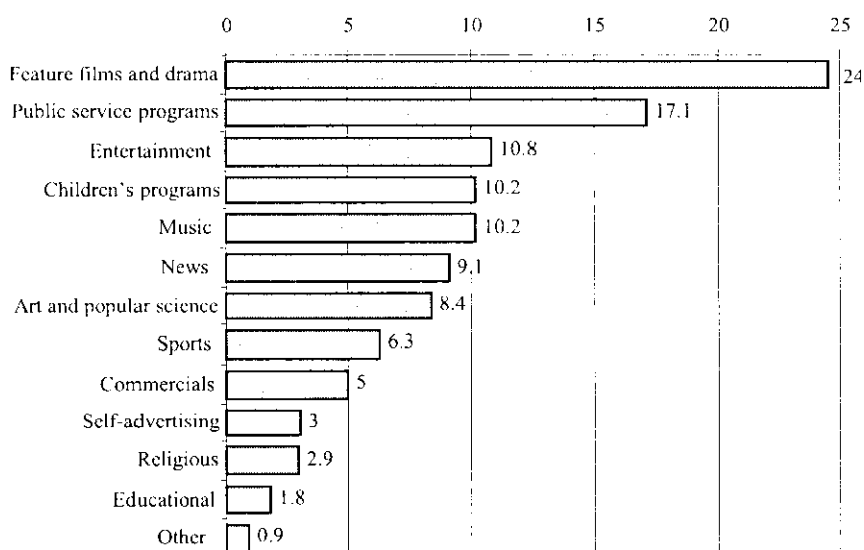
47% of the State TV broadcasts have been produced in Latvia, 41% are imports, 6% are joint productions and another 6% are the work of independent producers. The annual broadcast time amounts to about 6 417 hours.

The culture section of State Television produces programs highlighting various spheres of culture and art; stage performances, both taped and live, are a regular feature.

Opinion polls show that the public tends to perceive television as a source of information and entertainment. This attitude is behind the high ratings of the LTV I evening news program *Panorama*, as well as those of TV series and feature films. The interests of the audience are reflected in the state television programming.

Figure 10.1.

State commissioned TV programs by type (% , 1997)



The broadcast time not used by State TV, i.e. one channel that covers the entire territory of Latvia and two others that can be viewed in Riga and its vicinity, has been divided among the commercial broadcasters. Their activities are regulated by the National Council for Radio and TV elected by the Saeima. Presently there are 28 registered commercial or local television stations operating in Latvia. Cable network is also beginning to develop.

The largest among the commercial stations is *Latvijas Neatkarīga Televīzija (LNT)* that broadcasts for a total of 12 hours on work days and 17 hours on weekends and holidays. *LNT* broadcasts, mostly feature films and TV series, with some news and entertainment programs, are visible throughout Latvia.

The bulk of the programming of the rest of the commercial stations is made up of commercials, entertainment and feature films.

10.3. Radio

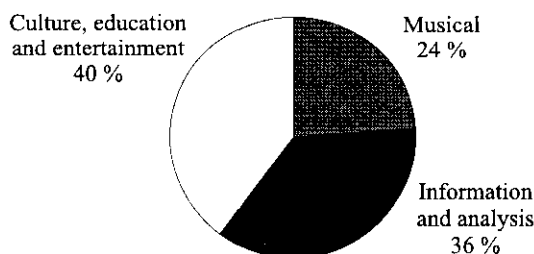
The Latvian State Radio, just like State Television, is partly financed by the state. The combined total broadcast time of the three state programs is about 50 hours per day. The broadcasts reach their listeners throughout the country. It has been estimated that Latvian listeners tune their radios to one of the wavelengths used by the State Radio about 1.1 million times a day.

The Latvian language Program I of the State Radio broadcasts news, information and analysis of the country's political, social, economic and cultural developments, special programming for children, readings of novels and plays, religious programming and music. Similar programs in Russian take up 25% of the total broadcast time of Program II, with the remainder devoted to music, youth and educational programming, as well as productions by the minority culture associations and special short wave broadcasts targeted at English, German and Swedish speaking audiences abroad.

The State Radio is a cultural institution and the largest producer in Latvia. A radio theatre, a choir, children's ensemble and drama group are all part of that structure. The archives of the State Radio contain a collection of about 200 000 units of audio material. The combined total broadcast time of the three State Radio programs comes to about 20 440 hours per year.

Figure 10.2.

Latvian State Radio programs by type (% , 1997)



In addition to the State Radio, 26 commercial and regional stations, some of which are heard throughout Latvia, occupy the FM frequencies. The programming of the vast majority of the commercial stations is limited to popular music, news and entertainment; one commercial station, however, plays only classical music.

10.4. Other electronic means of communication

The number of both *Internet* servers and users, as well as electronic publications, is on the rise in Latvia. The home page of one of the first servers on the local market, *Latnet*, offers general, systematized information about Latvia related resources available on the *Internet*.

By now, most of the largest state and private organisations and educational and research institutions, as well as a number means of mass communication and private individuals have access to *Internet*; many have also produced their home pages both in Latvian and English.

A group of young artists, *E-l@b* , is seeking to use the new information technologies for non-commercial art projects. *E-l@b* has been instrumental in creating the country's first *Internet* radio, *Radio OZOne* that mostly broadcasts experimental electronic music.

There have also been attempts to use the *Internet* for commercial gain. A good example is the largest morning paper, *Diena*, that is now available also in an electronic format.

11. SYSTEM OF CULTURAL EDUCATION

Since the middle of the 19th century first public music and drawing schools were established and several private art studios functioned. Higher education in art was available only abroad. For the most part it was obtained in Russia and Germany.

After World War I, along with the formation of an independent state, a system of cultural education also developed. In 1919 the Conservatory of Latvia and Arts Academy of Latvia were founded. The first two applied arts schools were opened in 1927. Folk schools for adults, which comprised drama and art classes, and various courses played an important role. Latvian folk conservatories functioned in eight cities and towns. In the 1930s the fifteen folk schools of Latvia had the average annual attendance of 3 to 4.4 thousand. National minorities had also their own people's institutions of higher learning.

During the years of Soviet power, the two applied art schools continued functioning. The Riga Folk Conservatory was transformed into Jazeps Medins Secondary School of Music. In 1945 Janis Rozentals Riga Secondary School of Art and Emils Darzins Secondary School of Music were founded. A music and art education system was expanded. In 1980s, there were 53 (10 700 pupils) leisure time schools of music and 12 schools of art (1 200 pupils), 15 secondary schools with a curricular emphasis on music (3 700 pupils), and 8 specialised music (1 200 pupils) and 4 specialised art secondary schools (608 pupils) in LSSR. In general education, music and drawing were included in the curriculum, and there were a number of art related extracurricular activities as well.

After the restoration of independence a number of changes in the organisation and curricula of art schools were inevitable, and a new institution of higher learning, the Academy of Culture, was established.

Table 11.1.

Number of establishments of cultural education (1997)

Branches (type of school)	Elementary education (number of schools)		Secondary specialized education (number of schools)		Number of High-schools
	Municipal	State	Municipal	State	
Music	84	8	1	9	1
Visual Art	36	3	2	4	1
Arts	19	-	-	-	-
Culture	-	-	-	1	1
Choreography	-	1	-	1	faculty (LMusA)
Total	139	12	3	15	3

The above table reflects a system of gradual training of professional artists, which roots in complementary education, that has an emphasis on the development of personality of children, but in the same time provides a solid basis for vocational education in arts. Vocational education in arts can be obtained in specialised arts secondary schools and colleges. Arts higher education establishments provide studies for either academic degrees in arts or professional diplomas. Such studies are available at the Academy of Arts, Academy of Music, and the Academy of Culture. After graduating from these, students receive a bachelor's degree, and the two postgraduate degrees, master's and doctor's are also awarded in the fields of music composition, performing arts, musicology, choreography, painting, textile art, design, drama, cinematography and television, culturology (culture theory), art management, sociology of culture, etc. At the institutions of both higher and secondary learning the specialised subjects are taught by professional artists, musicians and theoreticians.

Naturally, only a small part of the children who start their studies in leisure time schools complete their education at one of the academies. However, acquaintance with the world of music and art initiated during the early stages of learning makes the whole process of education more human and humane. Unfortunately, the number of general subjects taught at specialised high schools can be insufficient and can make for difficulties in obtaining higher education outside the field of music and art.

Although music and art schools are located all over Latvia, real opportunities for studying there are by no means equal and differ from region to region. The unequal distribution of specialised schools is, in large part, the result of historical traditions.

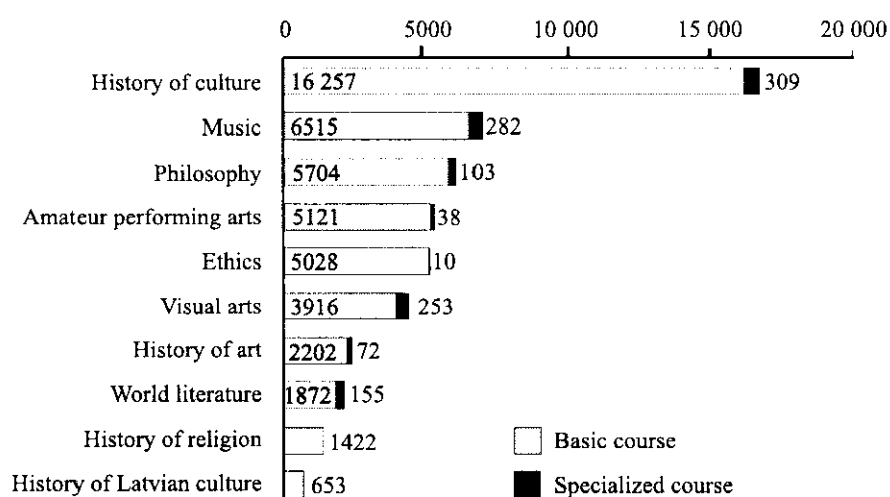
Although state and municipal financing for music and art schools is not sufficient, their activities are still on the level and there have been some positive developments. Notwithstanding the present economic difficulties, the participation of pupils in international competitions and festivals is on the rise and most successful.

The role of music and art schools in the cultural and social life of Latvia's regions is becoming increasingly more important. Several schools have become the cultural centres of their respective regions and reflect the ongoing process of culture decentralization. The venue of many national cultural events has shifted from Riga to the provinces. International events have taken place in the small towns of Latvia: in Jaungulbene, a camp for young musicians; in Aizkraukle and Kandava a competition of art school pupils and a seminar for teachers; in Valmiera, an international summer academy, in Limbazi, a festival of accordion music that drew participants from all three Baltic States, etc. The transfer of responsibility for art and music school financing to the municipalities could also be regarded as an instance of decentralization. The financial decentralization tendencies, positive overall, may however become a source of additional problems given the present deficiencies in the state financial system.

Teaching art and culture occupies a significant place in the curricula of elementary and secondary schools. In recent years, the range of subjects taught has become more varied. In secondary schools, however, all these subjects fall into the category of electives. It would perhaps be prudent to consider making at least one of this compulsory (e.g., music, because of its ancient traditions). Among the problems, one should also note the difficulty in attracting highly qualified professionals to teach in elementary and secondary schools.

Figure 11.1

Choice of arts subjects in general education
(number of pupils in 1996/97)



History of culture is taught in 293, music in 198, philosophy in 172, amateur performing arts in 148, ethics in 146, visual art in 178, history of art in 33, world literature in 34, history of religion in 38 schools. Some schools offer additional special subjects, e.g., children's literature, esthetics, design, Hebrew literature, flower arranging, history of French civilization, Russian literature, Latgalian literature, practical esthetics, rhythmic, rhetoric, the art of public speaking, drama, German literature, etc. However, not all culture and art courses are available throughout Latvia. Mainly this is the result of lack of trained specialists in certain areas of the country. The Ministry of Education and Science has still many problems to solve in order to increase the relative weight of culture and art courses in schools of general education, and to improve their quality.

The cultural education system for adults is still in its formative stages. Professional artists, whose number in society is relatively small, are trained in one of the three academies; it is also possible to continue one's academic education through extra mural courses. Yet more often than not their professional growth is the result of their own individual activities.

The Emilis Melngailis Folk Art Centre and a few other institutions offer an opportunity to increase one's acting skills in amateur productions; there are courses for leaders of amateur theatres, as well as for those interested in arts and crafts, folklore etc. The system of folk schools has not yet been restored to the pre-war level and scope. One must admit that the state and municipalities could pay more attention to this field of culture and help create a functional system that would draw wide public participation.

Since the 1920s research in culture history and theory has been carried out in Latvia contributing to the process of spiritual self-awareness and expanding cultural horizons. Also today the academic level of cultural education is intimately linked with research in humanities. At the three higher schools of art (numbering approximately 1.500 students and 300 members of academic personnel, about 45 of whom are involved in theoretical research) research is being conducted in the theory of music, the history of Latvian music and art, culture philosophy and sociology, culturology, folklore and traditional culture. International conferences are regularly held, monographs and collections of articles published. Along with research done at the schools of higher learning, some other institutions are engaged in similar work, e.g., the institutes of the Academy of Sciences, and notably the Institute of Literature, Art and Folklore. Funding is partly drawn from the state budget and channelled through Scientific Council of Latvia and other institutions, but for the most part research is conducted by enthusiasts in the absence of adequate financial support. Financial problems notwithstanding, research activities in academic cultural education institutions are an essential part of culture development in Latvia.

The education system of Latvia, including arts education, is currently undergoing reform with the aim of streamlining the structure of education, elevating the status of knowledge and its functional importance in society, and introducing European educational standards. This process, however, proceeds very slowly. The draft Law of Education, introduced to replace the legislative act adopted by the Supreme Soviet soon after the restoration of independence, was severely criticized at the first reading and has not been further promoted. Presently a number of education bills worked out on the basis of Latvia's Education Concept are discussed on state and public levels. The question of whether a special law for arts education is needed is yet to be resolved. Changes in the structure and contents of arts education proceed at a very slow pace, and are not always well founded. Financing of education and arts education is not sufficient. As a result, the infrastructure does not always conform to the requirements of the education process, while the teaching staff is forced to secure their survival minimum through outside work, which tends to hamper their professional development.

Institutions of arts education are subordinated to the Ministry of Culture; their connection with the Ministry of Education and Science is only partly regulated. Experience seems to suggest that such an arrangement is best, because this administrative

subordination suits the specific role and traditions of cultural education and makes the change easier.

Administration of arts education is carried out by the State Centre for Cultural Education of Ministry of Culture established in 1996 on the basis of the Centre of Schools and presently comprising two departments. The Centre is charged with co-ordinating all levels of art education, developing teaching methods and curricula for the elementary and secondary level of art education, arranging for continuing education for teachers, organising creative competitions for students of the arts education institutions, and promoting their participation in international competitions.

12. NON – GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS OF CULTURE

12.1. Creative Unions and other artists' organisations

During the era of Soviet power, creative unions were formed according to the communist party's Central Committee directives. They were included in a centralized system and worked as substructures within the structure of the artists' organisations of the USSR.

During the first period of occupation (1940-1941) organisations of creative artists were formed, including unions of writers, visual artists, composers and architects. After 1945 the activities of these creative organisations were renewed in their original centralized framework. The society of theatre workers was formed in 1945, the union of journalists in 1957, and that of cinematographers in 1958. Particularly strict supervision of creative workers was practised in the 1950s, when any attempted association among artists was treated as anti-state activity. A vivid example of this practice involved the so-called French Group. Several writers, actors and visual artists who showed active interest in French culture were condemned and exiled. This was a tragic time during which any attempt to maintain professional artistic standards and authentic national originality was subordinated to ideological dogma, repression and a policy of character assassination. Functionaries of the communist party maintained constant ideological control.

Illusions created by the short-time thaw during the Khrushchev era, and associated hopes for a less restricted atmosphere for creative work in Latvia, were quashed by an administrative campaign against local party leaders favourably disposed toward the national culture. This was manifested by even stricter control over creative organisations. Between the late 1960s and early 1970s, however, resistance to the regime on behalf of the creative intelligentsia becomes more manifest.

The overall situation in the cultural life of the Baltic republics, as well as in creative organizations, was more liberal than anywhere else in the Soviet Union. Artists who followed modern principles of art could enter creative societies. Nonconformist, underground and alternative groups did not occupy such an important place in Latvia as they did in Russia.

Creative unions in the 1970s and 1980s had an extraordinarily stimulating influence on cultural life. Exhibitions, concerts, library parties, art and film festivals, seminars, conferences, social discussions, competitions, local and international symposia in Riga and in the provinces, all took place thanks to the initiative of creative unions and their organisational work. Creative unions purposefully formed close ties with wide audiences, particularly in the countryside. Annual mass activities, such as Art Days, Poetry Days, and Music Days, embraced the whole republic. Campaigns associated with Art Days and installations in Riga streets and squares drew thousands of spectators.

Subordination of Latvia's creative unions to the centralized institutions of the USSR was not so strict in the 1970s and 1980s as it was before. They were comparatively independent, although in some spheres, for example in organising international contacts, the centralized control of the communist party remained.

The creative unions in Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania took active part in the independence movements of the late 1980s. Their members actively promoted and declared political demands and organised social campaigns. Latvian writers, artists,

composers and other creative workers organised a large-scale manifestation on the 25th of March, 1988 dedicated to the memory of Stalin's victims. On June 1st and 2nd, 1988, a plenary session was organised by the board of the Writer's Union in which representatives of all creative organisations took part, thus marking a turning point in the consolidation of political activities.

During the Soviet period the financial resources for Creative Unions were partly ensured by a system of foundations, which also functioned in a centralized way. The local Art, Literature, Music and other foundations transferred their income to the All-Union foundations in Moscow; there a certain percentage was kept for centralized expenses, but the remainder was transferred to Latvian foundations and was used by the unions as deemed necessary. The income of these foundations was collected from various sources. Music and literature monies were mainly obtained through deductions from author's fees. A branched economic structure and a system of various enterprises were formed in the sphere of visual art. The income of the Art Foundation in Latvia was secured by two comparatively well-developed enterprises — an integrated system of workshops of applied art, *Maksla*, and an integrated Decorative art combine. Because of tax deductions and the power to buy cheap raw material, these enterprises could earn comparatively stable incomes. In 1986 their profit was a million 103.9 thousand rubles. The production of these enterprises was distributed in Latvia and in commercial exhibitions abroad. The artists working in the combine *Maksla* designed and carried out large-scale orders, including objects decorating the environment and artistic arrangements of subway stations on the whole territory of the USSR.

Out of those means returned from the All-Union foundations in Moscow to the Art Foundation in Latvia for distribution according to the decisions of the Artist Union board it was possible to finance almost all social necessities and programs of visual artists. The Art Foundation paid rent for the offices of the Artists' Union and salaries to its employees. The Foundation regularly bought works of art from exhibitions, which were chosen by a commission, elected by the artists themselves. Gradually a large collection of contemporary art was amassed in Latvia. In 1987 this collection contained 14 359 art pieces. Regular contracts were concluded with artists to provide their creative works for exhibition. The Art Foundation financed rent for exhibition premises, art studios and the building of other objects required by artists. As well, the Foundation organised exhibitions in Latvia and abroad. During the period from 1982 to 1987, 888 exhibitions were arranged in which 46 909 works were exhibited. The Art Foundation covered all expenses associated with seminars held for artists and bimonthly creative group meetings in the centres belonging to the system of foundations. The Art Foundation covered the cost of individual grants, paid for social aid in cases of illness, treatment for artists at sanatoriums, and financed medical treatment needed by members of Artists' Union.

Likewise, social insurance and allowances were guaranteed to members of other creative units. The resources of the Literature and Music Foundations were used to support various creative programs and organised enterprises. This protective system, enabling social and financial support and certain privileges enjoyed by creative workers, was to a great extent based on deductions from the means earned by the artists themselves. Those financial means supplied directly from the state budget, the distribution of which was determined by the Ministry of Culture, formed the more indefinite and unstable source of financing for creative unions.

In the summer of 1990 the government made decisions according to which the Creative Unions were to become independent non-governmental organisations. The new state did not seek to influence the structure of the creative associations, nor their internal operations, although its decisions did establish certain conditions meant to ensure, at least partly, the financial support for those associations. However, these conditions did not have their intended effect in practice. Certain tax discounts economical structures of creative organisations were established only for the year 1990, and later they were reduced.

Being busy with many other severe economic problems, the state did not attempt to solve cultural policy problems, in favour of creative organisations so that they might continue to function on a viable economic basis. The boards of creative associations had to solve complicated legislative and economic problems of, by themselves. The activities of art foundation enterprises were placed on the same basis as those of commercial enterprises. Foundation activities were burdened with debts, and their re-organisation became a lengthy, complicated affair.

During the period of transition, creative unions and their associated fiscal entities have tried to find the means to support creative work. Some unions rented out space in buildings at their disposal, while others went looking for sponsors.

Since 1993, the structure and formation of creative organisations was determined by a law "On Public Organisations and their Associations". At the beginning, the specific character of creative organisations was not spelled out. In 1995 a supplement to the law was added which specifically addressed the foundation and regulation of creative professional organisations. The law states that creative organisations, which are registered both at the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Culture, may receive resources from the state budget to perform certain significant functions within the framework of state cultural policy objectives. Creative organisations may also receive support from municipalities. But because of the financial crisis, these regulations did not work. This law determines that if the resources of a social or creative professional organisation surpass 2 000 lats, that organization must establish an economic substructure, which has to operate according to regulations meant for commercial enterprises. These restrictions were unfavourable to creative organisations, especially the larger ones, whose functions, activities and programs require substantial resources.

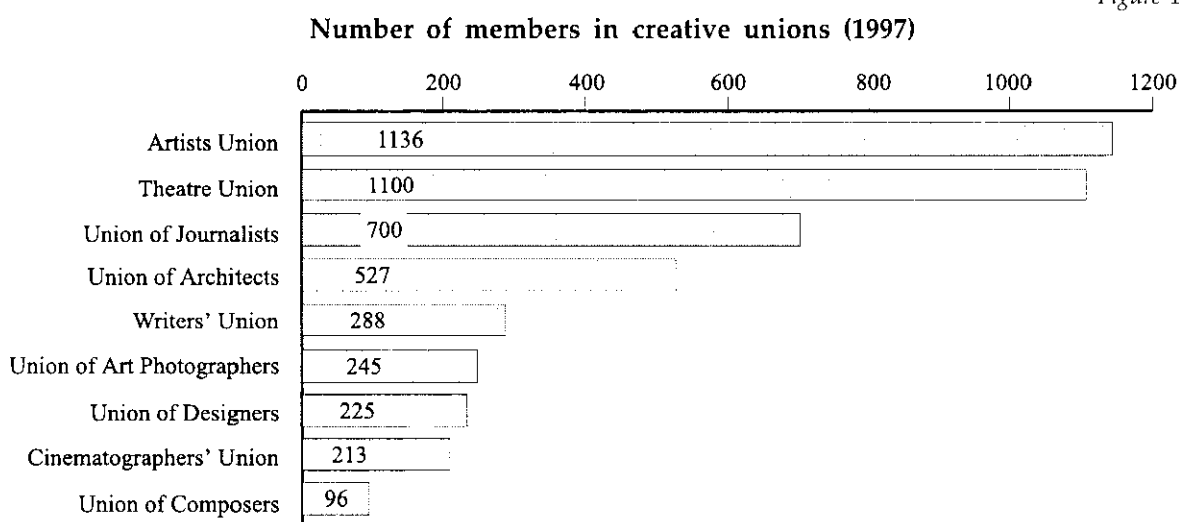
State subsidies for some unions during the period 1990 to 1995 have not been motivated by cultural policy considerations. The Writers' and Composers' Unions have received insignificant grants. Other creative associations have not received any regular subsidies. The Artists' Union, taking part in the creative project competition organised by the Ministry of Culture, received certain financing for some common exhibitions of artists in 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997. Since 1997 the representatives of the creative unions have been invited to take part in the distribution of state subsidies for creators.

While encountering difficulties with financing and inner restructuring, all nine former creative unions have maintained their integrity and to certain extent perform the functions determined by their statutes and regulations. Creative unions are comprised of individuals admitted according to professional qualifying criteria. The number of members has lately increased. Some creative unions also admit Latvian artists living abroad. Quite many non-Latvians professionally educated in Latvian art schools have successfully been integrated in Latvian cultural activities. There are also artists who are developing the unique features of their own ethnic heritage by co-operation with their own national cultural societies. It should be noted that there has been no grouping or isolation among artists in creative professions based upon nationality.

The number of artists who are not members of any creative organisations is hard to specify accurately, however their number in visual art, theatre and literature is not great. Musicians have special problems. The Union of Composers largely contains representatives of classical music, composers and musicologists, whose professional requirements are particularly strict.

There is a general tendency toward decentralization evident both in the activities of creative organisations and in the activities associated with their transformation. In the Soviet system it was compulsory for representatives of various art genres to join subsections of their art organisation associated with their fields. Entry for each individual was carefully regulated, and his or her support came from common resources.

Figure 12.1.



At present the creative unions do not try to regulate the co-operation of their members and are not able to promote it with their resources. Instead of subsections coordinated under an organisational umbrella there have appeared other forms of co-operation among artists. The legal regulations for non-governmental organisations foresee democratic procedure for the foundation of new professional organisations. In order to carry out specific tasks and to promote the development of their field, members of creative unions have organised several new creative organisations, which are registered and act as independent legal units, although most of them, as their umbrella organisations maintain contact and ties with existing creative unions. In the sphere of visual art three new creative organisations, besides the Latvian Artists' Union, are actively engaged in work: The Latvian Sculptors' Centre, The Chamber of Graphic Art and the Association of Textile Artists. The International Artists' Association *B 13* was established by the professors of the Academy of Arts and one of its main objectives is facilitating of the creative activities of art students and young artists. The interests and rights of ballet dancers in the Theatre Union are actively defended by the Association of Ballet Dancers. Formation of new professional organisations and their gradual functional differentiation is rapidly expanding. The patterns of relationship among various creative organisations sometimes involve certain contradictions and discussions, but the general tendency is to develop and stabilize fruitful contacts.

From their scanty resources, creative organisations offer small-scale social benefits to their members — pensioners and artists who live in particularly difficult conditions.

Some creative unions have other, more specialized functions they must perform. Thus, for instance, the Artists' Union owns a large collection of contemporary art (about 14 500 pieces) and it has to secure its storage and care receiving minimal help from the state or municipalities.

The Union of Journalists, taking upon itself the protection of the interests of its members, carries out functions similar to those of trade unions.

One of the most important tasks for the future is to provide legislative framework and protection for members of the creative professions. In a post-socialist society, ideas about the character and unique features of the creative professions are ill formed and vague. Institutions attempting to formulate the rules applicable to the various aspects of social life have, up to the present, ignored the creative professions and their unique properties. Creative professions must themselves collect information on how legal questions pertaining to artists are solved in other countries. In this respect international documents and information obtained from the Cultural Committee of the Council of Europe, the International Art Association IAA/AIAP (UNESCO) and other international

institutions and organisations are essential. The cultural policy department at the Ministry of Culture, established in 1994, gives some support to creative organisations in this regard.

Attempts to establish an umbrella organisation of creative unions were undertaken in 1988, when at the plenary session of the Writers' Union a new co-operative body - the Cultural Council of the Creative Unions was founded. In 1995 this umbrella organization was registered according to the new legal requirements as the Council of the Creative Unions of Latvia, which represents not only the traditional unions, but also those new artists' organisations, which have recently appeared.

Under the law "On Public Organisations and their Associations" such an umbrella organisations, which represents the majority of creative unions and organisations, has a definite legal status. It means that the Council of the Creative Unions has the official right to represent the interests of creative workers on a state level and, in co-operation with state institutions, it can carry out state functions in solving and co-ordinating problems in the creative sphere as well as general issues of cultural policy. The Council of the Creative Unions initially did not receive any financing from the state budget for carrying out its function, although the law foresees this possibility.

In May, 1995, the Council of Creative Unions took part in the foundation of the European Council of Artists' (CA) and joined this international interdisciplinary artists organisation.

Since 1994 the Council of the Creative Unions has regularly organised negotiations with governmental and parliamentary representatives. In several occasions solutions of different legal and economical issues favourable for artists have been reached.

12.2. Latvian Culture Foundation

Latvian Culture Foundation (LCF) was founded in 1987. Initial concept of the Foundation belongs to Imants Ziedonis, one of the most widely read contemporary Latvian poets, who became the first chairman of the Foundation's board, as well. The aim of the Foundation was and still is the same – to promote culture by channelling profits from state-administered and private business to different cultural endeavors. In accordance with the law all the donors and sponsors of LCF programs and projects enjoy substantial tax reduction benefits. Since 1995 LCF is an associate member of European Foundation Centre.

Basic policies of the Foundation are:

- to support individual cultural activities regardless of their location;
- to encourage regionalization of the Latvian cultural scene;
- to encourage and implement alternative culture projects;
- to develop long-term target programmes.

One of the most important projects of LCF is its annual *national competition for scholarships and grants in humanities*. The goal of this project is to promote research in topical directions of social sciences, philosophy and arts. Priority is given to research (both post-graduate and independent) in the previously non-existent fields, such as: paradigmatic social and cultural changes in the post-soviet transit society, cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary studies. Another direction of this program is promotion of translation of important texts from different languages, thus introducing them into Latvian humanitarian discourse. Starting from 1997 another scholarship program is launched together with the Economists Association 2010. Its concern is research in economics and related issues.

Regional development program of LCF is aimed at monitoring, maintenance and revitalization of historical environment; encouragement of folk arts and crafts and studies of regional cultural heritage; promotion of self-organisation and self-initiative on

community level. Either regional branches of LCF or any other Latvia-based organisation or individual can apply for grant within this program.

Daugava program. Daugava is the longest and historically most important river in Latvia. Traditionally it is endowed with symbolic values. Daugava region contains the richest archaeological sites of the early Middle Ages, it can boast of unique natural resources. LCF Daugava program involves special research groups and local authorities. Its aim is to maintain environmental sustainability of the region and promote historical, ethnic and natural research. The results of this research are published in a series of books –“*Daugava Papers*” and others. To promote the ideas of the program among the local population a specific *Daugava-Week* is held in some near-by region every year.

Riga 800-anniversary program. This anniversary will be celebrated in 2001. LCF has started preparations for the anniversary in 1993, a special committee had been created, where prominent historians, artists, museum research teams etc. were joined in effort to prepare books, conferences, exhibitions etc. dedicated to the anniversary. Some of committee's activities are on governmental level: series of eight commemorative silver coins, issued in co-operation with the Bank of Latvia; postal stamps, prepared together with the State Postal Office. In 1997 the first volume of the anniversary book series “*Bibliotheca Rigensis*”: *Basilius Plinius: The Encomium to Riga* (facsimile and translation in four languages) was published. A number of other projects are under preparation in co-operation with the hotels “Latvia” and “Konventa seta” and The Museum of History of Riga and Navigation. In May 1997 the Union of Riga's friends and supporters was officially founded.

Program “Archive of Lifes”. The aim of this program is to collect subjective historical evidence: diaries, memoirs, correspondence, personal narratives etc. and to create publications for the LCF series “*Liktenarhivs*” (Archive of Lifes).

Spidola prize. Spidola is no doubt the most popular feminine character in Latvian modern mythology. Although coined by the neo-romantic imagery of the late XIX century, this character is based upon ancient beliefs of folklore. Spidola is generally acknowledged to be a personification of the nations creative essence. Spidola prize is the most important prize awarded each year to a person or institution, which has made an exceptionally important contribution to Latvian culture and the humanities. Starting from 1997 Spidola prize for life-long achievements in arts and another one for important economic research are also awarded.

Financial backing for the LCF was, at the beginning, secured by a 1988 decree of the Council of Ministers to the effect that the state enterprise *Dailrade* should transfer its income tax to support the LCF program. Thanks to the activities of individuals, private donations to the LCF were widespread toward the end of the 1980s, particularly for the Daugava project. However, as early as 1992 the Supreme Council of the Republic decided on a different source of financing, responding to economic conditions of the transition period. 51% of *Dailrade* property was transferred to the Culture Foundation, 49% was kept by the state. In a later development, *Dailrade* virtually collapsed and other means of financing the Culture Foundation had to be found. At present the main source is private sponsorship, the functioning of which is to a certain extent ensured by the new legislation entitled “On the income tax of enterprises,” passed by the Saeima. This law establishes that the income tax is discounted by 90% for sum donated to the Culture Foundation, the Latvian Olympic committee, or the Latvian Children's Fund; it is reduced by 85% for sums contributed to public culture, education, science, religion, sports, charity, health and environmental protection organizations, foundations and institutions financed by the state budget. The overall tax reduction must not exceed 20% of the common tax sum.

12.3. Foundation for Creative Work

At the end of 1993 the Foundation for Creative Work was established to promote the activities of sponsors and patrons in their financial support for cultural activity. In outline, its main activities are:

- providing stipends for arts and humanities students and supporting the participation of young talents in international competitions;
- support for cultural publishing (magazines and newspapers);
- support for creative discussions and conferences;
- organisation of exhibitions, publishing of catalogues, recording of compact disks;
- organisation of the publishing house *Vermandarzs*, with the aim of publishing books of significance to Latvian culture;
- organisation of literary competitions, support for drama contests and music festivals.

The Foundation for Creative Work is supported through donations, bolstered by the aforementioned 85% tax reduction for sponsors of culture. This public organisation lends financial support to projects in literature, art and science and mainly supports those programs, which do not require large investments. The Foundation's income is mostly based on contributions from state joint-stock companies.

Several other foundations supporting cultural activities are active in Latvia. At present, however, their contributions are relatively insignificant. They are of a local character and carry out very specific projects. Unfortunately, the financial resources of these foundations are small and their social status is rather low. This situation has two principal causes: 1) the rather weak state of sponsorship and patronage, due to the economic crisis; 2) an excessive tendency to rely on the support of the state, and ensuing lack of awareness about possibilities for social funding. This is, to some extent, evident if one considers the activities and role of the International Soros Foundation in Latvian cultural activities.

12.4. The Soros Foundation–Latvia

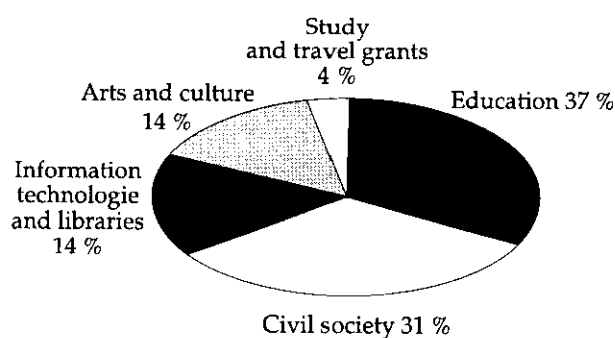
Although the funding associated with the Soros Foundation (SFL) is not typical of Latvian cultural policy, nor its financing, the activities of this foundation should be mentioned in our report. This is both in consideration for its noteworthy financial support not only to education and the democratization process in our society, but also for cultural activities. The Soros Foundation-Latvia was founded in 1992. It seeks to promote democratic ways of thinking in our country. In this respect, it supports cultural activities by financing Latvia's artists, musicians and actors in their attempts to participate in international cultural activities. The Soros Foundation sponsors cultural projects on a grand scale in Latvia: theatrical performances, the organisation of exhibitions and concerts, activities of cultural establishments, and the realization of regional programs in various cultural spheres.

In 1996 the budget of the Soros Foundation – Latvia was 4 507 448 US dollars. For national programmes 2 881 670 US dollars were spent. In 1997 378 580 US dollars were spent for arts and culture.

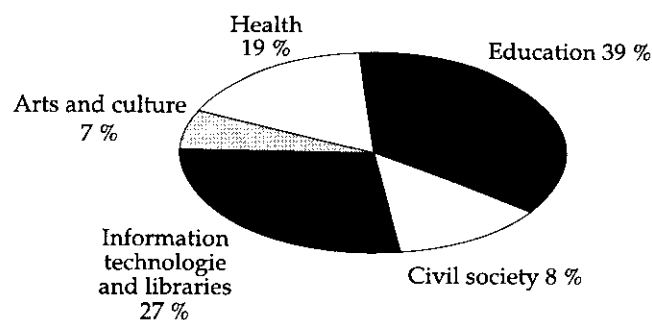
The Soros Centre for Contemporary Arts-Riga has been in operation for four years. In 1996, the Centre was fully integrated into the SFL structure. The main focus of the Centre – support for and internationalization of the avant-garde directions of contemporary Latvian art – has been preserved, but new directions, which are linked to local conditions and needs have also been intensified.

Percentage distribution of budget of the Soros foundation–Latvia (1997)

For National programs, 12.2.A



For Regional programs, 12.2.B



Recently SFL has launched another structure – the Performing Arts Information Centre. The goal of it is to use modern communication resources to make information about the performing arts more broadly accessible. In co-operation with the Theatre Institute of the Latvian Academy of Culture, the Centre has set up an Internet home page on the Latvian theatre scene. Agreement has also been reached on the establishment of a home page for the Latvian National Opera.

The Soros Foundation-Latvia not only provides financial support for Latvian cultural and educational activities, but also tends to encourage Latvia's cultural activity in the direction of Western cultural institutions and activities. Such activities of the Western world, being sufficiently tolerant toward the traditions of national culture, lend support to the realization of a modern, worldwide cultural situation that increases the participation of Latvia's culture in the activities of European culture.

13. CULTURAL HERITAGE

13.1. System of cultural heritage protection

The first efforts of protection and registration of cultural monuments in Latvia date back to the rule of the Swedish King Gustav II Adolf (1611–1632), when one of the first antiquity experts in the service of the Swedish State, Martin Asehaneus, collected inscriptions on tombstones, church objects and descriptions of their interiors in the province of Vidzeme, then belonging to Sweden. A more serious interest in cultural heritage appeared in the first half of the 19th century when several societies for protection of monuments and art associations came into being.

A new era in the protection of cultural artefacts in Latvia is associated with the first period of Latvia's independence (1918–1940). In early 1923 a law regulating the administration of monuments was adopted and, in October of the same year, a special state institution, the Board of Monuments, was created. The Board served a supervising function over putting the law into practice and carried out many other tasks, including protection, study and popularisation of cultural values and creation of lists of monuments requiring state protection. By 1940, 1454 monuments had been placed under state protection.

Following World War II, under Soviet occupation, several constituent bodies of the Council of Ministers and the Ministry of Culture, as well as institutions under their authority, worked in the field of monument protection. The number of explored and protected monuments grew, however, for the most part these were adopted symbols of communist ideology. Many other valuable buildings (especially church-related) and artefacts were neglected and often doomed to perish.

In 1989 the State Inspection for Heritage Protection was established, which is specially authorised state administration institution implementing state control over protection of cultural heritage. After the restoration of independence, on February 12, 1992, the law "On Protection of Cultural Monuments" was adopted as the first specialised law in respect of cultural heritage among the East European countries. This law, with its several amendments, forms the legal basis for the use and protection of monuments in Latvia. One must also note the "Regulations on Registration, Protection, Use and Restoration of Cultural Monuments" confirmed by the Cabinet of Ministers, as well as 38 terms in other legislative bills and resolutions (laws "On Municipalities", "On the Use of Land and Land Utilisation", "On Religious Organisations", regulations on territorial planning, etc.).

According to state legislation, cultural monuments are considered to be part of the cultural heritage. Those include landscapes and specific territories (ancient burial grounds, cemeteries, places commemorating historic events and activity of historical persons), as well as individual graves, architectural ensembles and individual buildings, works of art, implements and objects of historical, scientific or cultural significance whose preservation for future generations is in the interest of both local and international public. Cultural monuments are classified in movable and immovable monuments. The Law prohibits to destroy monuments, and any transformations or movements are allowed only in exceptional cases with the permission of the State Inspection for Heritage Protection.

Cultural monuments in Latvia may be owned by the state and municipalities, as well as physical persons and legal entities. Immovable property, recognised as a cultural monument, has particular encumbrances of ownership rights, and administrative acts, issued by the State Inspection for Heritage Protection, on usage and preservation of monument are binding for the owner or possessor of the particular cultural monument.

The state administration in protection and usage of cultural monuments is provided by the Cabinet of Ministers and implemented by the State Inspection for Heritage

Protection, thus ensuring control over the awareness, investigation and enumeration of monuments. On June 25, 1996 the Cabinet of Ministers confirmed its new Statutes. The Inspection is supervised by the Ministry of Culture and is constituted of following parts: Administrative Department, Experts' Department, Archaeological centre, Department of Architecture and Art, Department of Historical Environment, Museum of Architecture and Centre of Monument Documentation. In Latvia there are State inspectors for heritage protection in every region (a total of 33), who are the employees of the State Inspection for Heritage Protection, while the work of these inspectors is connected with the activities of respective municipalities. In addition, in some of the larger towns and regions, inspections financed by municipalities have been set up.

Objects having special cultural value are enumerated in the list of state-protected cultural monuments regardless of in whose ownership, possession or usage the cultural monument is. State enumeration of cultural monuments includes cognition and inspection of cultural monuments, determination of their historical, scientific, artistic, architectural, archaeological, ethnographic or other cultural value, their fixation and research. List of state-protected cultural monuments is drafted by the State Inspection for Heritage Protection and approved by the Cabinet of Ministers. Cultural monuments are classified, according to their historical, scientific, artistic or other cultural value, into monuments of state and local significance. The owner (possessor) of the object shall be notified in writing about including the object in his ownership (possession) into the draft list of state protected cultural monuments, but the owner's consent is not necessary for including the object into the list. He shall be granted tax alleviation or compensation of eventual losses due to restrictions on using the land or the object.

Ensembles and complexes of cultural monuments having special historical, scientific or artistic value may be proclaimed, by the Cabinet of Ministers resolution, as reserves of cultural monuments.

Newly discovered objects are protected by the state till resolving the issue of including the object into the list of state-protected cultural monuments. A person who has found any objects which might have historical, scientific, artistic or other cultural value, in and on the ground, in water, in ancient buildings or their remains, shall notify the State Inspection for Heritage Protection about his findings within 10 days.

In order to ensure protection of cultural monuments, protection zones for cultural monuments are established by the State Inspection for Heritage Protection. Around cultural monuments without any definite protection zone and newly discovered cultural monuments in rural populated areas the protection zone shall include the distance of 500 metres, but in cities – the distance of 100 metres.

Maintenance, conservation, restoration and repair of cultural monuments are carried out by their owners or possessors, pending a specific license granted at the discretion of the state inspection. For this, owners or possessors must use their own resources, but they are granted certain tax reductions. They must ensure the preservation of cultural monuments which are in their possession, but may receive financial help from the state if the monuments in question are of state importance and cannot be used for financial gain. In case if the owner fails to ensure preservation of a cultural monument in his property, the Law foresees the possibility to alienate the respective real estate. Financial resources obtained by leasing out cultural monuments, deductions from commercial activity related to cultural monuments, are allowed to use only for research, conservation, restoration and repair of cultural monuments.

The Inspection has the right to stop any economic activities concerning cultural monuments or their protection zones, in cases when regulations of cultural monument protections are violated and these monuments are threatened. The person responsible for the destruction of cultural monuments, violating of regulations concerning the use, protection and registration should be held responsible in conformity with the legislative acts of the Republic of Latvia by administrative means.

If the provisions of an international or interstate agreement on protection, usage or restoration of cultural monuments contradict the Republic of Latvia legislative acts on cultural monuments, the provisions of the international or interstate agreement are applied.

In order to solve complex problems in a more objective way and to ensure specialists participation, the Inspection has formed the following public boards of experts: Board of Organ Experts, Architecture Experts Board, Archaeology Experts Board and Expert - chemist. The conclusions made by these boards are of consultative character, however, the Inspection always takes into consideration its advice, when adopting decisions. Once the Inspection has confirmed the conclusions of public experts, they gain prescriptive character. In co-operation with the Society of Restorers a Certification committee for the profession of restorers has been formed. The Inspection has also compiled a data bank of firms engaged in the field of conservation and restoration. While carrying out its obligations, the State Inspection for Heritage Protection is co-operating with municipalities, various ministries and non-governmental institutions, like Architects' Association, Society of Restorers, Society of Archaeologists and Union of Civil engineers.

Both the urban and rural environment has been degraded during the years of occupation and has not yet been rehabilitated. Recent years have brought radical changes in towns and countryside. Beside positive tendencies there appear buildings and advertisements, degrading the environment and completely contrary to the principles of spatial planning. Because of problems that exist in the area of property rights, many buildings are vacant, territorial planning is just on the process of development, control of construction activities is not sufficient, cultural tourism has not yet taken its place in public life. Several towns have yet to adopt any building and zoning regulations. After survey of regional cultural monuments in 1996 it was stated that 520 of objects are in critical condition, but in some urban areas one third of all buildings are in emergency condition. A list of 100 most endangered cultural and historical objects in Latvia has been made up, but the state can not afford to give sufficient means for the upkeep of all cultural monuments under its protection. In 1996 297 215 lats were allocated to the program for exploration and salvation of cultural monuments and financial support was rendered for saving and restoration work of 96 cultural monuments, thus protecting them from destruction.

Despite all these problems and notwithstanding the fact that many owners of cultural monuments, having recently regained their property lack the means necessary for its maintenance, the number of objects in critical condition seems to be slowly diminishing.

The State Inspection for Heritage Protection has established successful co-operation with Estonia, Lithuania, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Poland, Germany, France, Belgium and other European countries, as well as close collaboration with several international organisations, like the Council of Europe Cultural Heritage Committee, UNESCO, Chamber of Craftmanship and ICOMOS. On Inspection's initiative, Cultural Heritage Committee of the Baltic States was formed in 1993 and since then working in regular sessions. The pilot project of the Council of Europe "The Abava Valley Protection and Development Program", a comparatively new direction in Latvia's culture-historical landscape protection, is also being carried out. In 1997 the Abava Valley specially protected cultural territory was selected for the List of Most Endangered Sites by World Monuments Watch Fund. The fact that the site was inscribed on the list already for the second time emphasises the urgent necessity to preserve the unique cultural landscape and put forward long-term development program for this site. Advisory of experts of the Council of Europe has contributed to the improvement of legislature in the sphere of heritage protection. A co-operation in the sphere of professional training is started.

For the inclusion of Latvia in the international cultural context, the annually organised European Heritage Days with themes "Wooden heritage in Latvia" (1995),

“Latvia’s cultural heritage 1920–1940” (1996), “Castles and manors of Latvia”(1997), “Hillforts in Latvia” (1998) are of importance. In 2001 Riga has the honour to be the host of the European Heritage Days Official Opening Ceremony. In 1996 the 2nd Congress of European Archaeologists Association took place in Riga. Inclusion of the Riga Historic Centre on the UNESCO World Heritage List (1997) is an international testimony for the outstanding cultural values and significance of the city.

13.2. Infrastructure of museums and the main directions of their activities

Museums in Latvia play an important role in the preservation of cultural heritage as well as in the orientation of intellectual and artistic life. The system of museums includes state, municipal, and private museums.

Table 13.1.

Number of museums (1990–1997)

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
State museums	47	44	44	42	39	40	40	40
Municipal museums	44	49	56	55	55	55	55	57
Other museums					90	78	93	181 ¹

Museum policy at the state level is carried out by the Ministry of Culture.² It is responsible for a rational use of the budget means allotted for museums under its supervision; registers private museums and museums at institutions; takes part in the formation of international agreements in the museum sphere; hands out permissions to exhibit abroad assets from state and municipal museums. Museum administration is carried out by the chief specialist at the Ministry of Culture and the Museum Association. Several state museums are supervised by other ministries.

The system of museum administration includes co-operation with state culture inspectors. However, this relationship is to some extent hampered by the fact that culture inspectors seldom are museum specialists. Where professional museum evaluation is needed, specialists from the museums supervised by the Ministry of Culture advise inspectors.

Museums are financed in the following way. State museums receive funds from the state budget, but they can obtain income from other sources as well (income from paid services, donations). These resources are included in a separate museum account, which is formed according to the law “On Budget and Financial Management.” These financial resources are disbursed according to the budgetary estimates established by the aforementioned institutions. At present legislative changes are taking place that effectively revises the financing for museums and other cultural institutions.

The municipal museums are financed by the respective municipalities, and they can also obtain additional financing in the same way that State museums do. These additional means are used to make the activities of museums more secure.

Financing for private museums and those at institutions is determined by the owners. Like state museums, these may claim money from the state budget if they carry out projects involving the history of civilization or art. Requests for state financial support are settled by the Ministry of Culture. If institutional and private museums have received means from the state budget, then in cases of liquidation State museums have priority rights to acquire the assets in these museums.

¹ Rapid increase of the number of museums is connected with more complete registration in 1997.

² After the Law on Museums was passed, State museums policy is carried out by the State Authority on Museums, the post of chief specialist on museums has been liquidated in its turn.

A draft bill "On Museums" ¹ that includes important changes in the museum administration system has been prepared and turned in for parliamentary approval. According to this bill, the Ministry of Culture is authorized to approve regulations for accreditation of museums and charged with forming and confirming regulations for the supplementation, maintenance, restoration, and use of the collections at their disposal. The bill also regulates manipulations with the National museum collection and charges the State Authority on Museums with their preservation and functional use.

The aforementioned bill also stipulates the formation of two new administrative structures: the Council of Museums of Latvia, a public body with consultative powers whose statutes are subject to approval by the Cabinet and that promote the development of and co-operation among museums. Its tasks: to prepare recommendations for Minister of Culture and other ministers, as well as municipalities, as to the financing required by the museums; to analyze requested items in the state budget and financial reports; to prepare a project for the distribution of allocated financing subject to the Minister's approval; to submit candidates to the posts of directors of museum stock; to act as adviser to ministries and municipalities in questions concerning museum work; to participate in the accreditation of museums. The Council of Museums, proposed by the Ministry of Culture, is confirmed by the Cabinet of Ministers. It includes four representatives, delegated by municipal museums (one for each province of Latvia), eight specialists, delegated by state museums, representatives of the Association of Municipalities and the Latvian Association of Museums — one from each institution and Minister of Culture.

The other new administrative structure, the State Authority on Museums is placed under the authority of the Ministry of Culture and charged with the following functions: to implement state authority on museums and their accreditation; to carry out and arrange registration of all museums; to supervise preservation of National Museum Collection; to evaluate natural, cultural, art, archaeological etc. objects confiscated by the customs or courts and make selections for the National Museum Collection; to supervise the practice of the law "On Copyright and Neighbouring Rights" in the functioning of museums; to obtain information about auctions of objects of value and register any changes of ownership; to provide expertise in questions concerning exclusion of certain objects from the National Collection; to organise professional training of museum employees and give them methodological assistance; to create teaching programs in museum science.

The museum network is spread all through the territory of Latvia. Traditionally, most of the museums have been and are in Riga (19 State museums, 11 branches of State museums and 9 private museums), although some important museums also exist outside the capital.

The development of this network is determined by both objective and subjective factors. Latvian museums have been formed both on the basis of private collections and on the basis of valuable collections of already existing museums, as well as through the group activities of enthusiasts. One must admit that in the past, activity in the network of museums has been somewhat sporadic.

Peculiarities of cultural tradition in several regions determine to a great extent the formation of museums and the activities they pursue.

¹Law "On Museums" is adopted on 18 June, 1997.

Figure 13.1.

Number of museums in cities of Latvia (1996)

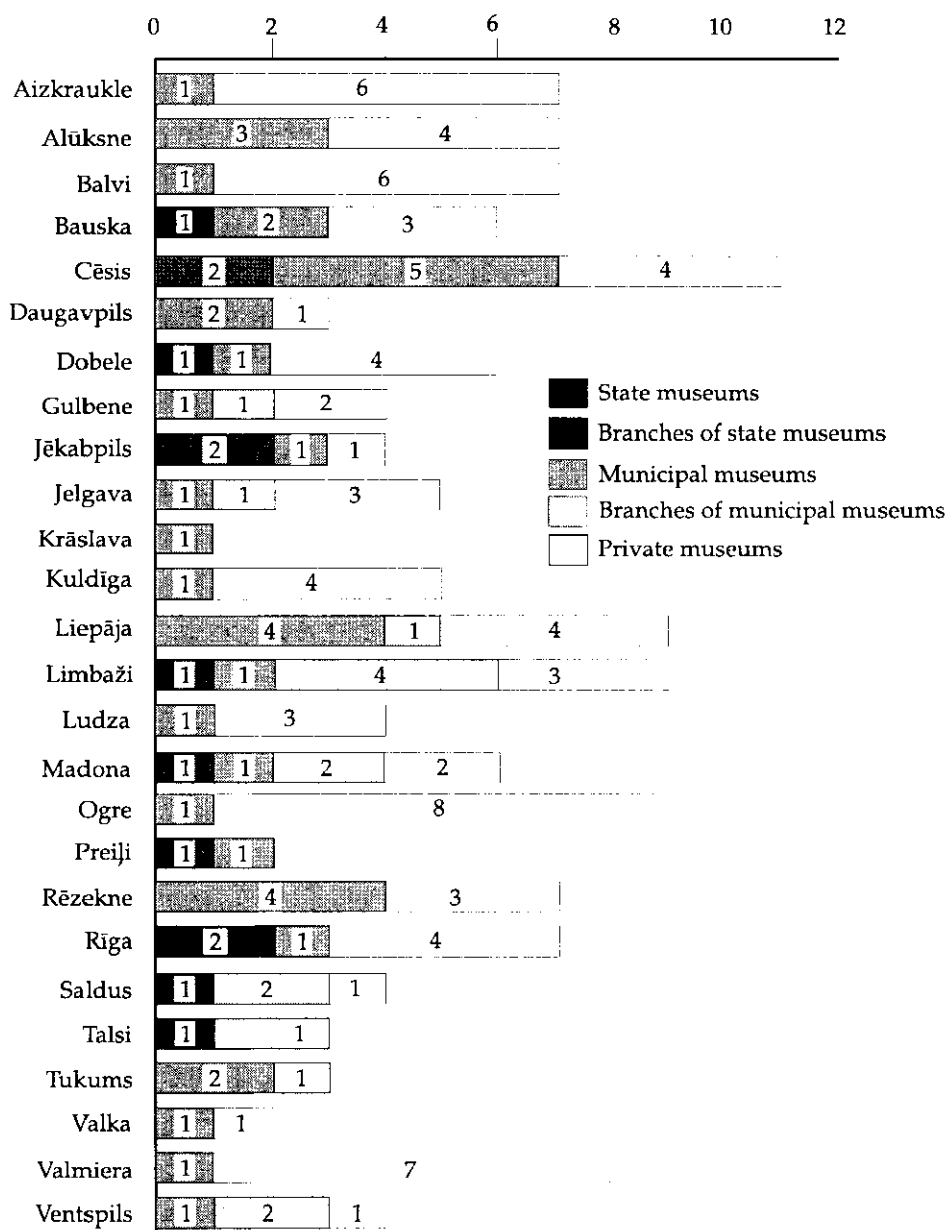
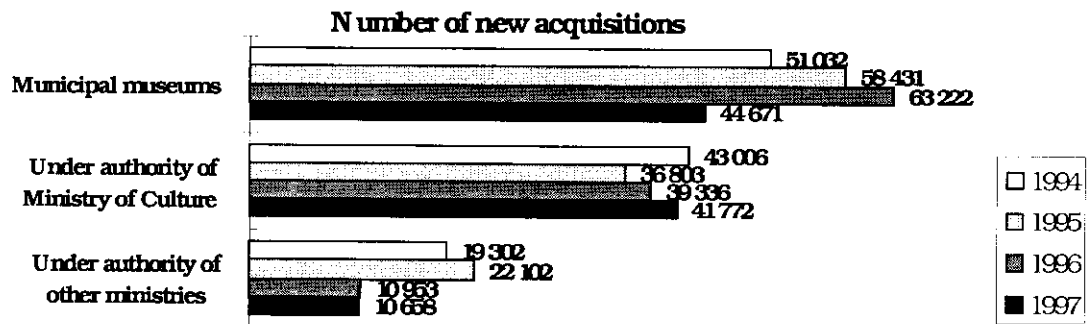


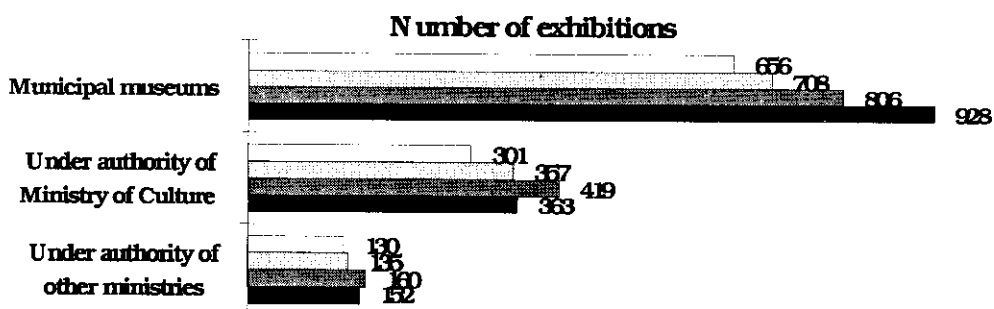
Figure 13.2.

Museums' activities (1994–1997)

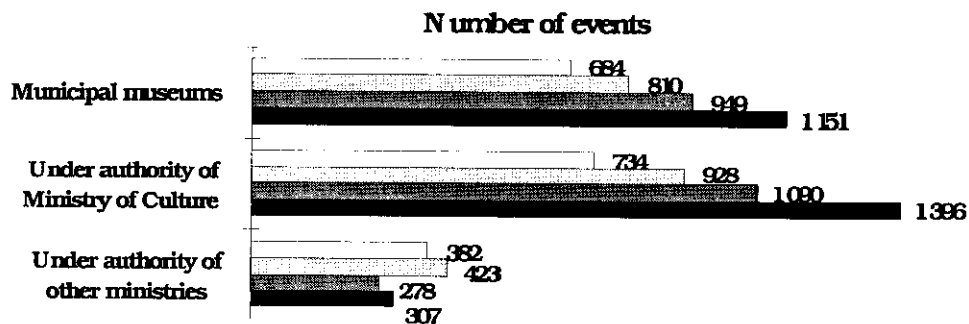
13.2.A



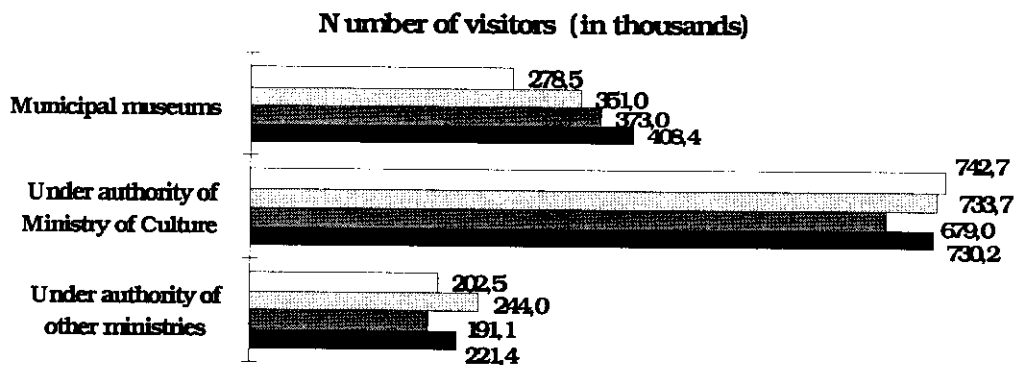
13.2.B



13.2.C



13.2.D



In Latvia, museums are concerned with several complicated problems. Because of limited financing, museums find it difficult to replenish their stock. It is true, however, that art museums try to increase their stock through donations. For example, in 1997 total donations to the Association of Art Museums came to Ls 465 471 lats, but state

purchases totalled only 35 600. When renting museum premises for personal or group exhibitions, artists donate their works to museum collections as compensation for the use of their premises. This means that the new additions to museum collections will only partly reflect contemporary art activity, since the collections increased by this means include only the works of those artists whose exhibitions were held on the premises of state museums. Lack of funds often excludes purchases of artwork by those artists who have worked actively for a long time and have gained international fame.

The low pay of museum employees, among the lowest for cultural workers, creates problems when seeking to hire museum personnel. If pay is lower than the subsistence wage, it is difficult to raise the standards applicable to their work, even where such improvements are needed. However, along with the grave financial problems (unlikely to improve in the nearest future) there exist other museum problems as well.

Latvia's museums have the right to join international museum activity, establishing connections with museums in other countries, entering the organisations of international museums and carrying out their activities there. Over the past eight to nine years, Latvian museums have sought to make full use of this right. Museums can obtain state-guaranteed insurance in organising international exhibitions. However, at present state support for such activities is insufficient and often difficult to arrange.

The administrative process associated with museums is complicated by a lack of needed information about private, school, social organisation, institutional and other museums. It is to be expected that the aforementioned organisational structures (State Authority on Museums and the Council of Museums of Latvia) will, in the near future, solve these problems and improve the whole system of museum administration.

To summarize, the state cultural policy seeks to promote the following tendencies in museum development:

- democratization in museum administration;
- placing all museums within a common sphere of cultural activity;
- making the activities of museums more professional;
- ensuring the protection of national treasures accumulated in museums.

13.3. Infrastructure of archives

The first archives in the territory of Latvia were formed in the 13th century: the archives of Archbishops and Dome College of Riga, the archive of the Livonia Order and the archive of the Magistrate of Riga. Documents have been concentrated in the archive institutions of different political powers and structures over the intervening centuries. Much of the material originally contained in these archives has been removed from Latvian territory or has perished as a consequence of various historical events.

The first state archive in Latvia, the State Historical Archive, started its work in 1919. The Cabinet stipulated that "the papers and documents which have historical meaning and are not needed for the current work of the institutions [of their origin]" were to be collected in this archive. All archives of state departments, community and class institutions were controlled by this archive. During the Soviet era the work and administration of archives was organised according to the USSR Statutes of the State Archive. Organisation of the archives' structure and function was oriented to and by communist ideology.

After the renewal of Latvia's state independence, the work of archives has been governed by the law "On the Archives", adopted in 1991. The duties, not only of state archives but of all legal agents in the formation, preservation, utilization of the National Archive's Collection are defined by this law. This law stipulates, among other things, that the state archives fulfil the function of supervision institutions according to their profile and sphere of activity; they accept documents for preservation, provide for their

preservation and utilization according to the interests of state, society and individual citizens; in their position as legal agents, the heads of certain institutions are responsible for the accumulation, registration, preservation and utilization of documents, and must deliver these documents to the state archives by the deadline determined by the responsible institutions.

At present the system of state archives, led by Latvian State Archives' General Management, works under the supervision of the Ministry of Justice. The system includes three state archives, eleven regional state archives and one personnel document archive. These archives contain approximately 11 100 000 files, 29 000 items of scientific and technological documentation, 64000 films, 248 000 photos, 16 000 identity documents, all gathered by virtue of the administrative actions of the Latvian state, private institutions, social and political organisations, as well as individual persons.

Co-operation among state archives, the Ministry of Culture extends over several important areas:

- replenish of cultural heritage;
- the utilization of documents for purposes of public exhibitions;
- co-operation between archivists and museum restorers.

A co-operative agreement has been struck between the Ministry of Culture and the Latvian State Archive which stipulates that newly-retrieved cultural/historical objects of cultural heritage will be delivered to the museums, but documents will go to the archives.

All the documents in museum collections were registered in the catalogue of the National Archive till 1991. A reference book, *The Documents of Cultural Workers in Latvia's Archives, Libraries and Museums*, was published in 1992 using this information resource. A conference entitled *Archives Return from Exile*, took place in 1996 and included the exhibition of documents and the publishing of a reference book. There are plans to continue such work in the future.

Archives, in co-operation with museums, have worked out ideas for several meaningful exhibitions, and participated in the selection and arrangement of items. Several museums regularly use the documents from various archives as part of their exhibitions.

A successful co-operation exists between the Central Laboratory of Micro-Photocopying and Document Restoration and restorers at museums: in addition to regular administrative ties and mutual consultations, a public exhibition of the best work by Baltic restorers takes place every three years. Archive laboratories serve as training ground for museum restorers of leather and parchment.

The Latvian State Archive of Film, Photo and Audio Documents has at times co-operated with the Ministry of Culture, in submitting a part of its collection for public perusal. However, this co-operation has been less than fully effective. This, in part, is due to differences in the interests of the parties: archives are chiefly interested in preserving documents, whereas film institutions, for example, wish to see them assets in cultural circulation. This is further complicated by financial problems: the Museum of Cinema, for instance, lacks the means to cover its films with special coating that would protect them.

The participation of Latvian State Archive in public cultural processes is promoted by the availability of financial means generated in culture project competitions: this financing may be used to prepare and publish cultural/historical document collections.

In order for such co-operation to continue, a unified approach to document description is worth pursuing, perhaps modelled after the internationally adopted standard for description of archived documents. This standard could also be used for description purposes of other archived materials and could make possible a unified, automated database that could both be used by museums and archives. Another problem that awaits solution concerns development of common training programs for museum and archive employees, especially in the field of document preservation and popularization.

Yet another set of problems concerns the infrastructure of archives. The law "On

Archives" (adopted in 1991) is outdated and isolated from processes underway in public life. The Parliament has adopted several laws regulating certain aspects of document processing, including a description of the procedure whereby documents should be turned over to state archives. Other issues, particularly those concerning intellectual property and applicability of copyright to documents in the collection of the state archives have not as yet been resolved.

Over the past four years the budget percentage allocated for financing of archives has somewhat decreased: from 0.29% in 1994 to 0.23% in 1997. Thus, the financing for maintenance of one file equalled 0.13 lats (without figuring in labour costs) in 1994 and 0.09 lats in 1997. Taking into consideration the inflation index as determined by the State Committee of Statistics, the actual expenditures per file in 1997 should come to 0.23.

The general public does not have sufficient information as to assets stored at archives, in large part because archives lack resources to popularize their work. As a result, the public, as well as power institutions, often regard them only as source of reference – partly because in recent years they have served this role well, thus participating in the reform process. However, the function of archives should not be limited to this: they should also serve as an intellectual power base for education and research.

Work at the archives should be re-organised according to European standards, including utilization of contemporary technology and modern preservation methods for original documents. That particularly concerns material on film, because, as a result of the privatization of the Riga Film studio, in this area of documentation, the situation requires most urgent measures.

13.4. Network of libraries

The first libraries on Latvia's territory date back to the German feudal period. As early as the 13th century the first monastery and church libraries were founded, some of which were destroyed in the reformation struggles of the 16th century.

The spread of reformation ideas in Latvia promoted the opening of the first public library, *Bibliotheca Rigensis* (at present – the Academic Library), in Riga in 1524. In 1588, library deposition of at least one copy for each printing was introduced in Riga.

The enlightenment ideas of the 18th century advanced the development of library science. In 1743 the first work on the subject in the Russian empire was published, a review of the development of world libraries and the 200 year history of Riga City Library (*Die bissher unbekannt und verborgen gewesene Bibliothek der [...] Stadt Riga*) by Willisich J.F. Toward the end of the 18th century, public and science libraries functioned in Riga.

From the 13th century up to the middle of the 19th century German influence dominated in Latvia's science and culture. In that period, only libraries organised by foreigners existed and the history of libraries was part of their cultural history. The idea of national libraries in Latvia began to develop in the middle of the 19th century, when the first representatives of Latvia's educated class became active. In 1848, the first library organised by Latvians themselves was set up in Edole. In Tirza in 1885, the private library of bibliophile Janis Misins was opened. In later years that library developed into an important repository of Latvian literature.

In 1919 the Latvian State Library (the present National Library) started work. In the 1920s the Latvian Librarian Society was formed, the first congress of librarians was convened, official statistics on libraries were gathered for the first time, and the first international co-operation developed between Latvian libraries and those of other countries. Latvian librarians entered the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). Along with the German school of librarian science, the progressive approach to libraries in the USA was introduced to Latvia's libraries: free access to bookshelves, the Universal Dewey Decimal Classification. Also, a professional

journal, *Bibliotekars*, was published from 1937 to 1940.

During the first year Soviet occupation the Latvian Librarian Society was closed, the publication of library periodicals ceased, and an annihilation of books began. The Bolsheviks destroyed about 500 000 books. They tried to eliminate not only anticommunist literature, but also the foundation of the nation's spiritual life, its unique national qualities.

In June 1941 Soviet occupation was exchanged for a Nazi one. The Bolshevik dictates in the cultural arena were replaced by those of Hitler's National Socialists. Again books were destroyed, although ten times less than during the Year of Terror, and mostly communist literature, national publishing unacceptable to the regime, Jewish and anglophile works. As a result of warfare, several million copies perished.

After the restoration of Soviet regime, 500 000 books from the State Library were destroyed in 1947 alone. Thousands of books were reserved in special archives inaccessible to the vast majority of readers. There was no information about them either in bibliographic sources, or in catalogues. Practically one of every four Latvian books was inaccessible to the reader. Toward the end of the 1980s, 203 000 items were registered in the special archive of the Academic Library and 88 684 works in the special archives of the National Library. Throughout these years a structure of general stock was formed which discriminated against national self-consciousness: 75% of all editions were in the Russian language, 19% in Latvian and 6% in other languages.

The quality of collections deteriorated, but their size and number increased. In 1989 there were 1066 public libraries. In over 140 technical libraries literature was mostly in Russian, and some librarians could not speak Latvian.

The general economic, financial and intellectual hardship that has followed independence also influences libraries. Since 1990, 677 libraries associated with bankrupt enterprises, trade unions and municipalities have been closed down. At present, library closures have diminished. Due to the high cost of living and general poverty, the need for libraries is rapidly increasing. Newly organised enterprises and other business entities have started organising their own libraries, usually in concern with their information services. There are already about 40 libraries of this type in Latvia. Thus the world-wide trend toward merging libraries and information services is also underway in Latvia, with the formation of unified centres of information.

According to 1996 data, more than 2 000 scientific, special and public libraries are working in Latvia. They are used by one third of the population. Each reader attends a library three times a year and reads, on average, ten published works. There is one library for every 1 250 inhabitants in Latvia, and 26 library books per person. The funds allocated to libraries comprise 0.2% of the gross domestic product.

The National Library (LNB), founded in 1919, became the main book repository in the 1920s. At present, the National Library of Latvia houses 5.5 million printed items in 60 languages. In 1996, the library had registered 33 733 readers. Every day 1 300 persons visited it, on average, although there are seats for only 300 readers. The National Library is housed in eight buildings. The planned erection of a new building has been postponed for economic reasons (Latvia is one of the few states in Europe that has no building specially designed and built as a national library). Although the number of readers has greatly increased during the past five years, financing has decreased at the same time. In 1996, only 0.73 lats could be allotted per reader at the National Library.

Along with the LNB, there are 172 scientific and special libraries in Latvia. The most important one is more than 470-year-old Academic Library of Latvia (LAB). One of its constituent units is the Janis Misins Library, the second largest repository of national literature. In 1996, 104023 items were kept here and 24 239 readers were registered.

Public libraries are the most accessible and widely distributed of libraries. Their network embraces the whole state territory. At present there are 961 libraries under the control of 600 municipalities. In 1996, the expenses from the municipal budgets for

securing the work of libraries came to Ls 3.5 million or 1.43 lats per capita. However, on average only 0.2 lats could be spent per capita for book purchases and periodical subscriptions. The situation is particularly sad in the larger towns (in Rezekne, the average expenditure is 0.03 lats, in Liepaja, 0.06 lats, in Riga, 0.8 lats per capita). The book collections in public libraries keep diminishing, with nearly twice as many stolen books as newly purchased ones.

There are 1 167 schools for general and specialized secondary education in Latvia. Almost all of them have libraries. On the whole they have the poorest financing, and the availability of books satisfies neither teacher nor pupil needs. There is no methodological centre for libraries which could facilitate the professional growth of librarians. The Association of School Librarians, established in 1996, is going to try to address their problems.

There are 90 specialized children's libraries, which are used by 34% of young readers. 52.8% of readers in the municipal community libraries are children and teenagers up to the age of 15.

The system of Latvia's bibliographic information almost completely embraces national bibliography. The founder of national bibliography is Janis Misins. The compilation, *Index of Latvian Literature* for 1585-1915, is the first scientific index of Latvian books. An edition for the 1920s and 1930s has been produced by the State Library.

The centre for national bibliography is the Institute of Bibliography of the National Library, where all printed material is registered, and where current and retrospective bibliography is compiled. Since 1957 a monthly index of the national bibliography *The Latvian Press Chronicle* has been published.

The second largest book repository in Latvia is the Academic Library (the former Fundamental Library of the Academy of Science), which has issued a three volume bibliographical index, *Latvian Periodicals: 1768-1940* (1977-1989).

The bibliographical and publishing activities of Latvian émigrés after World War II should be regarded as an unique phenomenon in world book publishing. Works published by Latvian authors in various countries of the world are compiled in five volumes, *Bibliography of Publications by Latvian émigrés* for the years 1940-1991. It was done by the outstanding bibliographer Benjamins Jegers in the course of 27 years (1968-1995).

The National Library of Latvia, in co-operation with other scientific libraries and the chair of Library Sciences and Information at the University of Latvia, conducts research in various problems of library of science, the history of libraries, bibliography, book publishing, reading, sociology and other current problems. Scientific articles of LNB and terminological dictionaries are published. A multilingual computer term database, *Concordia*, is being compiled. The main research studies in the history of libraries are, *The Beginnings of Latvian Libraries*, *Development of Public Libraries in the Second Half of the 19th Century*, *Sources of Latvian Libraries*, *Libraries, Book Publishing, Ideology During World War II*, and *Censorship in Latvian Libraries*. LNB is the initiator of the first concrete sociological study of reading habits in the nation. In the 1970s, 96.6% of the republic's inhabitants read books and periodicals. Reading prestige was very high. In the 1980s, a deficit of books and an infusion of heavy doses of ideology decreased the number of readers. In the 1990s the conditions have radically changed. Interest in books has increased, as has reading interest in libraries as institutions for providing continuous education.

1996 was a landmark year in library computerization. The joint project, *Network of Library Information*, has gained support from Latvia's government and the Mellon Foundation. Eight larger scientific libraries take part in it: the National Library, the Academic Library, the Fundamental Library of the University of Agriculture, the University Library, the Library of the Medical Academy, the Patent Technical Library, the Library of Medical Science, and the Library of Riga Technical University. They will elaborate a model for a library computerization system, which will ensure unified generation of information resources, a bibliographic data bank and the formation and

access to a common national catalogue. The project will promote a unified Baltic information infrastructure, introduce national information into international context — in global computer networks. In Latvia the computer resources of public libraries are based on the ALISE information system which can automate the whole library process, including collection of books, classification, cataloguing, bibliographic inscription, information searches and lending, as well as providing for administrative needs. Computerization of public libraries is financed by the Ministry of Culture, municipalities and the Soros Foundation-Latvia. In 1997 a non-profit organisation state share holding company "Library Information Network Consortium" was established to develop united automated information network of libraries in Latvia.

On the 16th of December, 1992, the Parliament of the Republic of Latvia ratified the law "On the National Library of Latvia." The law "On Libraries" has been handed to the Parliament for approval, and a law "On Compulsory Deposition in Libraries of One Free Copy of All Printed Material" is passed already in the first reading.¹

About 3,800 librarians work in Latvia's libraries. One out of four has a university education, one in eight a specialized education for librarians. Specialists with higher academic and professional education are educated at the University of Latvia, while those with secondary education go to the Latvian School of Culture.

There are three public organisations which embrace the whole system of libraries and librarians: Latvian Association of Librarians (LBB) (existing from 1923, renewed in 1989), a member of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA); the Association of Latvian Academic Libraries (ILATABA), founded in 1994, which represents the largest libraries, including university and some scientific libraries; the Association of School Libraries, founded in 1996.

At present, Latvia's library system is on its way from being a provincial one to becoming a fully European one. From a closed, isolated totalitarian institution it has become an open one, has regained the trust of readers, and has secured wide access to information.

13.5. Latvian folklore and its inclusion into the present cultural context

Folklore has held a special place in keeping up Latvian identity throughout the 700 years of its economic and political suppression as well as in the development of modern culture. Sociological surveys show that folklore has a high status in the contemporary system of values.

Latvian folklore has been regularly collected since the second half of the 19th century. Folklore of the present has been studied only since the 1980s.

The greatest part of the collected folklore is kept in the Latvian Folklore repository, which, as a separate structural unit, is part of the Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art of the Academy of Science. Modelled after the Scandinavian community repositories, the Folklore repository was founded in 1924. Two million in 1938, at present 3 million units of folklore (songs, stories, tales, riddles, proverbs, sayings, descriptions of customs, recordings of melodies etc.) have been collected. The material is thoroughly studied and compared to that of other peoples.

Up to now only one third of all these folklore materials has been published. The most important Latvian folklore publications are the following: 1) folksongs — *Latvju Dainas*, vols. 1-6, 1894-1915; the academic edition of folksongs, which has yet to be completed — *Latviesu tautasdziesmas*, vols.1-6, 1979-1993; 2) folk tales — *Latviesu tautas teikas un*

¹ The law "On Libraries" is adopted on 21 May, 1998; the law "On Compulsory Deposition in Libraries of One Free Copy of all Printed Material" — on 16 October, 1997.

economic rights of the author were defined and limited. There was a separate chapter in the law on the rights and obligations of owners of neighbouring rights. The law also set out the ways in which organisations, which collectively administered authors rights were to be established and could operate. The various ways in which copyright and related rights can be violated were also defined.

Latvia joined the Berne Convention on the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works on 11 August 1995. This meant that the state undertook international obligations in the area of copyright protection. Nothing was done, however, to create a true mechanism for this protection, and government institutions which officially undertook very serious legal obligations in fact did nothing to ensure that these obligations could be carried out.

The protection of copyright in Latvia is currently based on the law "On Copyright and Neighbouring Rights", as well as on several articles of the Latvian Civil Code. These apply to the involvement of courts in royalty collection processes.

In July of 1997, the mass media in Latvia published a draft of a proposed new section to the Latvian Constitution on human rights. Article 113 of the new section states: "The state recognizes the freedom of scientific, artistic and other creative activity and protects the rights of authors". If this document would be adopted, that would strengthen the role and responsibility of the state in the area of copyright protection.¹

Changes have been made to the country's Administrative Offences Code, setting out liability for violations of the rights of the authors of audio-visual works – unlicensed distribution of audio-visual works, unauthorized public performances of such works, and piracy. These changes affect only one type of copyright violation, however.

Amendments to the Criminal Code, meanwhile, set out criminal liability for violation of copyright and related rights. Illegal duplication, production, copying and sale of authors works (i.e., piracy) can now be punished by up to six years in prison. In November of 1997, Parliament received from the Ministry of Culture new proposed amendments that will take effect, when the new Latvian Criminal Law will be adopted.

On 23 August 1997, Republic of Latvia became a member of the Geneva Convention "On Protection of Producers of Phonograms against Unauthorized Duplication of their Phonograms" (1972).

In April, 1998 the Law on Joining Rome Convention "On protection of the Rights of Performers, Phonogram Producers and Broadcast Organisations" (1961) was adopted by Parliament. The law will take effect on 1 January, 1999.

On 8 April of 1997, the Cabinet of Ministers officially adopted Latvia's position in negotiations with member countries of the World Trade Organisation.² Before Latvia can join that group, it must bring its foreign trade system into line with the WTO TRIPS agreement. The Cabinet decision stated that Latvian law "On Copyright and Neighbouring Rights" must be harmonized with the TRIPS agreement, as well as the appropriate EU directives.

Given the norms in the TRIPS agreement and the fact that since the adoption of Latvia's copyright law there have been several new European Union directives such as "On the Legal Protection of Computer Programs" (95/250/EEC), "On the Protection of Data Bases" (96/9/EC) and "On Harmonizing the Term of Protection for Copyright and Certain Related Rights" (93/98/EEC). During two last years a great investment in analysis of Latvian copyright law, this work has been made also by the European Union's PHARE Program, which financed an expert evaluation of the Latvian law. This served to point out inadequacies in the law, as well as ways in which it failed to meet the requirements of the convention and the EU directives. The Cabinet of Ministers in July, 1997 has established a working group that produced proposed amendments to the Latvian copyright law. The purpose of the working group was to prepare all necessary amendments to bring the law into line with European Union directives in the area of copyright and the norms of the TRIPS agreement.

¹ In 15 October, 1998 the chapter on Human rights is included in the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia and adopted by the Parliament

² Latvia joined WTO in 14 October, 1998.

Latvian authors society AKKA/LAA was established on 4 October 1995 by merger of two collecting societies AKKA and LAA which were established in 1993, soon after the law "On copyright and neighbouring rights" took effect. AKKA/LAA has existed for two years, it is multi-repertoire organisation, member organisation of CISAC, and now represents more than 1300 Latvian authors and had signed agreements with 49 sister societies in other countries. AKKA/LAA's operations are governed by law and by the rights, which it has been awarded by authors, but full protection of copyright is possible only if there is a strong system of laws behind it.

In 1995 AKKA/LAA collected 197 290 US dollars. in 1996 – 400 243 US dollars. In the first ten months of 1997 the sum collected by AKKA/LAA for local and foreign authors was 461197 US dollars.

Compared to the European Union member states where income from copyright revenues constitutes three to six percent of the gross domestic product, the amounts are not large, but the fact that Latvia has joined the international protection system of copyright is of lasting importance. In the course of just two years, AKKA/LAA has been able to develop a mechanism for collection and dispensation of copyright revenues to both national and foreign authors. In this it has received financial assistance from the EU PHARE program.

However, as a non-governmental organisation AKKA/LAA needs the support of state institutions. Since AKKA/LAA does not have the right to initiate legislation, the Ministry of Justice, or the Ministry of Culture, or the Ministry of Internal Affairs must submit new draft proposals, as well as initiate amendments in the law "On Copyright and Neighbouring Rights" and in the Administrative Code.

The present shortcomings in legislation tend to hinder the work of the organisation and prevents the solution of a number of practical problems.

Both the National Radio and Television Council that issue broadcasting licences and the Ministry of Culture that issue licences for distribution of sound recordings, should thereby assume certain responsibility or even control over the activities of the recipients including payment to authors whose work they use. At present there is no such control; neither are there state institutions that would take it upon themselves to fight the black market audio and video distribution.

Latvia is the only Baltic country where the authors' organisation collects author's fees for the use of literary works in broadcastings.

Conventional regulations, under Latvia's socio-economic conditions, can force the state into self-isolation from the present day cultural processes or important individual achievements. The limited possibilities of Latvia's cultural industry and the small market may render access to culture fragmentary and our society – an incompetent partner in the European dialogue. As a result, the state institutions concerned may have to conduct a more flexible foreign policy in this sphere.

Notwithstanding a very thorough preparation of the copyright law, it is deficient in several respects, for example, it has not eliminated employer's advantage over the employee. It is important to recognize, however, that outside the scope of the law "On Copyright and Neighbouring Rights" the relations between the author and his employer (producer or publisher) are also vague. Often the author does not receive any payment, save for moral gratification for his work, or is simply offered a few free copies of his book or cassette. The quantities of self-made production that appear on the market under present conditions, are detrimental to its quality and prestige. As yet, it has not been possible to reach an agreement on a standard contract that would serve as legal basis for the author-employer relationship. Sudden bankruptcies are not uncommon, causing material and moral loss to the authors.

The authors, as a rule, are poorly informed about the legal, economic and social aspects of their rights' protection. This tends to prevent them from organising and expressing their demands to the state and social institutions, and to the employers and contractors.

Since the basis of a number of principles underlying the state cultural policy and the division of institutional responsibilities remains vague, and functional principles of financing creative work are yet to be formulated, the state can only partially be trusted as a partner that could make the conventional commitments more flexible. In contrast to other countries, in Latvia there are no special legal acts or contracts that would reinforce, or at least supplement, the copyright law and guarantee compensation for authors.

At present the only mechanism of implementation of the law is a private copyright organisation AKKA/LAA. There is also no infrastructure that could help implement the law. This tends to have a negative effect on the mechanisms of implementation and often prevents an adequate reaction to infringement of copyright.

The undeniably democratic tendency in general legislation should be stimulated to produce, among other things, an effective system of copyright protection. This can be achieved only if state institutions will expand their collaboration with non-governmental organisations, thus bringing about a change in public attitudes.

14.2. Social Protection of Artists

For the time being, the social protection of artists in Latvia is regulated only by general legislature. The following legal acts determine the protection of creative individuals, their professional activities and their associations:

The civil rights and labour relations of the residents of the Republic of Latvia are regulated by the Civil law and Labour code and amendments in said sets of laws, as well as other legal statutes that have been adopted since the Republic of Latvia was established.

The social and organisational activities of residents of Latvia are regulated by the law "On Social Organisations and their Association", which determines every social organisation's work and structural principles, except for those of trade unions.

The privatization of artists and photographers' studios is regulated by the law "On the Privatization of State and Municipal Buildings" (Paragraph 1, Item 8; Paragraph 4; Paragraphs 16 and 17).

There have been adopted legislative acts listing those foundations and social organisations that are exempt from property tax and whose sponsors are entitled to tax-breaks and special regulations, e.g., Regulation 70 adopted by the Cabinet on March 30, 1995, "On Granting and Cancelling Rights of Social Organisations (foundations) and Budget Institutions to Accept Donations and of their Donors to Obtain Income Tax Relief." Pursuant to these regulations, the Ministry of Finance makes a decision, based on the financial reports of public organisations published for a charge of 25-30 lats in government newspaper *Valdibas Vestnesis* and a motivated application, whether to include the applicant into the list of exemptions or to turn him or her down. Such a procedure denies public organisations the possibility to plan their financial, organisational and creative activities for several years ahead.

Resolution 120 of May 2, 1991 of the Council of Ministers regulates tax deductions for production costs incurred by artists and photographers.

Except for the law "On Copyright and Neighbouring Rights" and the Council of

Ministers' resolution of 1990 concerning the restructuring of creative associations, there are no other acts of legislation referring to the creative professions and associations. Separate laws, however, have been passed to regulate certain organisations and professions, e.g., religious organisations, crafts, etc., and their financial privileges. Thus there exists a precedent of the parliament adopting such laws, but they have not been specifically addressed to the creative professions and their associations.

There is hardly any social security network in place for artists. The Council of Creative Associations has attempted to ensure respect for the specific nature of creative work by proposing a draft law "On Creative Associations". In accordance with the advice of the Council of Europe experts, the sociological studies on social status of representatives of creative professions were carried out. Notwithstanding, further work on aforementioned draft law has stopped.

The normative approach to the administration of culture has been replaced by a peculiar relativism caused by poor regulation of bureaucratic practices. Under the conditions of widespread judicial nihilism, the law is not always of prime importance for the bureaucrat. The artist as a "non commercial" or, in the terminology of Latvian social legislation, a "self-employed" person, has to spend much energy to simply affirm his rights. To a certain extent it is this lack of social guarantees for artists and other culture professionals that creates the situation that has, at times, been characterized as "creative confusion of the intellectuals."

The artist at present is too directly dependent on market forces. Those in the creative professions may choose salaried employment, business or freelancer status. Most artists tend to opt for the first, and more often than not it means working in the infrastructure of culture, or in the field of education, where pay and social status are characteristically low. Except for the general social benefits that the law provides for the socially disadvantaged, an artist cannot hope to receive any other form (e.g., pension, various types of supports) of financial assistance notwithstanding his or her contribution to culture. Only those who have contributed economically can benefit from all the improvements in the social sphere, including health insurance. A person's moral, educational, or cultural contribution to public life is not taken into consideration when determining the amount of pension or any other form of financial assistance.

The social benefits accorded by non-governmental organisations to their members are of incidental character. For example, the Writers' Union guarantees a limited range of free health services to its members and offers financial support to family members in case of a writer's death. By 1997 however, the Writers' Union will probably have to refuse to render any kind of social assistance because of the poor state of its finances. Several attempts of creative associations to form a unified social protection system for their members (such as a unified health insurance fund, taxation and calculation of pensions depending on the specific character of work) have so far been unsuccessful. The state social security resources are concentrated and under the administration of Ministry of Welfare, and that prevents them from being used for purposes of social support for non-governmental cultural institutions. One must admit that, for the time being, social protection of artists that would take into consideration the specific character of their professional contribution is all but non-existent in Latvia.

At present, there is a lack of statistical data indicative of the social standing of artists. The government has obviously failed to fully comprehend that all principles of social life, including those of cultural policy, must form a unified system.

14.3. Creative work and its development as determined by the economic crisis and social reality

The present economic crisis is closely interconnected with social reality and the process of culture. Economy under our conditions has not been able to integrate culture and become similarly creative, and it has an uncertain value orientation. The economic crisis can be viewed as one aspect of the poor quality of money-culture relationship in Latvia. However, to lay all blame on economy would mean to undervalue the potential of culture. To fully grasp the situation at hand, culture should be viewed in the context of basic principles of cultural policy adopted by the parliament, and not as a purely departmental matter.

Social reality as a comprehensive index of the state of society under the prevailing conditions is characterized by the following:

- relativity of general values;
- absolutization of consumer society principles;
- perception of culture as a socially alienating phenomenon;
- rejection of creativity as a fundamental characteristic of culture in certain segments of society.

The infrastructure of culture is insufficiently steady and open to be capable of promoting those qualities favourable to creativity and self-confidence that became possible by the political changes in Eastern Europe, from freedom of movement and information to independence from ideological censorship. New opportunities for culture production, management and education have appeared and have been used in Latvia.

However, the artist's status in society remains vague. The state has failed to create a consistent model for the relationship between power and creativity; the mechanism for implementing the fundamental principles of cultural policy is far from complete.

The most consistent forms of state support have been competitions of culture projects held yearly by the Ministry of Culture and its annual grants. In 1996, the Ministry awarded three grand prizes and 15 scholarships, as well as, for the first time, 8 premiums in the category of folk art. The competition budget in 1996 was 160 900 lats, of which 74% were awarded for creative projects. The awards and grants, however, are not exempt from income tax.

For cultural infrastructure to become a really stimulating factor in the production of art, legal security will have to extend to all cultural values and activities. Failing to understand the specific character of the creative professions and the status of artist, legislators continue to draw laws directed at individual branches of culture, and even individual culture objects.

Up to now, there also exists no definite structure of national cultural values and no motivated guidelines for determining national priorities.

Better organisation and more stability should be attained in the state's allotment of culture directed funds. The growth of individual sponsorship might be stimulated if the legislature were to adopt a unified law "On Foundations" and develop such a system of taxation that would make culture financing more attractive to private capital.

Latvia must also follow the requirements and norms put forth in the UNESCO General Assembly's Recommendation regarding the status of creative professions; in the Charter of Visual Artists of Europe and other documents dealing with the rights of the creative professions and their role in society. Along with the extant freedom of speech and artistic expression, and the right to found organisations of professional representation, it is important for Latvia to secure the right to certain tax exemptions and to such a system of

taxation that would conform to the nature of each profession, and the right to a system of social security that would be just and take into account the particular nature of artistic work.

14.4. The Cultural Endowment

In 1994 Estonia passed a law establishing the Cultural Endowment of Estonia and it has functioned very well. The success of Latvia's neighbour served as an added stimulus for launching a similar endowment here. As was obvious from the competitions for the distribution of state budget (including competitions for the distribution of the special culture budget, funding for culture projects, culture periodicals and Culture Ministry awards and stipends) organised in previous years by the Ministry of Culture, the funds to be made available should be much larger and their distribution mechanism improved.

The National Council for Culture, the unions of creative professionals and a number of other culture institutions all took part in the debate about the draft law; it also received wide publicity in the mass media. Anybody interested in the bill had an opportunity to address the Ministry of Culture and the parliamentary Commission for Education, Culture and Science with possible suggestions, amendments or revisions.

Presently the bill has been approved for second reading at the Saeima.¹ While over the process of writing many conceptual and editorial changes were incorporated into the law, the basic elements have remained intact (identical to the Estonian model): the Endowment is to be a non-profit state share holding company that has the right to invest its assets, to sell and buy public securities and acquire state treasury notes and real estate (not to exceed 20% of the statute capital), to engage in economic activity and avail itself of the legally established tax advantages.

An important amendment that has been incorporated into the body of the bill after it was reviewed for a second time by the Cabinet of Ministers concerns the sources of financing. Initially the base capital was proposed to be drawn from revenues generated by lottery and gambling and from excise tax levied on alcohol and tobacco. This model was not accepted by the Cabinet of Ministers because the Ministry of Finance objected against a "redistribution" of excise taxes.

According to the new Cabinet approved model, the base capital is to be drawn from lottery and gambling, as well as from a Cabinet apportioned share of national budget revenues that should amount to no less than two million lats (almost four million dollars) per year.

As for the distribution mechanism, it is important to note that it will not be administered by state bureaucrats, but rather by the Endowment's Council. Consequently, albeit established by the state and headed by the Minister of Culture (the law specifies that he or she assumes the duties of Chairperson), in terms of distribution of finances and maintaining the base capital, the Endowment will be independent of state institutions.

The Endowment funds will be distributed two to four times a year through project competitions (under the old system, the Ministry of Culture funding for creative projects was made available only once a year) organised separately for each branch of culture (seven such branches have been established). The distribution within each branch will be carried out by branch councils of seven experts (two of those are to be appointed by the Ministry of Culture, the rest, by the respective public associations).

In order for the Endowment to operate successfully, it is essential to ensure transparency and publicity to its activities, and so each allocation of funds will have to be well motivated. After the law comes into effect, the Endowment will work out its statutes

¹ Law "On Cultural Endowment" is adopted on 18 December, 1997.

that will specify the spheres covered by each of the seven branches, the process of selection of experts, the criteria for projects and distribution of funds, etc.

Following the initiative by the Ministry of Culture, a work group composed of experts from several ministries and other institutions has been set up. This group of experts will analyze and attempt to improve the existing legal environment including certain advantages to sponsors of culture and provide for a wider circulation of donations.¹

Should the work of the Endowment proceed as planned and receive the support of future governments,² it is hoped that it will prove capable of increasing its financial base and become a stable and widely respected institution as is already the case in Estonia.

¹ Draft law for charity is carried out and at present is in harmonization level (October, 1998).

² Unfortunately, working on the budget of 1999 the Cabinet of Ministers didn't consider the law 'On Cultural Endowment', which stipulates annual state subsidy of 2 million lats for the Endowment, and included in state budget only a million lats for the Endowment.

15. DEVELOPMENT OF MINORITY CULTURE

15.1. History of ethnic minority culture development

In order to understand the present multinational society of Latvia, one must cast a look back and consider the development of this aspect of local history. When Latvia gained independence in 1918, Latvians had to find a way of co-operating, and a model of mutual trust, with the minorities, Germans, Russians, Poles, and the Jews, who had lived in the territory of Latvia for centuries. This was particularly necessitated by the complex internal and external situation, in which Latvia found itself. Latvians hoped that the minorities would be loyal to the new state, whereas the minorities wanted to ensure a free development of their respective cultures and to preserve their ethnic identity.

Throughout the first period of independence, particularly in the 1920s, the principle of cultural autonomy was respected in Latvia. However, unlike Estonia, Latvia did not have it written into the Constitution or guaranteed by a separate law.

The second part of the Constitution, which contained a clause declaring that "minorities, in their national cultural affairs, are autonomous, publicly legal organisations" was never adopted, nor the draft laws regulating the use of German, Yiddish and Polish in Latvian territory.

Legal guarantees of autonomy of national cultures were encoded in the law "On Minority Schools in Latvia," which was adopted by the provisional parliament, the People's Council, in 1919 and continued in force until 1934, and some clauses of certain other laws.

In accordance with the aforementioned law of 1919, a board of minority schools, German, Russian, Jewish, Polish, and Belorussian, was set up under the auspices of the Ministry of Education. The school administrators had the right to take part, in the status of advisers, in Cabinet meetings when issues concerning the cultural life of the respective minority they represented were discussed.

The minorities in Latvia could realize quite a wide range of the possibilities in developing their national culture and education. Education could be obtained in state, municipality and private elementary schools and gymnasiums in the mother tongue, be it German, Russian, Polish, Jewish, Belorussian, Lithuanian or Estonian.

In the school year 1919-1920 there were 1 053 Latvian and 212 minority elementary schools, and, for 1933-1934, 1 502 and 555, respectively. The number of gymnasiums, 36 for Latvians and 29 for minorities in 1919-1920, by school year 1933-1934 had grown to 55 and 41, respectively. German, Russian, and Jewish theatres were staging plays; several cultural associations were active; newspapers and journals were regularly published.

To a certain extent, minority rights were also secured by their political parties, whose candidates were elected to the parliament by general and proportional elections (15 to 18 deputies out of the total number of 100). These MPs vigorously protected the interests of their electorate in various Saeima commissions, as well as in the board of the Culture Foundation.

The relationship between Latvians and the minorities in the 1920s and 1930s was not entirely free from mutual grudge and conflict, but these were solved according to democratic norms. After the coup d'état of 1934, however, the minorities had to put up with certain restrictions. That fact did not help in keeping their loyalties firmly on the side of an independent Latvian state.

During the years of Soviet occupation official ideology postulated a free development of each nation, yet in practice, policy was aimed at eradication of national characteristics and fusion of ethnic processes within the framework of russification. Any expression of "bourgeois nationalism" was severely repressed; the fight against so-called "cosmopolitans" was nothing but a Soviet version of anti-Semitism; cultural development of certain nationalities was restricted. After World War II, Jewish schools did not re-open; Polish, Lithuanian, and Estonian schools were closed down. As the repressive measures of totalitarian regimes had caused great losses particularly among the educated, several minorities fell victim to rapid russification and sovietization. In Latvia, the only minority culture that was allowed to develop was the Russian one: apart from Latvians, only Russians had their own schools, periodicals, theatres, etc.

In the political change that took place second half of the 1980s, struggle for a free development of national culture and language played a major role. Policy that the Latvian Popular Front and the Supreme Soviet, which was elected in 1991, carried out towards the local minorities was motivated by the need to ensure maximum democracy in the sphere of inter-ethnic politics by favouring free development of minority culture. In 1988 and 1989, the Latvian Popular Front promoted the establishment of minority culture societies.

15.2. Cultural autonomy rights in legislation

Cultural autonomy of ethnic minorities in Latvia is guaranteed by the Constitutional law adopted by the Republic in 1991, "Man and his Civic Rights and Duties" and another law adopted in the same year "On Free Development and Rights to Cultural Economy of Latvian National and Ethnic Groups". Legislation regulating the functioning of state language, as well as guidelines governing the education of ethnic groups adopted by the Ministry of Education and Science in 1992 have also left their mark on the development of minority culture.

The Main Cultural Policy Postulates approved by the Latvian parliament in 1995 maintain that "the State of Latvia in its cultural policy seeks to protect the natural coexistence and interaction of cultures based on principles of mutual respect and tolerance. The state guarantees free development of culture for all national and ethnic groups residing in Latvia and promotes integration of aliens in Latvian culture if they so freely choose. The state bases its policy on the principle of cultural autonomy."

A certain contribution to the legal implementation of cultural autonomy is made by the treaties on co-operation in the field of culture and education that Latvia has concluded with the ethnic homelands of some minorities. Co-operation with Poland, Lithuania, and Estonia has hitherto been most effective. Israel has been very supportive of the cultural and educational activities of the local Jewish community while Ukraine recently extended material and moral support in the establishment of a Ukrainian school in Riga.

15.3. The infrastructure of ethnic minority culture and the activities of National cultural societies

As per recommendations of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted in 1993, the designation of ethnic minority should apply to such a group of persons that have long-standing and close ties with their country of residence and share common descent, language, culture, or religion. Thus a national minority is a conscious and voluntary association of people. In the legal sense, national minorities in Latvia are constituted of those non-Latvians, who are full citizens of Latvia. In the pragmatic and political sense, however, the term "minority" is often applied to all non-Latvians permanently residing in Latvia, except for short-term guest workers. There are other

reasons why the concept of minority is not easily defined in the Latvian context: the number of non-Latvians is disproportionately large and, as a result of sovietization, as a result many ethnic groups have lost their distinguishing features, language and culture. According to the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, as of 1996, there were 120 national and ethnic groups residing in Latvia.

Contemporary ethnic relations take several forms: assimilation, differentiation, integration. The latter model seems best suited for Latvia, as it seeks to unite several distinct cultures into one political nation, while each still keeps its identity. Thus the state should strive to promote integration as a necessary first step towards naturalization.

One of the most complicated problems that tends to impede integration, is mastering and using the Latvian language. A large part of aliens either do not speak Latvian at all, or do so poorly. That particularly applies to the middle-aged and elderly part of the population. This problem has two aspects: the available possibilities for mastering the language and the motivation to do so. For some, the motivation seems to be lacking, and such attitudes may change only through a lengthy process of political maturation. It is however the responsibility of the state to make the possibilities of learning Latvian more available.

1995 saw the adoption of a national program for Latvian language acquisition. Its implementation requires great budget expenditures that, in present economic situation, are often difficult to make. Seen this light, the contract on a 3.2 million dollar assistance project signed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the government of Latvia in 1996 acquires added importance. The aim of this project is to promote integration by offering quality Latvian language courses to non-Latvian speakers and minority students. This project will be financed by the UNDP and the European Commission, and the governments of Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Finland and Sweden. Available financing covers the first stage of the project to be completed by 1998. The project is aimed at four target groups: schools where language of instruction is other than Latvian; young people who do not know Latvian; non-Latvian speaking adults, and some professional groups, e.g., the police and prison staff. Within the project, 800 teachers of Latvian and 300 teachers of other courses taught in Latvian will receive training for work in minority schools. Modern teaching aids: books, videos and tapes will be published, and a course developed for television and radio.

Language courses are available throughout Latvia and are accessible to anyone. In co-operation with the Language Training Centre, new teaching methods tested in other countries are being adopted. Funds provided by the EU PHARE program have been used to publish dictionaries and develop TV language courses. A language-training course has also been developed for the radio. There is still a shortage of teachers qualified for teaching Latvian in schools where Russian is the language of instruction. Although such training is offered by several of Latvia's universities, problems remain, because teachers are poorly paid. In fact, the shortage of teachers extends to practically all subjects.

The Agency of Nationalities of the Department of Public and Religious Affairs is the executive body charged with responsibility over issues concerning ethnic minorities. The Agency operates under the authority of the Ministry of Justice.

In 1991, Latvian legislation passed a law that determines the right to obtain education in one's native tongue. At present, thirty of Latvia's minorities have opened their own schools and classes. One can obtain elementary and secondary education in Latvian, Russian, Polish, Jewish, Estonian, Lithuanian, Belorussian, or Ukrainian. Sunday schools are also quite common and are practised by the smaller minorities, Armenian, Georgian, Azeri, and others. It is also possible to establish private schools: the Japanese School of Riga is but one example. State financed university education is available only in Latvian, however, several private universities have opened with Russian as the language of instruction, e.g., the Baltic Russian Institute, the Institute of Social Technology, etc.

The law permits 20% of TV air-time to be used for minority programming; however,

only a little more than 16% is as yet used for this purpose. As for the radio, the National Cultural Societies currently broadcast in eleven languages.

The annual state budget forecasts financing for support of activities by the National Cultural Societies. The societies publish a total of ten periodicals. The state also subsidizes the Theatre of Russian Drama. While it is true that state financing could be more generous, in present financial situation it is impossible.

A special place among the minorities in Latvia is held by the Livs. Despite their scanty number (in January 1998 in Latvia there were only 188 residents of Liv descent), their contribution to Latvian culture and history is significant. The Livs are an ancient ethnic group indigenous to Latvia and speakers of a rare Finno-Ugric language. As early as the 12th century, the Livs had to withstand the first assault on Latvian soil by invading crusaders. Under difficult political and socio-economic conditions and ethnically dispersed, the Livs maintained an ethnically significant identity up to the 19th century. The following century proved tragic to the Livs leading them to the brink of extinction. Their number was decimated by the two world wars; during the inter-war period of independence, the Latvian state paid little attention to the preservation of their ethnic self-awareness and language. In the 1950s and 1960s, under Soviet occupation, Livs ceased to be regarded as a distinct ethnic group. The process of their extinction was further promoted by administrative measures. After the renewal of Latvia's independence, the state has done much to preserve the Liv cultural values and language. With the adoption of the law "On Free Development of National and Ethnic Groups in Latvia and their Right to Cultural Autonomy", for the first time in history, the Livs were recognized as an indigenous nationality. In addition to moral support and reflection of their problems in scientific conferences and publications, the Livs have been granted a special, protected territory, *Livod rānda*, whose economic and cultural activities receive state financial support. Since the resumption of its activities, the "Liv Union" has been engaged in significant cultural and educational projects; the Livs have their own folk groups, radio programs, periodical and, under the auspices of the Nordic Information Office, a cultural centre. Because of the critical demographic situation, however, it is difficult to make any predictions as to the future of this ethnic group.

The cultural societies of national minorities play an important part in Latvia's cultural life. These societies began to form in 1988. The first ones, the Cultural Society of Latvian Jews and the Polish Union of Latvia, were founded by the two relatively small minorities that had suffered most under Soviet nationality policy. The process gained vigorous moral support from outstanding Latvian and minority intellectuals and political endorsement from the Latvian Popular Front. A unifying organisation, the Association of the National Cultural Societies of Latvia (LNKBA) was created, which serves a co-ordinating function. At present, twenty national cultural societies are organised under LNKBA, while some remain outside this structure. In 1995 there were 3 Estonian, 11 German, 3 Gypsy, 20 Jewish, 8 Liv, 10 Lithuanian, 14 Polish, and 4 Ukrainian organisations that pursued a variety of social and cultural activities on the national or regional level. Several of these have a definite political orientation that tends to be indicative of the respective minority's position on Latvia's independence. The national minorities are active both professional and amateur theatre, visual arts, and music. In 1996 a festival of minority culture "Latvijas Vainags" was held thus starting the annual tradition of this festival (at present festival is held once in two years).

Latvia's state cultural policy vis-à-vis its national minorities meets the standards of European democracy, fully respecting the traditions of multinational societies. Obviously, there are many problems determined by the present political and cultural situation, and by the peculiarities of the state bureaucratic apparatus.

16. PARTICIPATION OF SOCIETY IN CULTURE

16.1. The concept of participation and its possible interpretations

Participation in the processes of culture is manifested as man's attitude towards a certain system of values. Cultural activities reveal significant conditions of man's individual and public existence. It is difficult to characterize man's participation in culture as passive or active because the process is varied and any attempts to categorize it by definite, historically stable forms can only produce a picture that is less than complete. When considering man's participation in culture in its institutionalized forms, one cannot but consider only those elements of cultural life that are relevant to traditional infrastructure.

For an adequate description of public participation in cultural activities, it is necessary to first examine two main conceptions of culture. That will enable us to evaluate more precisely the phenomenon of participation in the complex context of contemporary life.

In the broad sense, culture embraces the whole of reality as produced by human activities: material, as well as spiritual values. These values, removed as they are from narrow, private concerns, determine and motivate man's actions.

In a narrower sense, culture embraces the sphere of human activity that is constituted by both professional and amateur art. Art is a form of creative self-expression, and a means of satisfying one's cultural needs.

When examining the notion of culture in the broader sense, it may be useful to refer to the categorization of traditional values into the instrumental on the one hand, and the democratic and humanitarian on the other. From the ideological viewpoint, the latter set of values, such as individual freedom, humanism and a humane philosophy of life, are given priority. Yet in practice, the first set of values tends to predominate, with its emphasis on rationality and pragmatism, public recognition, and qualities of professionalism and craftsmanship.

The broader interpretation of the concept of culture reflects the framework of public sphere, within which direct participation of society in culture takes place. The narrower interpretation, substantiates the unique role of the system of values in the existence and intellectual activity of various social and ethnic groups. However, in the present economic and political situation, material and ideological conditions in Latvia are less than favourable to preservation and actualization of existing cultural values and to creation of new ones. This is partly confirmed by the results of sociological studies carried out in our country by two of the leading firms *Baltijas Datu Nams* and *Prognoze*.

The results of research carried out in 1995 reflect the motivation of those people who do not frequent cultural events and show a passive attitude towards culture. As many as 79% of the respondents give their lack of financial means as the main reason for this, while for 30% it is a lack of time; for 4%, habit, and for another 3%, the unavailability of a partner. Consumption and participation in the reproduction of cultural values, or lack thereof, are not only determined by a certain attitude towards cultural needs, but also by socio-economic conditions. Although the sociological data should be primarily considered as a subjective evaluation of their social and cultural situation by the respondents, they are also indicative of the objective state of society at large. In this period of transition, the

status of culture in the hierarchy of values tends to deteriorate because of the increasing impact of material problems and the need to solve them. This is aggravated by inadequate social security affecting most of society. Under conditions of radical political, economic and social change, man's participation in culture cannot remain unchanged.

16.2. The relatively active participation in cultural processes

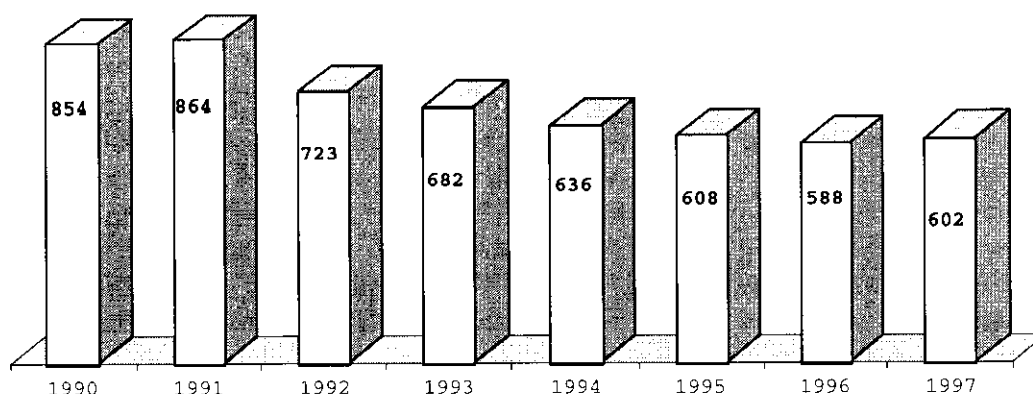
The best evidence for the relatively active involvement of Latvian society in the process of culture can be gleaned from amateur activities: choir singing and other kinds of musical amateur activities, dancing, drama, arts and crafts. Most of these are pursued within the system of amateur groups that are based in local cultural centres (so-called houses of culture). A comparatively small number of amateur groups exist outside this system.

Most of the financing for these activities is provided by municipalities; organisational and methodical help is rendered by a state institution, the Emilis Melngailis Folk Art Centre.

Statistical data show that during the period from 1990 to 1995, the participation in organised amateur activities has decreased. In 1990, 4.5% of Latvia's population took part in various group activities, compared to only 2.3% in 1995.

Figure 16.1.

Number of cultural centres (1990-1997)



The decrease in both the number of amateur groups and their participants is primarily caused to economic conditions. In many places it has become difficult for the participants to attend rehearsals because of lack of transportation; material infrastructure is often inadequate for the pursuit of cultural activities. Financial and organisational problems are also to blame for the diminishing number of cultural centres.

Musical activities

During the course of development of Latvian spiritual life several forms of amateur musical activity have become popular: choirs; pop ensembles; *kokle* (wooden string instrument) music and folklore groups; brass and country bands.

Choir singing, throughout its almost two hundred year history, has drawn the greatest number of participants and played a significant role in the formation and consolidation of the Latvian nation. The beginnings of Latvian choir singing date back to the first half of the 19th century, when the basic tradition of choir singing took shape. The first skills of group singing were acquired at school and in the church. The repertoire consisted of church and secular music by German composers. By the middle of the 19th century, the first professionally trained Latvian choir conductors, composers and musicians appeared. A major leap in both quantity and quality of Latvian choral music was made possible by the activities of teachers seminaries in Vidzeme and Kurzeme. In the 1860s and 1870s the number of singing societies and choirs was on the rise, and both their skill and the quality of music increased as well. The graduates of the teachers seminaries took an active part in this process.

The Song Festivals (both the national and regional ones) are an important manifestation Latvian choral art. The song festival tradition can be traced back to the first half of the 19th century and was first practised in Germany, Switzerland and Austria. The choral associations of these countries served as inspiration for similar activities in Latvia, and the first German choral societies were founded. In 1861, in the first Baltic German choral festival took place in Riga drawing 21 choirs whose total number of singers exceeded six hundred. This event was an encouragement to the Latvian intelligentsia as well. In that same decade, a number of Latvian charity, cultural and educational societies were formed in which choral singing held an important part. In the 1860s and early 1870s local songs festivals took place in Vidzeme and Kurzeme paving the way for the 1873 First All-Latvian Song Festival in Riga, where the song by Karlis Baumanis, *God bless Latvia* was sung for the first time. This later became the national anthem of the State of Latvia.

The history of song festivals is an important part of national history and embraces several distinct periods: 1873 to 1910; 1926 to 1938; 1948 to 1985, and from 1990 to present. The first of these is closely tied to the process of national awakening and development of national self-confidence and marks the beginnings of Latvian musical traditions. The second period coincides with Latvia's inter-war independence. Notwithstanding various economic and organisational difficulties, the song festivals of that time were eloquent proof to the development of truly democratic art forms along with more elite ones. The song festivals of the third period took place during the occupation period and were treated as significant events by the Soviet state. Subsidized by the state, they became increasingly more imposing and lavish acquiring a mass character. The festival tradition branched out into a number of related activities: regular competitions, concerts and camps were organised. In 1956 the first university, and, in 1960, the first elementary and high school song festivals were held. The state, however, demanded adherence to Soviet ideology in the choice of repertoire; several songs expressing a specifically Soviet brand of patriotism were a part of each concert. Notwithstanding this political censorship, the song festivals retained their role in the consolidation of the people's spiritual energies.

After the restoration of national independence, three All-Latvian song festivals have taken place, in 1990, 1993 and 1998. Because of the new, transformed political climate, Latvian choirs from abroad could also take part. The traditions of choral singing have played an important role in the preservation of national identity in emigration as well.

As evidenced by the designation "singing revolution," these traditions were of particular political significance during the late 1980's and early 1990's when struggle for renewal of independence took place.

The ideological transformations were, however, accompanied by a change in the status song festivals had hitherto enjoyed. In the future, they may once again become a significant factor in the spiritual development of the nation and strengthen its self-confidence. After a periodical drop in the level of organised activities, which, first and foremost, was evidenced by the diminishing of the number of singers, certain period of stability began.

During the last years number of youth choirs has increased essentially. The high professional standards of the best choirs have increased as well, as demonstrated by their success at international festivals. Choir singing as one of the oldest amateur traditions in Latvia, deserves more attention in the implementation process of national cultural policy.

Systematic collection of folk music materials began in the sixties and seventies of the last centuries, followed by a rise in activities of folklore groups in the nineties. Several of folk ensembles also sprung up in the 1920s and 1930s, while a sharp increase in their number was observed in the 1950s, when folklore materials were actively collected and studied. Another period of marked activity occurred in the late 1980s, a time of keen interest in national cultural values. Among the expressions of this interest was an increase in the number of folklore groups and their participants whose attitude towards their ethnic heritage is by no means uniform. Festivals of folk music are a regular occurrence. Among them, the international festival, *Baltica*, is the most important.

Another mainstay of Latvian culture is the country band, whose repertoire includes folk music, arrangements and *zinges*, a genre of popular drinking songs. The concert activities of country bands are varied: they accompany dance groups, provide entertainment at parties, and give independent performances. In the 1990s the number of country bands has suffered a steady decrease: from 214 in 1990, to 75 in 1997.

Among folk musical instruments *kokle* is unrivalled in popularity. An ancient instrument, it was re-discovered in the 20th century and became particularly popular in the late 1940s. Patterned after the ancient original, new *kokles*, concert instruments on which several octaves could be played were developed. The *kokle* players formed new music groups. Interest in this instrument was revived in the early 1990s.

A specific place among Latvian amateur music groups is held by and brass bands, some formed entirely of school children. Their concert activities are manifold, and, for the last few decades, brass bands have also participated in song festivals.

Second only to choirs, pop music ensembles have drawn the greatest number of participants. In fact, they represent the only kind of amateur music activity where participation is on the rise, reflected both in the number of groups and individual singers. This particular form of music combines certain Latvian traditions with elements of global mass culture. Its development, above all others, is also stimulated by mass media.

Amateur dancing

Amateur dancing in Latvia has developed in several genres: traditional folk, ball-room, and performance dancing. Among amateur ensembles, performance dancing, which, in part, has originated in amateur theatres, is the most popular. In the 1920s and 1930s there were several performance groups for adults and for children. Choreography of performance dancing is based on ethnographic material, which is adapted for stage and includes elements of classical ballet. During the Soviet period, state cultural policy favoured this form of artistic expression and amateur dancing was allowed to develop on an unprecedented scale. As a result, new folk ensembles were formed and choreographers regularly presented their work at festivals and competitions. In 1948 the Dance Festival tradition was started. At the Tenth Song Festival, a total of 104 dance groups uniting 1656 individual dancers performed. In 1960 the first dance festival for pupils was held.

Although the first half of the 1990s saw a decrease in the number of dancers and dance ensembles, folk dancing has well rooted traditions in amateur art and involves various age groups, from children to the elderly.

Movement of amateur theatres

Amateur theatre in Latvia has developed besides the professional theatre art during 130 years and has always preserved its enthusiasm despite the change of generations and ruling powers. After the renewal of independence a number of traditions, which arose during the previous years, was kept alive. State cultural policy mainly is carried out by the E. Melngailis Folk Art Centre, which co-ordinates activities of amateur theatres, organises common activities, as well as provides methodological training for leaders of amateur theatres and offers other kind of assistance.

Amateur theatres in the 90ies in Latvia – these are several hundreds of ensembles with different principles of activities, experience and traditions.

There are about 40 amateur theatre groups, which work with professional producers; stage designers and music consultants also take part in the staging process. Many of them have studios for children and teenagers. Instruction in theatre subjects is periodically organised for actors. There are 3 – 5 performances on the repertoire as a rule. Amateur theatre groups perform regularly in their towns and give guest performances around Latvia and also participate in international festivals.

Approximately 100 groups consist of enthusiasts who do all the staging process by themselves, often without the assistance of professionals. They mainly perform in their villages or rural districts. The characteristic Latvian theatre playing traditions are inherited from the previous and handed over to the next generations and often sparkle in the characters, played by bright folk talents.

Besides these permanent theatre groups there also exist experimental groups that work on a few performances together.

In Latvia about 300 school and children theatres – from primary school groups till youth studios – are active.

Since 60ies we can speak about the movement of Latvian amateur theatres- for many times they have unified in order to create and cultivate common traditions. The most important of them up to now are the following:

- gatherings of Latvian amateur theatres (they take place once in four years in one of the beautiful and rich in theatre traditions towns of Latvia, all amateur theatres participate: a gathering means three colourful days with performances both indoors and out-of-doors, theatrical plays in town, conferences, discussions and parties);

- common tradition of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia – festival “Baltijas rampa”, which is held annually in each country in turn; it has become like a large scale international festival;

- annual show of performances “Gada labaka izrade” (the best performance of a year), when 10 most successfully new productions of respective year are showed for the public of the capital and the professional theatre jury. The calendar of amateur theatre activities annually also includes 6 – 8 regional festivals, such as “Brīvā telpa” in Jelgava, “Ūsiņš” in Aizkraukle, “Vīzija” in Gulbene, “Kamerizrāde” in Alūksne, “Pitons” in Dobeles, “Tālvils” in Valka, etc. Besides important are creative workshops for directors, theatre courses, competitions of performances, theatre camps both for grownups and children, etc.

Several amateur theatres organise also international festivals. Already well known are “Skatuve Jūrmalā” in Jūrmala, “Labirints” in Ventspils, “Spēlesprieks” in Limbaži – these festivals take place once in two years.

Since 1991, Amateur Theatre Association of Latvia has started its activities. Since joining AITA/IATA many Latvian amateur theatres and directors have found friends abroad, have participated in international festivals, AITA/IATA World festival, congresses, conferences.

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Decorative arts and crafts

Latvian decorative art is rooted in the traditions cultivated for centuries, which have influenced Latvian esthetic taste and notions of jewellery and textiles, as well as the aesthetic environment in general.

In ancient times the traditions and skills of various crafts were obtained in family, apprentices inherited them from their masters, as well. Starting from the second part of the 19th century it became possible to learn and develop these traditions participating in special collective activities (courses, schools) founded by individuals, as well as organisations.

Also in 20ies and 30ies of the 20th century the traditions of folk decorative arts were expanded and popularized by different schools, courses and mass media, as well. The exhibitions of decorative arts were organised by various societies and social organisations, often aimed to develop and popularize national culture and self-confidence.

After the World War II private initiatives in folk art, as well as other spheres, were restricted. Collective unions – courses and studios of folk decorative arts - were established. These establishments continued traditions started in 20ies and 30ies of investigation, studying and popularization of folk decorative arts.

Division for Applied and Visual arts of E. Melngailis Folk Art centre became an organizer and co-ordinator of folk art activities.

At present approximately 10 thousand craftsmen are active in different branches of folk applied art. Some of them are members of Folk Decorative art studios (totally 52) and Decorative art collectives (totally 100). In Riga there are 32 various Folk Decorative art studios.

Sociological studies show society's attitude towards participation in artistic amateur activities. The results of an opinion poll conducted in the summer of 1996 testify relatively high level of society's cultural activity. Totally 2 000 people from various regions of Latvia were asked about their cultural pursuits.

Table 16.1.

Participation in amateur art activities (% , 1996)

	Total	Latvians	Non-Latvians
Sung in choir or ensemble	6.8	9.6	2.4
Participated in dance group	3.3	4.6	1.3
Played a musical instrument	8.1	9.8	5.4
Participated in drama ensemble	3.6	4.3	2.4
Drew, painted, was involved in decorative arts individually or in organised group	5.6	6.4	4.3

16.3. The relatively passive involvement in the process of culture

In any society, the number of people whose involvement in culture is relatively passive is greater than the number of those who take active part in the cultural process. The results of the aforementioned study confirm this for Latvia as well.

Table nr. 16.1.

Passive involvement in culture activities (% , 1996)

	Total	Latvians	Non-Latvians
Have been to a concert	32.3	36.7	25.5
Have seen a theatre performance	30.2	37.7	18.5
Have been to an art exhibition	12.1	17.2	4.0
Have been to a museum	14.9	17.7	10.5
Have seen a film at a theatre	18.6	19.4	17.2
Have read a book of fiction	57.6	57.3	58.1
Have read a cultural periodicals	43.5	50.4	32.8
Have watched a culture program on TV	67.8	73.1	59.4
Have heard a culture program on the radio	51.5	56.1	44.3

As the above study shows, Latvian levels of involvement in culture, both active and passive, tend to be higher than those of non-Latvians. This is confirmed by other similar studies. To draw any generalizations from these data, they would certainly have to be submitted for more detailed analysis, yet it seems safe to make a few comments as to their provenance. First, a large part of non-Latvians, for various reasons, have rather weak ties with the cultural traditions of their respective ethnic homelands. At the same time, they do not participate in the cultural process of their country of residence. The traditions of the Russian, German, and Jewish minorities, who enjoyed a vibrant cultural life in the inter-war period, were broken during Soviet occupation. Second, the processes of sovietization seem to have had a more devastating effect on the minorities than on the Latvian part of the population whose preservation and expression of ethnic identity was contingent upon participation in national culture. Finally, the social structure of the post-World War II immigration may also be of some importance: the percentage of members of the educated class was comparatively small.

In a general sense, the consumers of culture always outnumber its creators. In modern times, this imbalance is further exacerbated by television, radio, and other electronic media. Consumption of the forms of culture favoured by the means of mass communication requires minimum amount of intellectual, emotional and financial investment. As a result, the number of people who take part in those processes of culture that require a direct, albeit relatively passive, participation is much smaller. Concerts, theatre performances and museums are by and large frequented by the relatively well-to-do (the middle class). Also, women tend to be more active than men.

Statistics point to diminishing levels of participation in all, relatively active as well as relatively passive, forms of cultural process over the past five years. Changing lifestyles for a substantial part of society have produced a corresponding change in the hitherto accepted scale of values. Many people, for the most part because of social conditions, have had to give up their former habits of cultural consumption that used to involve regular attendance of concerts and plays, and visits to museums.

During a period of transition, under conditions of socio-economic instability, people tend to choose the more accessible, cheaper, and mobile forms of culture that seemingly

17. INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL RELATIONS

Formation of international cultural ties is a significant part of Latvia's cultural life. The quality and stability of these ties is of essential significance not only for the ensurance of a full development of national culture, but also for its integration with the world. At present it is important for Latvia to move towards the European Union, and joining European cultural programs, while keeping its national identity.

The Latvian public has always been interested in the cultural activities of the world and in the possibilities of participating in them. During the first period of its independence (1918-1940) wide reaching cultural ties were established with many European countries, particularly in the areas of music and painting. During Soviet occupation all creative activities, including those in the international arena, were under strict ideological and political supervision by the communist party and the KGB. In the Latvia of 1950s and 1960s international cultural pursuits were much restricted, and coming into direct contact with cultural processes abroad was next to impossible. Latvian artists' visits to foreign countries were very few indeed, and opportunities for foreign artists to take part in cultural activities in Latvia were equally rare. The Latvian public's knowledge of world cultural processes was restricted by political censorship and tended to be one-sided. In fact, it was only in the 1970s that opportunities to participate in cultural activities abroad somewhat increased, albeit remaining for the most part restricted to the countries of the communist bloc: Bulgaria, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the GDR. Yet cultural contacts with other countries gradually began to open up. Latvian choir activities and exhibitions of paintings abroad were of special significance, as were foreign visits of individual artists.

A certain role in the establishment of foreign cultural relations was played by friendship treaties Riga signed with a number of "sister cities": Kobe in Japan, Pori in Finland, Norkoping in Sweden, Aalborg in Denmark, Bremen and Rostock in Germany, Szczecin in Poland, Ruse in Bulgaria etc. Bremen festival in Riga and Riga festival in Bremen, where a large group of participants took part, were held in the late eighties and had a resounding effect for the development of international ties. Liberalization of the regime under Gorbachev further enhanced that development and made it more goal oriented. time opened new vistas for international cultural activities which gradually became more purposeful.

Since the renewal of independence in 1990 international cultural contacts have substantially expanded. Information on cultural trends in the West has become multidimensional; foreign countries have expanded the scope of their activities in Latvia; Latvian artists are regularly invited to participate in various international events and projects. International culture relations in Latvia are organised by state institutions, non-state organisations, social funds and private persons alike. These activities are manifest in various spheres of culture and on all levels of co-operation. In the 1990s government level treaties on co-operation in the sphere of culture have been signed with Germany, Israel, Ukraine, the Peoples Republic of China, Finland, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam, Great Britain, India, Italy, France, Slovenia, Hungary; cultural co-operation with Estonia, Lithuania and Russia takes place on the ministry level. Treaties with Bulgaria, Egypt, Spain, Turkey and Croatia are in the preparatory stages. Latvia enjoys vibrant cultural relations with the Nordic countries: as a rule, these countries do not conclude inter-governmental treaties, preferring partnership between lower level organisations.

In 1992 Latvia joined the European Cultural Convention. Co-operation with global organisations such as UNESCO, NEMO, IFLA, and W.I.P.O., as well as with the Council of

Cultural Co-operation of the Council of Europe and other international cultural institutions is now commonplace.

Following the state cultural policy guidelines, the Ministry of Culture signs and implements agreements on cultural exchange and co-operation; assists in the exchange of representatives and collectives of culture, science and art; organises the exchange of exhibitions, concerts, performances etc.; ensures participation of Latvia's state cultural institutions and representatives of creative professions in international organisations and culture forums.

On state level international cultural relations in Latvia are usually organised by the Ministry of Culture in co-operation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The organisational work itself is carried out by the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Ministry of Culture in co-operation with specialists of the Department of Cultural Policy and institutions, subordinated and supervised by the Ministry of Culture. Other state institutions are also active, particularly the Ministry of Education and Science that co-ordinates international co-operation in the sphere of cultural education, and supervises participation in the *Tempus* and *Erasmus* programs.

The expansion of international cultural relations is primarily hindered by the country's financial situation. Lack of finances prevents Latvia from becoming a full participant in European and global cultural activities. Latvia's participation in international festivals, competitions and conferences has been rather limited. One must admit that no consistent cultural policy principles on elaboration of "Latvia's image" have been worked out, yet such consistency would greatly aid co-operation. It is true, however, that up to now Latvian participation in European cultural processes have been sporadic. Latvia has been introduced to Europe, and to the world at large, only by way of activities of individual artists or certain groups of artists.

Difficulties of spreading Latvia's cultural values throughout the world are caused by the traditional problems shared by small nations. Chief among those is the obstacle caused by language. The reason why those problems are particularly acute for Latvia is, first, that the integration of Latvian culture in the international context was hindered by Soviet occupation and, second, that the present economic situation prevents the state from financially supporting for translations of works of Latvian poetry and fiction. A related problem concerns copyright: although legislation regulating their protection was already passed by the first post-Soviet parliament, a system for practical implementation of this legislation is yet to be formed. Only the very first steps have been taken to restrict violations in the area of music recordings and in other spheres governed by the law On Copyright and Neighbouring rights.

Latvia became a member of UNESCO in October, 1991, and in May of the following year founded its UNESCO National Commission. The UNESCO activities in Latvia have taken several directions. Chief among them is working on proposals for co-ordinating laws adopted in Latvia with the requirements of the international conventions. As yet, Latvia has signed and ratified only one, the Bern Convention (in 1995). The Convention on Preservation of World Cultural and Natural Heritage has been signed, as well. It is very important for Latvia to also join the Hague Convention of 1954 on protection of cultural values in cases of military conflicts, and the 1970 Convention on Prohibition against illegal import, export or transfer of cultural assets.

Inclusion into the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage list of parts of Old Riga (1997), Art Nouveaux buildings, and the Monument of Freedom has been of great significance to Latvia. UNESCO also provides Latvia with information about cultural study opportunities and training abroad and runs summer courses. The most important project in this area so far was the International Cinema School in 1995. Attention is also paid to the specific rights and interests of those working in the creative professions. With support from UNESCO, Latvian ballet dancers have joined the International Ballet Association, while Latvian actors have become members of the International Federation of Actors. In June,

1996 Latvian, Estonian and Lithuanian culture gained international exposure as part of 50th anniversary celebrations for UNESCO in Paris.

Unfortunately the activities of UNESCO National Committee have received very little support from the state. As the financial basis of the Committee depends on state donations, which at present are not expended for programs, regular Latvian participation in international projects is made very difficult. It is also likely that certain other possibilities in co-operation between the UNESCO National Committee and other Latvia's cultural institutions are yet to be fully explored.

In the first years after the renewal of independence Latvia's cultural relations were particularly active with the North European countries. This orientation was determined by several factors: the active and practical support that they extended to Latvia during the renewal and strengthening of its independence; foundation of some special Scandinavian diplomatic representatives of culture in Latvia; previous century long traditions of culture relationship and consciousness of common reality.

In the early nineties after political changes in Central and Eastern Europe, the cultural ties of the region of the Baltic sea became more active. In the Cultural Forum *Ars Baltica* which was initiated by previous Prime-minister of Schleswig - Holstein Bjorn Engholm and founded in 1990, under manifold cultural initiative by the Baltic sea countries along with representatives from Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, Russia and Mecklenburg - Pommerania Latvian artists and cultural workers also participated. Within its financial limits and according to general interest Latvia takes part in the projects of *Ars Baltica* which supports direct contacts among artists, and participates in the organisation of mobile exhibitions and other enterprises. An important activity was the participation of the writers and translators in activities of the Baltic centre of writers and translators organised in Visby, Gotland, in 1993. Within the framework of *Ars Baltica* young organ players from all the countries around the Baltic sea and Iceland came together at the International festival of organ music organised by the Riga City Hall.

The Danish Institute of Culture (DIC) holds a special place in Latvia's international culture life, a department of which was organised in Latvia in 1990. At that time the DIC along with the Sweden consulate were the only foreign institutions which by means of co-operation in the sphere of culture could inform European society about the real political situation and events taking place in Latvia. During the five years of the Institute's existence, many programmes of co-operation have been carried out; the DIC as a mediator helps to establish contacts with several Danish cultural institutions, thus favouring development of cultural ties between Denmark and Latvia.

Since 1990 Latvia participates in the international cultural symposiums Oorchuns, in 1991 the Centre of Baltic culture was opened in Bornholm; the society of Copenhagen was introduced into Latvia's vanguard art. In 1993 *Riga Days* took place in the capital of Denmark, the programme of which included an exhibition of Latvian painters, concerts of folklore groups and Movement theatre. Beginning with 1996 Denmark regularly supports international festivals of modern music. In 1990 Riga witnessed an exhibition of 9 Danish painters, later guest performances by the Danish Royal symphony orchestra took place in Latvia. An exposition of Danish design was exhibited; two Danish theatres gave guest performances in Latvia. In project there is *Copenhagen - the Culture Capital of Europe' 96*. Latvia was represented by 50 artists from various spheres of culture. That was a wonderful opportunity to acquaint Europe with Latvia's culture and what is more to view oneself in European context.

In 1991 the Nordic information office was established in Latvia (NIO). The aim of this office is to give Latvia alternative information about the Nordic countries, to favour formation of contacts between various institutions, including the spheres of culture. With the co-operation of NIO the cultural life of Latvia has been enriched by several interesting enterprises: Latvia's culture days in Norway were organised, which included exhibitions

of paintings, concerts of folks music and ballet performances, film programs; for the first time in Latvia it was possible to watch a wide retrospection of films shot in Nordic countries; the days of Icelandic culture were held in Riga, which were represented by photographic art, painting, music and literature. Several joint projects in cinema art were realized in Latvia and a joint Latvian - Swedish and Latvian Norwegian feature film co-production. In 1993 the writers of the Baltic countries held a meeting with the writers of the Northern countries. In 1995 first Song's festival of the Baltic and the Northern countries took place. More than 6 000 persons participated in it. Choirs and brass bands made music in many regions of Latvia. In 1996 the largest enterprise organised by NIO - the meeting of Northern and Baltic sea culture was carried out.

Since 1992 a very important place in Latvia is held by the activities of the Goethe Institute. The Goethe Institute (GI) has organised several important enterprises, for example, Germany: *The 1920s* the program of which included the vanguard of the 1920s a festival of silent films, an exhibition of *BAUHAUS* photographs, concerts, an exposition of installations. In 1993 German culture days were held where Latvian society could get acquainted music, jazz, the dance theatre and a review of feature films; the GI has organised a film club and a theatre video. The activities of the Goethe Institute have embraced the whole of Latvia. Several enterprises are also organised in historically important Latvian towns, where German culture workers had been active. This has also left an influence upon the development of Latvia's intellectual life.

Culture ties have become active with other European countries as well with France, Great Britain, Poland, Italy, mostly because of the embassy work of these countries as well as the activities of Latvia's state and social organisations. For the past year the bureau of the British Council, France Culture centre etc. have been active in Latvia's culture and education spheres.

Wide cultural ties in various spheres of art have developed between Latvia and both its neighbouring Baltic countries - Lithuania and Estonia in the activities of state and social organisations as well as by personal contacts of artists and groups of artists. In 1991 the Baltic Assembly was founded as an organisation of co-operation between the Parliament of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. In each parliament delegation one working group is included, which works out questions of culture the three Ministries of Culture of the Baltic states and other state and non-governmental institutions.

Concerning the methodological aspect working out theoretical questions of communication are urgent in Latvia. Several science centres in Latvia (University of Latvia, Latvian Academy of Culture, the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Academy of Science) are carrying out research in these questions. The result of this scientific work are concerned not only with theoretical aspects in the publications at international conferences and publications, but also in projects of intellectual practical spheres of work, at least partly promoting the formation of cultural ties.

In 1988 the Emilis Melngailis Folk Art Centre organised the first festival of international folklore *Baltica* in Latvia. In 1989 by uniting the societies of national folklore of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia a folklore association *Baltica* was founded which in 1990 was accepted into the CIOFF (Counsel International des Organisations de Festivals de Folklore et d'Arts Traditionnels). The Festival *Baltica* has become traditional, in the same way as the dance festival *Sudmalinas* (the Windmill), which performed for the first time in 1992. This Folks Art Centre also organises the participation of Latvian artists in international folk music concerts and forums.

The Museum association of Latvia which works in close contact with the Ministry of Culture has been a member of the NEMO (European Museum Organisation Network). Co-operation in NEMO gives an opportunity to establish direct contacts among various museums, to give information about Latvia's museums and their values.

International culture exchange in the sphere of music is actualized by state and non-state institutions. Several international chamber music, organ music, and boy choir

festivals, the Music days of J.S. Bach, J.Vitols International competition of pianists and vocalists etc. are held in Latvia. Exchange concerts and tours take place regularly as well as conferences of Baltic state musicologists.

International co-operation in fine arts is mostly organised by professional artists. Because of lack of finances state support is not sufficient therefore activities of artists and groups of artists are more widespread. Latvia's artists co-operate with Belgian art museums, Art galleries of modern Spanish and Finish art, the Fund of Modern Regional French Art, they take part in the program *Council of Europe Art Exhibitions* etc.

State television is also involved in the international context; it carries out exchange of culture programs and takes part in some other international cultural activities. Very active international cultural ties are secured by the National library and the Academic library promoting inclusion of Latvia in this sphere as well.

All three higher art schools also participate in the international culture ties, in accordance with their specific characters by organising international music competitions, participation in exhibitions, co-operation of theatre studios and secure academic exchange of professors and students.

Active co-operation is formed with the higher educational establishments (in Finland, Sweden, Poland, Iceland, Estonia and Lithuania, Luxembourg et al.) with which bipartite treaties have been concluded. Latvian art schools are members of international art school association. In the Academy of Culture in Latvia studies in the speciality of international relations have been taking place. Lately studies in our Art schools have been undertaking by students of other countries. One should take into consideration that higher Art schools are also involved in the high schools reform in Latvia, the aim of which is to organise higher education according to European standards. Beginning with 1996 Latvia owns studio in the International Art centre in Paris for artists, musicians and other creative professionals from Latvia. The possibility to live and work in Paris of two artists annually is supported by the Ministry of Culture.

International cultural co-operation is also brought about by creative unions, associations and funds. The UNESCO Latvian Centre of International Theatre institute has been active also in the framework of the Latvian Union of Theatre workers since 1991 (LTI). This centre prepares material about Latvian theatres, organises co-operation with International theatre festivals, and the participation of Latvia's artists in international enterprises.

In 1993 the international festival the *Baltic Theatrical Spring* took place, while in 1995 the International Young Actor's festival *Homo Novus* did.

Within the limits of its possibilities the Writers' Association is realizing international cultural ties; that is also done by the Artists' Union and the Union of Art Photographers. Professional as well as other associations try to include Latvia's culture workers into the European context and to acquaint them with the activities of modern culture.

Social organisations as societies of cultural co-operation between Latvia and other countries (Switzerland, Finland, France and others) also play a certain role. Although the work of these societies could be more active, they still carry out their task, i.e. acquaint the inhabitants of Latvia with the culture activities of other countries and propagate Latvia's culture abroad.

Culture Foundation of Latvia and some other institutions also form cultural ties with foreign countries. Inclusion of artists or groups of artists into the cultural context is very popular; so is organisation of direct contacts between various institutions and private persons.

Some social institutions in Latvia carry out original forms of cultural ties. For example, "Children's Academy of Creative Fantasy" (where children aged 2 to 16 participate). These children regularly and successfully participate in international exhibitions - for the last two years in Denmark, Israel, Taiwan, Cuba. It also organises international exchange of children's drawings.

In the present situation formation of international culture ties are a contradictory process. A positive factor is the possibility to form an open exchange of culture processes, acquainting Latvian society not only with the classic values of world culture but also with its modern tendencies, by seeking a way of including achievements of Latvia's culture in the international context. However, problems still exist. At present Latvia is dominated by the requirements for western commercial culture (shows, TV serials, bestsellers). These requirements are met by TV canals and publishing houses. A complicated process of relations between mass and elite culture is going on.

One may conclude that in the sphere of foreign relations there is a tendency to enter the world cultural context. This is determined by the general orientation of Latvia's society in the cultural traditions by a dominant on intellectual values. After gaining independence there is a possibility to establish wide culture ties, because ideological censorship in the state is annihilated. However, Latvia must still carry out in practice the orientation of cultural policy in forming ties with international culture.

A negative tendency is the economic crisis in the country. In forming further contacts with foreign countries main attention should be paid to the development of projects of significant international value, which should be regularly supported by state institutions. A professional approach to the organisation of international cultural ties should be supported by a certain part of the state budget under the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture. Besides, one should wish for greater support from Latvia's embassies concerning the export of cultural values. One should also consider the formation of Latvian culture and information centres at least in some foreign countries.

18. SUMMARY

This report certainly does not embrace all the problems concerning culture that arise in practical life. That would be beyond the scope of this report, besides even if maximum precautions are taken to ensure objectivity, subjective angle is hard to avoid: in this case it is each author's choice of priorities. The authors have focused on certain features of cultural policy at the expense of others. It is however important to realize that the resulting report does not only constitute information for the Council of Europe; it has helped us to get a clearer perspective on our own situation and to be tolerant in the confrontation of opposing views, so as to find new possibilities for further development of our cultural policy.

Cultural policy in Latvia as an independent state is still being formed. Legislation for the culture process and the functioning of its infrastructures is also under construction. Although certain positive results have already been achieved (basic principles of cultural policy confirmed by the parliament, the *acquis communautaire* "On copyright and neighbouring rights" adopted, etc.), legislation is still underdeveloped and there are still plenty of problems to be solved in order for cultural policy to have a firm legal basis. However, the existence of laws is important only insofar as they are observed. The widely spread judicial nihilism in Latvia's society also influences the sphere of culture. This is quite evident in the sphere governed by the Law on Copyright and Neighbouring rights.

In regard to the second important manifestation of cultural policy, financing, we have to conclude that state support is not sufficient. Apparently harking back to the socialist period, independent Latvia likewise finances its culture according to the "leftover" model. The available financing is largely used for the maintenance of cultural infrastructures and payment of salaries, instead of utilizing those means to ensure continuity of the cultural process or realization of various projects. In addition, as confirmed by official statistics, the salaries of people employed in the sphere of culture, not unlike medical workers and educators, are low even compared to those working in other state institutions.

Public participation in cultural activities has substantially decreased. This has been caused not only by the relative or absolute poverty of a large part of society, by also by the lack of social and psychological motivation in a time of radical social and political changes; apathy is quite common among the socially unprotected part of the population. Cultural institutions have yet to form efficient strategy and tactics as they need time to adjust to the new situation, and this also has a negative effect. Most recently, however, the steady decrease in public participation in culture seems to have stopped. If the economic situation does not deteriorate further, it will promote certain social stability for a relatively large part of society and make active participation more possible. The phenomenon of participation, however, has also a qualitative aspect, which tends to become evident in confrontations with mass culture: even its most primitive forms tend to attract a certain part of society.

Sociological research has shown that drastic political changes can take place in the course of just a few years while economic transformation requires at least ten. It, however, takes two generations for a thoroughly reconstituted society to develop. In view of all this, financial aid should be extended at least to those artists who have made important contributions to the development of Latvian culture. This, in effect, is an issue concerning the moral climate of society; finding ways to resolve it would certainly raise the prestige of intellectual and spiritual values.

The present financial situation is an obstacle to striking a balance between support for creative processes and support for preservation of cultural heritage. This balance,

which is a precondition for a successful development of the cultural process, is often violated by sporadic and inconsistent financing.

An integral part of a democratic society is decentralization of its cultural administration that can be carried out in manifold ways. In Latvia decentralization has not proceeded at a uniform rate: some areas have shown more activity than others. In the process of decentralization it is most important that responsibility for culture is distributed proportionately.

Decentralization of cultural administration is, first, maximum participation in decision-making by an interested majority. Compared to socialist rule, the role of competent, politically independent experts has increased in adopting financial decisions. And yet, participation of wide segments of society, instead of just professionals, could be much greater.

Participation of municipalities is restricted by subjective and, even more so, legal and financial limitations. Yet their participation in ensuring the regional cultural processes is on the rise.

In the sphere of cultural policy, theoretical research is practically non-existent. Admittedly, several conferences in the 1990s have been organised by the Ministry of Culture to discuss cultural policy issues. The most important of those was the conference on "Cultural Policy in the Baltic States" (1996) organised in co-operation with the Council of Europe.

And finally, another factor should be regarded as important in evaluating cultural policy. This national report includes an essay by the poet Imants Ziedonis on the identity of Latvian national culture. The specific role culture has played throughout our dramatic history invites serious consideration of its functions in the current period of transition, and of the future of our nation. At the same time, our cultural process should by no means tend toward isolation; on the contrary, inter-cultural relations are very important for continued existence of national culture. Yet we should strive to preserve the identity of our culture — not just in the interest of furthering the spiritual existence of our nation, but fully aware that true integration in the European contexts means making our own original contribution. We should keep in mind that in this changing world national culture identity cannot remain a fixed set of features, but a dynamic process. Thus we always have to seek our identity anew, making it part of global processes and ensuring the possibility for new values to be created.

Council for Cultural Co-operation
Council of Europe

Ministry of Culture Republic of Latvia

CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES
IN MEMBER STATES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CULTURAL POLICY IN LATVIA

REPORT
OF EUROPEAN PANEL OF EXAMINERS

by
Dorota Ilczuk

RIGA
1998

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We would like to express our sincere appreciation for the work of the authors, as well as of Peteris Lakis and the whole team who prepared an excellent national report, full of valuable information and statistical data, in spite of all the difficulties that we know to exist even in countries with a much better financial background.

Moreover, we would also like to express our heartfelt gratitude to the many, many people who were kind enough to devote their time to us and show us help during our stay in Latvia (the people we contacted there are listed in the Appendix no 1).

Paldies!

*“With a song I was born
with a song I open up,
With a song I lived through my life,
With a song I shall be laid
In a mound of white sand”*

Latvian folksong

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Composition of the Panel of Examiners

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Schedule of the Examiners' activities

17- 21 March, 1997

First Visit by Panel of Examiners: Riga

14-20 June, 1997

Second Visit by Panel of Examiners: Pedvale, Skrunda, Kuldiga, Jelgava,
Daugavpils, Aglona, Cesis and Riga

12-13 September, 1997

Meeting of Panel of Examiners in Warsaw

20-22 November, 1997

Visit by Rapporteur: Riga

9-10 January, 1997

Meeting of Panel of Examiners in Brussels

INTRODUCTION

Brutus to Cassius:

“There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which taken at the flood leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and miseries.
On such full sea are we now afloat,
And we must take the current when it serves,
Or lose our ventures.”

Shakespeare: 'Julius Caesar', Act IV, Scene 3.

Programme

The Cultural Policy Evaluation Programme initiated in 1985 by the Council for Cultural Co-operation of the Council of Europe has up to now covered 13 countries: Sweden, France, Austria, Netherlands, Italy, Finland, Estonia, Russia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Croatia and Latvia, and is now under way in Portugal.

The program concerns cultural life in the investigated country in general, but particularly concentrates on the cultural policy of the public authorities. In many cases study of the individual reports shows this has not always been strictly observed, with evaluation often going considerably beyond the authorities' activities in the sphere of culture. All the reports set out the aims of cultural policy, as well as the programmes implemented and those defined goals, which have been achieved. A trend towards problem analysis, reformulation of cultural policies, has taken place.

It has been a challenge to undertake such a major empirical and comparative international programme but as a result the countries involved have started to deal much more systematically than previously concerning activities undertaken within the framework of cultural policy, and their consequences. It has also been a challenge to examine national policy from an international perspective. In order to make such an approach possible, a special methodology has been devised. On entering the programme each country produces, usually with the help of an independent research team, a national report.

The reasons for countries deciding to join the program, are diverse. In the case of Latvia this decision was certainly motivated by the desire to confront the pressing problems affecting culture during the period of change from a totalitarian system to a democratic one, and laying the foundations of a market economy. Moreover, over the short period of Latvia's independence there has been a deficiency in both means and opportunities for wide-ranging cultural research on the Latvian culture. The national report provides an excellent filling of this gap.

National reports are usually characterised by a historical perspective which, through analysis of the past, enables the reader to understand the current processes. They also contain a wealth of data, illustrating the basis of the legal, institutional and financial conditions for culture. The Latvian national report was prepared by the Latvian Academy of Culture's research team led by the University President, Peteris Lakis, with the collaboration of a number of outstanding Latvian intellectuals,

representatives of unions of artists, individual artists and the Ministry of Culture. Before the national report appeared in its final version, it had been subjected to self-evaluation. The final changes and corrections were the responsibility of the director of the Latvian Culture Foundation, journalist Peteris Bankovskis.

Following completion of the national report, the Council of Europe's examiners produce their written evaluation. This report constitutes a specific commentary on the national report, including their conclusions in the form of advice and recommendations. In our case they have been formulated by a five-person group consisting of: Christopher Gordon from Great Britain (chairman), Tuulikki Karjalainen from Finland, Carl-Johan Kleberg from Sweden, Hilde Teuchies from Belgium and Dorota Ilczuk from Poland (rapporteur). Ritva Mitchell, as the then representative of the Council of Europe and a guiding spirit of the whole process, took an extremely active part in the meetings. Antra Torgane from the Latvian Ministry of Culture organised our visits in Latvia very efficiently and was extremely helpful.

The third stage of the programme's implementation is the discussion at the final meeting between the Minister concerned and the team of examiners. The debate on Cultural Policy in Latvia will take place in April 1998, at the Culture Committee of the Council of Europe.

Report

Writing reports on culture issues is always difficult. First, for obvious reasons. Since culture is hard to define, even the sphere subject to evaluation constitutes a problem in itself. What culture do we have in mind? For the sake of this exercise, we dealt mostly with 'institutionalised' culture but always mindful that culture should be approached in a holistic way. Culture is a product of a dynamic process, in which the public, private and independent sectors, play an equally important and complementary role. Hence we have tried to take into account the interaction between the above sectors, between the various sectors and the cultural industries and the relationship between professional activity (mostly within established structures) and what is referred to as "amateur" activity.

Second, culture is extremely difficult to 'measure' and one has to be rather careful when comparing particular aspects, for instance the economic potential of culture. The differing degree of social and economic development in individual countries considerably confuses the comparative process. The evaluation period is also very important (the first evaluation took place in 1989 and lasted approximately one year; the programme has now been considerably intensified). With Central and East European countries, transforming their economies from central planning to the market, inclusion in the programme additionally complicates the comparative process, but at the same time makes evaluation even more interesting. Researchers treat every study of change with great interest, and the political, economic and social spheres of these countries have been going through a series of rapid changes. Citizens of transforming countries subject to evaluation may have quite conflicting feelings; bringing to mind the Chinese saying: "May you live in interesting times".

For the majority of people in Central and Eastern Europe the period of economic transformation constitutes not only a happy time of regained freedom of speech and initiative, but also an opportunity to construct a democratic political system. It is however also a tough time of painful adaptation to difficulties arising from the implementation of market economy rules. Impoverished post-communist countries face a difficult choice of strategy: whether to act quickly - having to make enormous sacrifices in the process, or to develop more gradually thereby postponing the prospects for economic stability. Unfortunately, regardless of the adopted approach, the sphere of

social activity tends not to be given any priority, especially in the first stage of transformation of any centrally planned economy. This is true of Latvia. When interviewed by The Baltic Times in January 1997, Andris Skele, the Latvian Prime Minister began his answer to a question about the priorities of his government in 1997 with the words: "Economy. Economy. And once again, economy. (...)".

In view of the above, can we claim that the problems of cultural policy encountered in a country like Latvia are - due to its political and economic situation - radically different from those encountered in the older European democracies? Asked to define the most important problems of Latvian cultural policy, Peteris Lakis, the University Vice Chancellor who was responsible for preparing the National Report, listed the following: weakness of the legal system; lack of long-term perspective in the approach to the problems of culture; habitual dependence on government patronage of culture, suppressing spontaneous initiative within society; low level of private support for culture; weakness in cultural statistics and lack of relevant research. However, almost identical problems occur in other European countries too. Of course, the degree of severity may be rather different but the context is extremely similar.

In a remarkably short time since Latvia gained its independence, the Ministry of Culture disseminated a national cultural policy entitled "Main Cultural Policy Postulates of Latvia". In order to define the features of this policy and to understand their essence and underlying conditions, it is necessary to undertake a long journey (both literal and metaphorical) to this beautiful country. This journey will lead us initially to some recognition of the legacy of Latvia's past based on a study of the national report. Latvia is a country which has managed to preserve its identity despite the fact that it was a Soviet republic for 50 years. Our journey will also lead us through the legal framework related to the new political, economic and social climate, particularly in relation to culture; through the regulations, forms and criteria for financial support; assessing the value of cultural goods, as well as the supply and demand of services; through the Ministry of Culture as well as the local authorities; through visits to numerous Latvian cultural institutions; discussions with artists and representatives of artistic associations; performances by music school pupils and participants at cultural centres; and finally through meetings with local artists, which enabled us to reach the wellsprings of Latvian culture.

The Examiners' group made two visits to Latvia, in March and June 1997. Each visit lasted about a week. In March the examiners concentrated on Riga alone and, in June, they travelled mostly outside the capital, visiting Pedvale, Skrunda, Kuldiga, Jelgava, Daugavpils, Aglona and Cesis. Due to the radical changes directly affecting culture which were taking place at that time, both of a fundamental character (administration reform, parliamentary debate on the establishment of a National Endowment for Culture, etc.) and of a more personal one (resignation of the Minister of Culture Rihards Pīks), it was decided that in autumn 1997, when many of the issues might have found solutions, the group's Rapporteur would make one more short working visit. This took place in November 1997, with a three day visit for final working consultations.

Finally, it has become possible to draw up conclusions and recommendations having taken into consideration the specific conditions applying to Latvia but at the same time referenced from an international perspective. It is important to stress that this report is formulated against the background of an ongoing debate stimulated by the report from the World Commission on Culture and Development "Our Creative Diversity" and the contributory regional report presented by the Council of Europe "In from the Margins". Conclusions and recommendations from these reports can be useful for Latvia.

The Structure of the Report

The report's structure corresponds to the most pressing dilemmas and opportunities in Latvian cultural policy and are identified by us as follows:

First part: General Dilemmas and Opportunities

1. Formulation and implementation of cultural policy
2. Changing responsibility: state, regions, municipalities
3. Development trends in Latvian society
4. Old and new rules for funding culture

Second part: Sectoral and Specific Dilemmas and Opportunities

5. Cultural heritage for the future: museums, buildings, literature
6. Existing creativity
7. Cultural and media industries
8. Cultural exchange and mobility
9. New ways of working: cultural training and international co-operation

Third part: Conclusions and Recommendations

The first four dilemmas constitute the major part of our report because of their general importance and application. The latter five are presented in a more modest way for two reasons. Firstly, they are much more specific and, secondly, the issues they touch have already been presented in a very broad way in the National Report.

This presentation also follows our conviction that the broader theoretical commentary of the First Part is needed in order to explain the real "revolution" in cultural policies in the sense of a radical change with respect to the Soviet period. In our view, any such change must first of all deal with the problems of a redistribution of responsibilities between state and municipalities, civil society, and the funding of culture.

In order to make the report more readable, we have organised the material as follows:

only the First Part contains descriptive or informative passages, the content of which is either based on the Latvian National Report or on documents prepared by the Ministry of Culture, by local self-government bodies etc. These have been isolated out of the text and placed in framed boxes;

the text in general (all chapters) contains observations, opinions and recommendations formulated after reading the National Report, analysing source documents and legal regulations, and, most importantly, in the course of discussions that took place during the two research visits of the examiners' group to Latvia. If the above material contains any information, the latter has general relevance, and is aimed at facilitating the reader's understanding of the premises of the judgements and opinions expressed.

Readers unfamiliar with Latvia are referred to Appendix 2, devoted to Latvia's geographic, demographic, political and economic context.

FIRST PART

GENERAL DILEMMAS
AND OPPORTUNITIES

1. FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF CULTURAL POLICY

1.1. Beginning a discussion on the fundamentals of a new cultural policy

Political and economic transformation in Latvia initiated following 1990 has created new conditions for cultural development. In the first period of change, the most important thing for artists, performers and administrators was to regain freedom: freedom of artistic expression, which became a fact after censorship had been abolished, freedom to associate and to undertake business activity, the possibility of unrestricted foreign contacts. The people, intoxicated with freedom, believed that the regained freedom in itself could deliver solutions to all the problems. Hence at the beginning public speeches by some artists and politicians contained the argument that it was not really necessary for the state to have any cultural policy whatsoever.

However, quite soon, along with the new possibilities of free artistic creation, as well as a free flow of cultural values and messages economic constraints and difficulties arose, rapidly becoming more and more severe. Artists' hopes for private sponsorship were fulfilled to a very limited extent only, and private sponsors were not able to replace the role of the state, which gradually withdrew from its patronage of culture. What is more, the role of the market itself as an effective regulatory mechanism turned out to be limited only to certain cultural goods and services. Whole areas of cultural provision disappeared, while the salaries of people surviving in others were lower than the "social minimum" - a salary just high enough to provide for basic necessities. Thus development of culture faced a new organisational, legal and economic situation, which gave rise to widespread fears.

This situation posed a variety of questions to the cultural sector; the answers to these questions would determine the future existence and status of Latvian culture. Let us record a few of them:

1. What is the responsibility of the state in maintaining the balance between the public, private and independent sectors?
2. To what degree should the state withdraw from its patronage of culture, and where is the 'thin red line', beyond which processes threatening the destruction of national culture begin ?
3. To what extent can the newly developing local authorities complement the state in the functions it has performed up to now ?
4. Which kinds of cultural activities are best regulated through the mechanism of the market?
5. Can artists count on private sponsorship and, if so, in which areas of culture?
6. Who, and according to what priorities and criteria, should distribute the funds assigned to culture, so that they can be used in the most effective way possible ?

To try to find an answer to these and other questions, three illustrious intellectuals, Imants Ziedonis, Viktors Daugmalis and Dainis Ivans, published in 1993 a joint initiative "the Latvia Culture Programme". The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science joined the project and appointed experts to draft a proposal "Main Cultural Policy Postulates of Latvia". Similar texts exist in other countries but a formal document of this nature is unique from an international point of view. Widespread consultation with the

representatives of different sectors and spheres of culture was organised during the initial stages of preparing this document and many revisions were made before the Government presented the Main Cultural Policy Postulates of Latvia for final approval by the Saeima in 1995.

1.2. The Main Cultural Policy Postulates

The document entitled "Main Cultural Policy Postulates of Latvia" is described as a joint agreement between the State and society, confirmed by the Saeima, which defines the main principles, aims and tasks of the national cultural programme. It defines the most important tasks of state cultural policy and the mechanisms for putting cultural policy into practice. It defines education as a basis and future for culture and presents an elaborate plan with that aim. Besides the survey of the several cultural fields, it ends with a chapter on cultural environment and cultural co-operation.

Freedom for the creative process, along with guaranteed conditions indispensable to the development of resources to support the cultural process (understood first of all as 'institutional' culture) were defined as the main principles of Latvian cultural policy. The state should be governed by democratic rule, which in this context means it should guarantee every citizen free access to cultural goods and products. The main aims of Latvian cultural policy were defined as protection of the continuity of cultural process in Latvia, the country's future cultural development, and protection of the national identity of Latvia.¹

We are impressed that in this country, which had been subjected to totalitarian influences for such a long time, the principles of cultural policy correspond so closely to modern democratic solutions. The Postulates of Latvia conform to modern cultural policy rationales, which in the majority of European states are aimed at achieving four basic goals: promotion of cultural identity, cultural diversity, creativity and participation in culture. It is also admirable, not least from an international viewpoint, that the Latvian authorities have been able to develop such an advanced document as the postulates during a relatively short time. The document has a clear and instructive layout. There are many countries, not necessarily among the so-called "new democracies", which cannot lay claim to such a document. The process for its development can also to be commended as a model: a group of intellectuals and creators takes an initiative, which is subsequently taken up by the Ministry and then, after broad discussion, approved by Parliament.

As we will later show, however, the reality is far from the model set up. But that does not mean that the idea of formulating such a document was mistaken. Goals are meant to be for the long term and that takes a long time to realise. We will in what follows try to compare the actual development with the guidelines adopted.

At the same time as we acknowledge that the policy principles are comparatively well developed, we would also comment that both the World Report and the European Report draw attention to the need for the cultural policies of today to be rethought. They are no longer adequate. "Culture will have to be brought into the heart of public administration if it is to become more than what it is now - a partial spasmodically effective instrument of policy". ("In from the Margins"). Without being able to go into all the possible consequences of the challenging conclusions in the two reports, the examiners draw the Latvian authorities' attention to the reports and to the ongoing follow up discussions.

¹ The National Report stresses that the Postulates of Latvia are based on a model of cultural policy, in which the state assumes the role of an "Architect". Then the policy with respect to culture is treated as an inherent element of the social policy of the state, and on the administrative centre level there is a specialised government administration body that takes decisions determining the volume of funding allocated to culture in the budget, as well as the principles and criteria for their distribution. The countries employing a cultural policy closest to the Architect State model are the Scandinavian countries and France.

EXCERPTS FROM "MAIN CULTURAL POLICY POSTULATES OF LATVIA"

The most important tasks of Government cultural policy

Guaranteeing legal, economic and social conditions for freedom; ensuring material and financial support enabling each individual to participate in the acquisition of cultural values and their creation.

Protecting national cultural heritage, supporting research on this heritage as well as its inclusion in present-day cultural activities.

Protecting Latvia as a small country, with its own culture and language from the expansion of the language and culture of larger areas; strengthening national consciousness of identity and self-esteem of Latvians and Livs who live within an accessible space of world culture.

Promoting decentralisation in the administration of cultural policy, in financing cultural institutions and in taking upon itself the responsibility of cultural development on all levels - state, as well as municipal, social and individual.

Furthering regional cultural development, establishing cultural centres outside Riga: ensuring a full-bodied cultural life in the whole of Latvia.

Limiting harmful influences of the free market economy and commercialisation on culture.

Strengthening integration between culture and education; rebuilding a common value system through involving children and teenagers in the creative process of culture.

Encouraging the enrichment of culture among Latvians and other nations by promoting interchange of fruitful ideas and experiences.

The main implements for putting cultural policy into practice

legislation

financing

organisational structures of cultural policy management

information, research, development of public opinion

The construction principles underlying the mechanisms of putting cultural policy into practice

In financing culture, the State's policy tries to create an optimal state, in which cultural heritage protection is balanced by financial support for new creative experiments, and gives financial assistance for new non-state cultural presentations.

Responsibility for development and execution of the State's cultural policy is distributed among various legislative and executive institutions of the state acting on different levels. The State devises a harmonious policy of culture and education because of their common aim - creating a spiritually free, humane and creative personality. The basic task of cultural policy in the sphere of education is to create in each person an inner necessity for spiritual perfection.

Cultural policy can influence the process of culture favourably only if it is based on objective information analysis.

The cultural process unites cultural heritage and contemporary creation in common activities, and binds the present to the past, thus ensuring continuity of culture and its development in the future.

1.3. Discussion on the cultural policy postulates

Opinions on the value of the Postulates within Latvia vary to a large extent. The most commonly encountered negative view characterises the document as "wishful thinking", having little in common with reality. Some people wish that the postulates had included more precisely defined priorities. They point out that, when the above priorities are not clearly formulated, then the most vital tasks can be relegated through "priorities of interests", driven mainly by economic and political premises. The National Report states "Firstly, those institutions and programmes which need very little to maintain their existence are preferred to others. Secondly, prestigious projects are supported (for example, the Opera reconstruction, and construction of a new National Library). The importance of these institutions of national culture cannot be denied, yet it must be noted that the means are not always effectively used in these cases".

The problem is not with the Postulates themselves but rather with the lack of necessary additional follow up measures. All formulation of goals leads to some conflict between goals and such disagreements can never been solved through a written text. Solving goal conflicts is in fact a part of the current policy making. We will see in the following discussion on issues where follow up is unclear or lacking. What we find specially important is to spell out how a continuous evaluation of the goals set up can function. Experience from other countries has demonstrated that it is necessary to redraft such a long term programme after a period. Such a revision will contribute to an important debate about what has been achieved. Otherwise there is the risk that the goals lose contact with a rapidly changing situation.

1.4. The role of Parliament and the Government in cultural policy making

The general policy guidelines, legislation and the budget are decided in an interplay between the Parliament and Government. A smoothly functioning allocation of responsibility is decisive for an effective cultural policy.

1.4.1. Parliament

The Latvian Parliament - Saeima - as the supreme legislative body plays an important role in cultural policy. Its Committee for Education, Culture and Science prepares and recommends decisions. Its work consists first of all in submitting, considering and supervising the progress of legal acts and resolutions, as well as in considering reports and information submitted by the Minister of Culture, and conducting analyses in the area of culture. Within the Committee, the person currently directly responsible for cultural issues is its Deputy Chair - Pauls Putnins. He is a theatre man and a representative of the Farmers' Union - one of the six parties participating in the governing coalition. The members of the Farmers' Union have eight seats in the Saeima.

The programme of the Farmers' Union - a Conservative party - assumes the need for decentralising state assistance to culture. It also stresses the importance of protecting culture against the negative effects of commercialisation, the need to even out opportunities for different regions, as well as the need for co-operation with non-government organisations and for modern management methods in culture. On the other hand, the programme lacks any proposals to leave the culture to its own devices, to privatise its non-commercial areas etc., which are so characteristic of the Liberals. It is not without a reason that we characterise in this way the programme of a party that at present plays the most important role in shaping cultural policy. In particular, we learned

about a proposal to commercialise the theatres, submitted by a Centrist-Liberal party, *Latvia's Way* (also in the governing coalition, 17 seats in the Parliament). The proposal does not follow directly from the party's official cultural programme, although the latter stresses the need to define culture as an important, long-term economic investment. But at the same time we can find a declaration that "it is very important to elaborate and implement a detailed long-term state programme to support the development of non-commercial cultural spheres". Certain conclusions can be drawn from the above example. Firstly, the cultural programmes of political parties are still not sufficiently varied and mature to reflect their actual future plans. Secondly, since politicians from the parties belonging to the same ruling coalition have rather different ideas on the development of culture in Latvia, the fact that the Saeima accepted the Postulates in 1995 is even more praiseworthy.

Concluding the role of the Saeima on cultural policy in Latvia, we should underline that, in having decided on the Postulates, it accepted an important responsibility in cultural policy. We find it in general important to have a vital debate in the Parliament on follow up and we hope that this debate will be reflected in the media. There are huge problems in Latvian Cultural Policy. The only way to overcome them in a democratic state is to bring them to the surface and ensure they are resolved through public debate.

1.4.1.a. The role of legislation

During our discussions on cultural policy in Latvia, one of the regular topics of concern, but also a remedy offered, has been the legal system - or, to be more precise, its weakness and the need for improvement.

It is evident that both the existing and the newly created legislation only partially addresses the problems worrying Latvians. In countries undergoing economic transformation, legal regulations usually lag behind the reality. Latvians face the fact that unfortunately the problems of culture will probably not be treated as a legislative priority by the state for a long time yet. Be that as it may, nobody wants any longer to accept a situation where the law is unclear, and the task of determining its precise interpretation is left to civil servants, particularly in view of the fact that corruption of the authorities is becoming a subject more and more often discussed at present.

The role of legislation in cultural policy differs greatly. In some countries, like Finland, France, Italy and Denmark laws play an important role. In other countries like Germany and Sweden laws are mainly used for some basic rules like freedom of expression, etc. In the Communist countries, laws were important instruments and that model has been taken over in the post-communist countries. We find that laws play a very important role in Latvia to follow up the postulates. Many laws are now being revised. Legislation is - apart from the budget- the main way in which the state exercises its authority. A special type of legislation of huge importance for cultural policy is the law on the role of municipalities and regions, which is discussed in Chapter 2.

We find it natural that a country in a state of transition must rely on amending existing legislation. It is important to have a revised, modern legislation but statutes can only represent the framework. They can never help to solve most of the basic problems. The Examiners' report on Italian cultural policy gives many examples how elaborate legislation does not necessarily lead to well functioning cultural policy. We urge caution against any blind faith in legislation. Laws, which are by nature inflexible and cannot easily be changed, should therefore not be too detailed as that can limit freedom of action and initiatives. When financial resources are restricted it is for example very important that cultural institutions have as much freedom as possible. Delegation of power and responsibility is increasingly the norm but money must be linked to it for the effects to be real (In from the Margins 12.3.3.). Necessary conditions on the use of money are better issued in a form more transient than laws. For example, as conditions attached to the allocation of money and rules decided by the Government can more easily be varied than laws.

Legislation in culture

The present cultural policy is realised both on the basis of new legal regulations of a general character (introducing into the Latvian context solutions typical for democratic societies and market economies), as well as on the basis of detailed regulations directed at solving the problems of culture.

The most important detailed regulations concerning culture include, among others, the following Acts of Law: "On the Press and Other Mass Media" (1990); "On Archives" (1991); "On a Free Development of Latvia's National and Ethnic Groups and their Rights to Cultural Autonomy" (1991); "On Protection of Cultural Monuments" (1992); "On the Work of Radio and Television" (1992); "On Social Organisations and their Associations" (1992); "On Latvia's National Library" (1992); a collection of statutes "On Copyright and Neighbouring rights" (1993), some new laws that regulate the functioning of cultural infrastructures, particularly the financing problems (e.g. "On Taxation of Lotteries and Games of Chance" (1994) and "On the Cultural Endowment" (1997).

At present, there is work in progress on an act on museums and libraries, and an act regulating organisation and financing of theatres. In addition, introduction of a so-called "umbrella act" covering the whole area of cultural activities is considered. One of the issues to be decided by this Act would be the division of competence between the state and municipalities, which is extremely important at the time when a territorial reform is in progress.¹

1.4.2. The Government and its Minister of Culture

Under the current coalition government of Latvia, the person responsible for the shape of the current cultural policy is the Minister of Culture. Mats Sylwan, cultural attaché at the Swedish embassy in Riga, illustrates the political scene in relation to culture in Latvia in the following way: "(...) During my two years in the country I have shaken hands with four Ministers of Culture. All of them were picked from the cultural life. What unites them is that they all represented the same party, the Farmers Union, but also that none was a member of this party at the time when he was asked to become minister." From this quotation we learn that up to now Latvia has used the model, according to which the cultural post is given not to politicians, but to people involved in culture. It is not our purpose to judge whether such a solution is better or worse than a situation where the Minister of Culture is drawn from the ranks of career politicians. The issue has been the subject of many still inconclusive debates - which underlines the importance of the capabilities and qualities of the person occupying the ministerial position, notwithstanding his/her political or cultural roots. We can only draw the reader's attention to the fact that in the period under review, Latvia has seen frequent changes in tenure of the Minister of Culture' post, which inevitably leads to some discontinuity in policy implementation.

Recommendations:

It is extremely important to undertake actions aimed at increasing the "credibility" and effectiveness of the document "Main Cultural Policy Postulates of Latvia" defining the fundamental principles of cultural policy in Latvia. It seems to us that in order for it to stop being treated as a collection of ideas having little in common with the policy realised in practice, it is necessary to:

¹ Law "On Museums" is adopted in 1997; law "On Libraries"- in 1998; law on theatres' activities has been transformed to the law "On Culture Institutions" (passed in 1998), included in the category of general legislative acts.

1. for the Latvian authorities (especially the Ministry of Culture) to prepare necessary follow up measures;
2. to examine the shortcomings in the process of implementation of Main Cultural Postulates and to define clearly the priorities between different areas of culture especially in the light of public funding constraints.
3. to have a vital debate in the Parliament on the follow up, which we hope will be reflected in the media. A new contribution to such a discussion could be a conference devoted to the results of evaluation of the cultural policy in Latvia conducted within the framework of the Council of Europe programme.
4. for the Latvian authorities to participate actively in the follow up to the reports "Our Creative Diversity" and "In from the Margins" which rethink the cultural policies of today.
5. to redraft such a long term programme after a period.

We find it natural that a country in a state of transition must rely on amending existing legislation. It is important to have a revised, modern legislation but statutes can only represent the framework. We therefore warn against creating a too rigid and detailed a legal framework for culture. Many issues can be resolved by current government decrees, which are often able to react to changes in the environment, newly emerging problems etc. in a more elastic way than legal solutions. In this context we can see the importance of the issue of a well-functioning distribution of responsibility between the Parliament and the Government.

2. CHANGING RESPONSIBILITY: STATE, REGIONS, MUNICIPALITIES

Decentralisation of power is an issue of fundamental importance for all countries, but particularly transforming a totalitarian system into a democratic one. Only thanks to genuine decentralisation of power is it possible to observe the subsidiarity principle, central to modern societies, according to which decisions are taken as close as possible to those whom they concern. According to the European Charter on self-government, the task of running public affairs should in general be the responsibility of those authorities that are closest to the citizens, i.e. to municipalities. On the other hand, problems exceeding the practical capabilities of municipalities should be solved through co-operation and associations of local communities (Art.10). Thus we encounter here an explicit suggestion of a strong municipality and its associations. Also according to the principle accepted within the European Union (Article 128 par.4 of the Maastricht Agreement), formal recognition and links between culture and other areas should be established not only centrally, but also at regional and local level.

Table 1

**Responsibilities of various state and self-government administration levels
in individual areas of culture**
(1st January 1997)

	Theatre	Museum	Music	Literature	Visual Arts	Heritage	Libraries	Cultural Education	Amateur Arts
State	Latvian National Opera, Latvian Philharmonic Society, eight theatres	15 museums (with 15 branches) Latvian Association of Art Museums is included	National Symphony Orchestra; Academic Choir Latvia	Zinatne Publishing House	Association of Art museums Protection (5 museums; Rundale palace Museums) Art section at Rainis museum of Literature and art history; Smilgis Theatre museum)	Inspection of Culture Heritage 7 Councils of Experts	National Library, Library for the Blind; 3 libraries under other ministries authority, 200 libraries functioning in different state institutions	Latvian Academy of Arts, Jazep Vitols Latvian Academy of Music, Latvian Academy of Culture, ten colleges, and five schools (primary and secondary art schools)	Emilis Melngailis Folk Art Centre
Region		16 museums					15 libraries	23 schools	8 cultural centres
Municipality		12 museums					1985 libraries	111 schools	580 cultural centres

These two principles alone dictate that previously centralised post-communist countries now in the process of reconstructing their democratic systems have to build completely new public administration systems. This must involve clear division of competencies between the state, regional and local levels, ensuring that cross-sector co-operation takes place at all administrative levels, and with the transfer of responsibility accompanied by transfer of financial resources. We will examine the way Latvia deals with this issue in relation to culture, and consider the most important problems of the decentralisation process currently taking place.

In Latvia, cultural policy is dealt with both by the central public administration and by regional and local authorities. The detailed organisational structure of Latvian cultural life was presented in the form of a schema included in the National Report (Figure 6.2).

We have also produced a table (1) setting out the division of competencies between the state, regional and local levels.

2.1. Central Government

Central Government

- A dominant role in determining state cultural policy and in shaping the principles of subvention is played by the central administration of culture. The main organ of central administration for culture is the Ministry of Culture and Art. Its organisational structure reflects the priorities realised. The main departments of the Ministry are: Department of Cultural Policy, Department of Regional Policy and Administrative Department.
- An organisation affiliated to the Ministry of Culture is the independent State Inspection for Monument Protection. The bodies coming directly under the Ministry are: E. Melngailis Folk Art Centre, State Centre for Cultural Education and National Film Centre.
- The main purpose of the Ministry of Culture's activities is to carry out the tasks of Latvian cultural policy defined in the Saeima. In order to achieve the goals set, the Ministry performs promotional, co-ordination, information and control functions in the areas of culture and cultural education within Latvia. The Ministry's tasks include first of all the development of draft acts of parliament in the area of culture and cultural education; preparation of the culture budget proposals and analysis of the budget's implementation; taking care of the development of professional areas of culture, amateur art and folk art; co-operation with self-government bodies, institutions, groups of people, and individual people having connections with culture; supervision and financing of state cultural institutions.
- The state cultural institutions supervised and financed by the Ministry of Culture include: the Latvian National Opera, the Latvian Concert Agency, National Symphony Orchestra, State Academic Choir "Latvia", seven dramatic theatres, two libraries, seven museums, one museum-reserve, the Latvian Association of Art Museums, three academies, ten colleges and five schools, as well as the Cultural Endowment.
- The Ministry of Culture is not the only state administrator of the cultural infrastructure in Latvia. Many specialist cultural institutions, including first of all art schools and museums, are under the patronage of other Ministries: Ministry of Education and Science (very important in view of special importance of cultural education in Latvia), Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A special responsibility is borne by the Ministry of Education and Science, which supervises art education at the university level.

The positioning of the Ministry of Culture in Latvia gives it a crucial responsibility and importance. It has a determining role in practically all stages of the formulation and implementation of the state's cultural policy. Virtually all the cultural institutions and organisations which are involved in professional creative activity are legally and financially dependent upon the Ministry. Furthermore, since the local authorities are obliged to struggle with rather limited financial allocations, the Ministry also has a key role in helping maintain the cultural infrastructure at the regional and local levels. Given the negligible (with a few notable exceptions such as the Soros Foundation

of Latvia) contribution of private patronage, the Ministry's maintenance and development roles are paramount.

Two significant points should be noted in this context. Firstly, the Ministry's budget has tended annually to have declining purchasing power, which has in turn led to the bulk of annual grants passed on to institutions being devoted to fixed and overhead costs (predominantly salaries) rather than to support creative or project work. Secondly, the rather 'vertical' art-form dominated structure of the Ministry means that whilst each division tries to do its best to look after the needs of its own sector, or client group, priorities across the sectors are not necessarily identified. This may have helped lead to the current situation in which hard choices are avoided, and the sector as a whole feels demoralised by the pattern of declining resources. Everyone under these conditions (in both Ministry and institutions) thinks the solution to the general problem is more money - but has little real expectation that it will arrive. Few organisations - the National Opera here being a major exception - seem to have had the courage to take responsibility for their own destiny, radically restructure, and face up to the need to change working practices in the light of a realistic estimate of likely available public resources.

We were disappointed to find only rather limited acknowledgement of the need for much greater co-operation between the key partners in the public and private sectors, in order to sustain and develop the cultural sector in appropriate and 'modern' ways. Despite the history and the difficulties which we acknowledge, it seems to the Examiners that the initiative to establish a much improved national overview, mutual goodwill and co-operative action to meet the requirements of the cultural sector as a whole, should in the first instance come from the Ministry of Culture.

Both the World Report and the European report stress that any cultural policy with ambitions to have a wider focus - as expressed in the Postulates - must ensure that the Ministry of culture co-operates actively with other ministries. We noted an interesting example of co-operation between culture and education, based on a special section in the postulates. It has positive consequences on the organisational level. On the other hand, we found that there was a considerable reduction in the budget of the cultural education post last year. In general we recommend that the Ministry of Culture develops systematically its co-operation with other Ministries. Understanding the viewpoint of other ministries is often mutually difficult but important results can be achieved for the cultural environment from improved co-operation. As within the central level, cross-sector co-operation is equally important at the local and regional level.

An effective realisation of cultural policy by the state's administration requires a good system of information about culture. Unfortunately, Latvia does not yet have in place a modern and coherent programme for monitoring culture. The issues which require attention include: lack of basic quantitative information about the financing of culture at different management levels, as well as about institutions and cultural activities, collected in one generally accessible place; lack of information about new contemporary expression, new technologies and the mechanisms of mass media, and about the consequences both general and detailed of legal regulations, lack of systematic recognition of the areas of culture outside the direct influence of the Ministry of Culture and Art; the drawbacks of basing financial reporting solely on the general principles determined by the Ministry of Finance, without taking into consideration the specifics of the cultural activity, etc. We recommend that the Ministry of Culture develops an information system that really addresses the most important aspects of cultural policy. At a time of decentralisation it is specially urgent to be able to follow the consequences of the ongoing reform at local and regional level.

The organisational structure of the Ministry of Culture reflects features characteristic of a state transforming its economy. Since most of the work across the country is aimed at establishing a legal framework to enable the development of economic and cultural life, one should not be surprised that the list of positions and departments within the Ministry

of Culture includes those of the Parliamentary Secretary and Division of Strategy, which indicates the stress placed by the Ministry on legislative work conducted in the Saeima and on the strategy of cultural development in Latvia.

2.1.1. The intermediary bodies

In order to preserve the principle of autonomy of creation in the decision processes concerning culture, some countries either make use of the "arm's length" principle to delegate their authority to intermediate bodies, or employ advisory-expert teams of artists and authors.

Most modern European cultural support systems contain intermediate bodies, occupying space between the Ministry and the cultural organisations themselves. However, the model for such 'arm's length' agencies can differ greatly, according to the administrative traditions of the country concerned. Some are purely advisory, while others have considerable executive functions. In certain cases they cover much of the cultural policy spectrum, whilst in others there are separate dedicated bodies for different sectors.

As the responsibilities of the Ministry of Culture in Latvia are diverse, it is not surprising that a National Council was established in 1995 to provide for an overall advisory function. But there are also separate councils for preservation of heritage, for drama, for cinema etc. In addition, we should draw attention in this context to the National Endowment which, once it is up and running, will have an important executive role to play (discussed in more detail under 4.1.2. a). The National Council, which only recently came into being, is restricted to advice-giving. As yet therefore, we are unable to form any kind of judgement as to its effectiveness. This will depend to a great extent on the quality of its Board and Secretariat. Nevertheless, it is an important step in itself to have, independent of the Ministry, a body composed of qualified individuals drawn widely from the cultural field. There will be a need for these various councils to have genuine co-operation with the Endowment. The necessity to make difficult choices over what is to be supported financially should be a spur to good quality advice. One of the key rationales for having 'arm's length' agencies is that it provides an alternative to the Ministry making artistic judgements, which may often be interpreted as politically motivated. Civil servants are, in any case, rarely recruited for their ability to make these kind of judgements and decisions.

Choices in what to support in the cultural field are inevitably often made on subjective grounds, which further strengthens the argument for having high quality independent advice in the various councils. The Council of Europe's report "In from the margins" discusses the issue of peer group evaluation (12.3.8). Whilst not minimising the risks, (including the possibility of creating a self-perpetuating oligarchy) it concludes that "peer group assessment remains the best of the available options to ensure well-informed and artistically sound decisions. However, government, or its chosen intermediaries, should ensure that decision making processes are regularly reviewed to ensure there is no circularity of advantage."

We have already commended the vitally important role that artists in Latvia have played in the formulation of cultural policy, and we have confidence that they would participate in a constructive manner in the various advisory and executive bodies. It will still be important, though, to establish rules which allow for a regular turnover and rotation of membership.

The structure of these bodies should be kept under constant review. Areas such as support for artists, or the creative industries will call for additional treatment, or even - as a last resort - the creation of new bodies. The need to keep down administrative costs should act as a brake on matters getting out of control.

2.2. Regions and municipalities

2.2.1. Regions and municipalities today

Regions and municipalities

- Local government in Latvia operates on the regional (26 regions) and local levels. The local level consists of 7 city councils, 70 town councils and 492 rural self-government bodies. The regional authorities are active in co-ordination and consultation with regard to municipal and rural self-government, especially in providing solutions to common problems. The competencies of regional authorities include administrative duties at the local level and support for realisation of social, economic and cultural functions of the whole region. Within culture, the duties in particular include looking after the regional libraries, museums, historical monuments and the environment - primarily in the sense of under-pinning their organisational and financial background. The same competencies in the area of culture, only with respect to the local level, are enjoyed by the self-governing authorities of towns and villages. However, self-governing authorities of the so called "Republican" cities possess joint competencies at the regional and local self-governing authority levels. The self-governing authorities of all levels have the right to establish cultural institutions
- Realisation of the tasks assigned to regional and local authorities is financed from their own revenues (drawn largely from local taxes and income tax from private persons) supplemented by the general subsidy specified in the central budget (which takes regional inequalities into consideration). The percentage share of this subsidy (including the cost of salaries) in the state budget had been continually decreasing over the last years - in 1996 it amounted to 22.6% of the budget, in 1997 - to 16.8%, and the share planned for 1998 is to amount to 15.6%. Local self-governments is also responsible for tasks assigned to it by the state. According to the Charter on Local self-government, the state's delegation of functions and tasks to the local level should at the same time transfer the financial means for their implementation. The structure of expenditure on culture as well as its level, is decided by the local self-government authorities themselves.
- An important element of the landscape of Latvian territorial administration is the activity of government (Ministry of Culture) inspectors responsible for co-operation between the self-government level and central government and assistance to realising the cultural policy of the state in the provinces. This system was initiated in 1992.

2.2.2. Implications of the regional reform process

In Latvia the process of allocating competencies between the state and self-government authorities, and determining a financial basis for carrying out these responsibilities is not yet complete. Up to now, according to the regulations of the Law on Local Government, dating from 1992, self-governing authorities have responsibility at regional and local levels (towns and rural areas). At present, regional reform is under progress. The reform is aimed at abolishing the regional level of self-government and transferring the competencies currently assigned to the regions down to the local level. In order that the self-governing authorities are able to cope with their new duties, as well as to preserve the links between them, that exist mainly thanks to the work of the regions, it

has been proposed that local self-governments should be obliged to co-operate by forming voluntary associations (i.e. with arbitrarily chosen partners). The regional level will thereafter operate according to quite new principles. Depending on which variant the Saeima accepts, either four regions plus Riga or nine regions plus Riga will be created. The government supports the first proposal, i.e. the four historic regions (Kurzeme, Zemgale, Vidzeme, Latgale) plus Riga. It is still not yet clear what the future regions' competencies will be or whether their authorities will be elected (as was the case with the 26 regions which are now to be abolished) or nominated. It is not resolved whether they will constitute a self-government level as they have done up to now, or whether they will become regional 'representatives' of the state authorities.

For the transitional period while the reform is implemented, the state intends to appoint so-called Co-operation Councils in all the 26 regions which are to be abolished, as well as in every Republican city. The Councils are to be consultative bodies consisting of: representatives of a government agency responsible for the territorial reform, as well as of the state supervision, delegated by the state, and the local authorities of a given region. The basic tasks of Co-operation Councils have been defined as follows: "to ensure direct exchange of information between local government and the state, as well as between local government units, or to co-ordinate the activities of local government and state institutions, to explain, prepare and ensure the implementation of the local government reform processes" (Amendment to the Law on Local Government).

During our meetings with representatives of the local authorities, cultural inspectors, representatives of cultural institutions, cultural administrators and amateur and professional artists, we sought views on the subject of the reform being introduced. Did the administrative reform threaten culture? Would it harm the existing situation, or was it a new chance to develop culture? Opinions on the implications of the reform on local cultural development (including the former regional level) were divided. They ranged from words full of optimism and certainty that the functions of regions would cease, that in future independent local authorities would foster a greater concern for culture, through scepticism expressed in the view that, behind the facade of democratic slogans, the state wanted to cede as much responsibility as possible to local self-government level without creating an adequate financial framework for realising the tasks delegated, up to predictions of the disappearance of cultural institutions and music schools situated in smaller towns and villages due to insufficient understanding of the needs of small districts and their lack of resources. What are the reasons for such a diversity of opinions?

We suspect that the underlying reasons are complex: psychological, social, economic and, finally, territorial. Certainly, in those regions where the regional authorities were very active and welcomed co-operation, the changes are regarded very sceptically. On the other hand, in the likely future seats of the new, larger regional authorities the proposition is predictably welcomed. There are great differences amongst the regions from the economic viewpoint (the privileged Riga): some of them are poorer (the East), and some - richer (the West). However, doubts are by no means limited to the poorest regions - though it is obviously there that the delegation of responsibility for cultural institutions and projects financed up to now by the regions may be put at most risk.

We believe that the financial threat is very serious, and the exceptions are quite few. In the opinion of the Union of Local self-government of Latvia, the minimum level of resourcing assigned to local authorities by the central level should amount to 25% of the state budget as a whole instead of their present level of 16.8%. According to the union's own estimates local government bears about 70% of the responsibility for the social and economic development of the country. If the negative prognoses unfortunately turn out to be correct, and the financial situation of local authorities deteriorates any further, then self-governments will have to face a difficult choice. As the experiences of other young European democracies have shown, in such a situation expenditure on culture is usually near the very end of a long list of the needs of local society.

The next question is, who will deal with matters which are clearly over and above the competence or scope of a single municipality? In an insufficiently developed civil society, will the self-governments, which have been operating in an independent way for only a few years, be able to pool their efforts in an efficient way to deal with common problems? In other words, will the idea of self-government associations turn out to be viable? Finally, could such voluntary associations manage to sustain the former regional cultural projects or ensure the continued existence of regional cultural institutions?

Yet other doubts are raised by the insufficiently defined future functions of the cultural inspectors currently working on the 26 regional territorial levels. Will they continue to work? How many of them will remain, in view of the fact that the number of regions may decrease so drastically, and what will be their revised functions? This is important, since the inspectors - notwithstanding their rather unfortunate name *inspector* inviting unpleasant connotations with inspection, or control, one of the basic mechanisms abused in communist countries and viewed with great reservations in all post-communist countries - have been fully accepted in the regions and municipalities. Their activity has exceeded the scope of a purely co-ordinating function, and they are recognised as active animators of cultural life in the regions. We think it important to keep/establish special structures for co-operation between government and the regional and local level, between authorities and the private and independent sector and to create it in the most appropriate way: inspectors, intermediary bodies like regional and local councils, etc.

Nevertheless the future contains a lot of enigmas, we are of the opinion that the will to respond flexibly to local initiatives on the issue of administrative reform (as has been declared by the central authorities) is very noteworthy and may have justification in practice. It may be the case that worries about the cultural environment will be calmed down by the results of the first experiments with implementing the administrative reform. The first example is that of Kandava, the first town in which the self-government reform is to be implemented on the mayor's initiative. The second example comes strictly from the area of culture, and concerns the state Liepaja theatre whose very existence is threatened and where survival may depend upon transformation into a municipal theatre.

In conclusion, we would underline that whatever the final shape of local administration after the territorial reform, it will be necessary to ensure that the changes involved do have a positive influence on the local culture, whose continuity and development depend on public support for both cultural institutions and cultural projects.

Recommendations:

- **Self-government authorities should be provided with conditions, and financial capability to enable them to determine the direction of their cultural policy according to their own strategy for economic, social and educational development.**
- **It would be advisable to organise a public debate at local level with participation of central authorities, artists, researchers of culture, and people involved in the practice of culture in order to define the desired scope of competence of local and regional authorities in culture.**
- **It is necessary to strengthen the co-operation between the Ministry and the local authorities; similarly between the Ministry and the local authorities with the non-governmental sector (like Soros Foundation of Latvia, artists unions, etc).**
- **The duties of the Ministry should include initiating work aimed at monitoring cultural development, filling gaps in the existing statistics on culture and adjusting the latter to European standards.**

- Modern cultural policy requires multiple links between culture and the social and economic development of the country at all levels. It is a task for the Ministry of Culture to strengthen its co-operation with the other Departments and stimulate the municipalities to establish formal connections of culture with the other areas.
- The Ministry should ensure that the National Council (and any other such bodies) develops into an authoritative and respected independent advisory agency.
- The advisory bodies should be required to co-operate fully with the National Endowment - and vice versa.
- Peer group evaluation provides an important safeguard against any possible political interference in artistic judgements and choices. The advisory structures should be kept under constant review as they evolve, and there should be a regular turnover in membership.

3. DEVELOPMENT TRENDS IN LATVIAN SOCIETY

3.1. Development of civil society

Civil society and open society are terms applied to modern democratic states. Trying to give a more precise definition of this extremely important concept, we could say that the civil society concept is like an idea whose practical expression is - in addition to other things - through development of the so-called *independent sector*. According to the common approach, an independent sector is usually defined as a chain of associations or interest groups, as well as free groups stimulating all types of activity. Independent of the state on the one hand, while on the other allowing citizens to "take matters into their own hands" and accept responsibility for realising the tasks involved through charitable and non-profit activities. Following "In from the Margins" we can say: "The balance between the state and the individual needs should be carefully set and the role of major corporations monitored and controlled. The laws and regulations which define these matters are what we mean by a 'social contract'. A key concept in the World Report is empowerment, which covers an important aspect of civil society. It is about people's ability to exercise wider options by directly participating in the decision making process or having access to, and influence on, those who have the power to decide, democratically and accountably.

Strengthening civil society is of particular importance in cultural policy. By stimulating individual initiative such a type of society favours the so-called "democracy of culture" principle (active participation in culture), which is stressed so much nowadays. It also reduces disadvantage in access to culture by looking after the interests of less privileged social groups, etc. Non-governmental initiatives generally cost less because they have light organisational structures, combine different sources of income and are often supported by volunteers. Furthermore, independent initiatives are created at the grass-roots, react instinctively to the latest trends and are able to respond rapidly to what the citizens want and need.

In the early 90's, the post-communist countries experienced a real explosion in the growth of civic cultural organisations, in particular foundations and associations, which gradually became important partners for the public, as well as for the private, profit-oriented sector. The state approved these initiatives, introducing appropriate legal encouragement and tax inducements. Over recent years the growth rate in the number of civic organisations exhibits a trend towards stabilisation. It seems likely that the needs in this area have been already partly satisfied. Perhaps the tax inducements are insufficient, but it is also very probable that there is no legal formula allowing non-profit organisations to play new roles: namely, that of a producer and a supplier of cultural goods and services.

3.1.1. Construction of civil society: dealing with mental habits inherited from the past, or a task for at least one generation

How is the civil society concept developing in Latvia?

After the year 1991, all inhabitants of Latvia have been in a sense resettled into new conditions, a new place. Everything is different - the world that they used to know, feel and understand is becoming more and more distant. In this new, unknown land of the

market and democracy they still cannot find their own place with much confidence. Experience of life, gained in other times, is of no use; old notions and categories do not match the new reality. The communist establishment managed to imbue the society with a mentality of the state's client. Or even that of a petitioner, who tries to win the favour of the dispenser of goods by conforming, and in return has a secure existence and can live in peace.

The change of people's attitude from that of a supplicant to that of an active participant in public life is in Peteris Lakis' opinion one of the fundamental problems of the contemporary Latvian society. Frequently we also had the impression that the concept of a civil society itself is not generally understood, and people's attitudes can most often be described as either expectant or inert. Up to now, this situation has not yet been changed sufficiently by the civil organisations. Latvia has been comparatively slow in strengthening the role of new civic organisations within the group of post-communist countries. Hungary, Poland and Estonia considerably outdistance Latvia in this respect. This is not just a question of inadequate tax encouragement's, for, whilst there is a much greater range in Poland and Hungary, the situation in Estonia is as limiting as in Latvia. Nevertheless, we feel that all over Latvia, there is a growing number of interesting projects, initiated by individuals and groups of people, who are inventing new ways to meet the needs of citizens and artists (for example: the Open-air Art Museum in Pedvale, the New Theatre in Riga, the Educational and Art Centre at Zvartava, etc.).

Pedvale open-air art museum

The concept for this project came from Latvian sculptor Ojars Feldbergs in 1991. It integrates three-dimensional modern art with the natural and agricultural landscape, which is subject to seasonal change and cycles. The location is 200 hectares of countryside near the small town of Sabile (Kurzeme), in Feldbergs' native region. The elevated position on the bank of the Abava allows for superb sittings of sculpture and views in varied landscape, and across the river. One of the key objectives of the project is to heighten appreciation of the natural landscape, and to restore peoples' understanding of it to something like what it was before Soviet occupation made its devastating impact on both the cultural landscape, and upon aesthetic responses to the inhabited environment.

The works of art are created by Latvian and foreign artists, often made during the course of symposia, workshops and residencies, and are left as exhibits exposed to the elements. The result is a deeply moving and sensitive blend of the natural and modern (mostly, but not exclusively, using natural materials) which also seeks to locate Latvian art within the mainstream of international developments. The territory covers the lands of three former manors, dating back originally to the 12th century before Christianity came to Latvia. The impressive 18th and early 19th century manor houses are protected historic buildings, but which have suffered as a result of poor maintenance during the decades when they were under the ownership of the local collective farm. Under supervision of the heritage authorities, they are being gradually restored and converted for use as exhibition spaces, studios and workshops, residential accommodation and office/services for the museum. The first area of land was rented in 1992, and has subsequently become private property. The remainder is rented from the local authority and the church, with unfinished acquisition rights.

The aims of the project are to:

- (1) create a multi-functional rural cultural centre for professional and amateur artists and craftspeople to collaborate alongside local agricultural work, and where all work is closely influenced by the changing seasons;
- (2) mount exhibitions within the park area;
- (3) provide well-equipped studio spaces for artists;

- (4) assemble a unique contemporary art collection and provide sympathetic space for national and international workshops and symposia;
- (5) display historic architecture and conservation processes in progress;
- (6) develop the cultural centre as a tourist attraction for its own sake, and to help develop the economy of the region in providing the required facilities, food and services.

All efforts at promoting development of civil society are extremely desirable. A considerable contribution is that of the Soros Foundation-Latvia, working within the framework of the Civil Society programme. A strong development of civil society has many implications. In culture a primary issue is a possibility of asserting your cultural identity by ensuring that people never see themselves merely as passive consumers of culture, but also continue to see themselves as participants, makers, producers of culture; and possibility to realise art that goes beyond the scope of interest of the state as well as of commercial producers, i.e. art that is interesting for small groups of admirers only, as well as avant-garde art.

3.1.2. Institutions of the independent sector: old and new associations and foundations

The organising principles of public life in communist countries ruled out the existence of any complementary or alternative forms: the civic institutions in Latvia were disbanded or subjected to state control. Foundations disappeared from the landscape of public life. Their ownership status did not conform to the concept of the communist state, in which state ownership was preferred for ideological reasons, and the functions traditionally performed by charities were deemed superfluous to the new, happy society, without the poor, the homeless, or the addicted. The only social organisations in culture were mostly associations: artists' and creative unions, cultural associations and societies whose independence was greatly limited. They were financed via Moscow from funds specially created for that purpose. The unions and associations carried out privilege-granting functions with respect to their members: social assistance and allowances were guaranteed for them, individual grants for artists were paid, regular contracts were concluded with artists to provide their creative works for exhibitions in Latvia and abroad. But, as is written in the National Report: "This system was far from ideal. Although decisions on distribution of resources in artists' unions were taken on a collegial basis, the said distribution was often influenced by ideological considerations".

After Latvia's regaining of independence in 1992, the government introduced the "Law on Social Organisations", on the basis of which the old artists' unions were transformed into independent public organisations. Their independence was somehow connected with financial independence: however, in fact their right to state support up to now has amounted to minimal real support only. The associations are still not on the Ministry of Finance list of privileged bodies which qualify their sponsors for tax reductions. Business activity conducted by the associations in order to earn their keep is subject to taxation on the same principles, as any other profit-oriented activity. Little wonder that the first years of adaptation to the new conditions were devoted to a dramatic fight for survival. The situation of those associations that had properties inherited from former times was better. The unions occupying these buildings cannot sell them, but they are allowed to profit from renting them. In spite of their modest capacities, the associations have always tried to help their members. They offer small-scale social benefits to their members - pensioners and artists who live in particularly difficult conditions. Some of them perform other functions - for example, the Artists' Union possesses a modern art collection numbering 14 500 items, which it cares for without any help from the state authorities.

Alongside the associations of many years' standing, new ones have appeared, for example the Association of Professional Photographers. We did not encounter tensions of any special kind between older associations which possess some capital assets, and their younger "colleagues" which begin their activity without any assets or experience but also without any political past.

A new form is the creation of institutions facilitating co-operation of artists involved in the same kind of creativity. For example, within fine arts, in addition to the Latvian Artists' Union there are also: The Sculptors' Centre, The Chamber of Graphic Art and the Association of Textile Artists.

The number of members of artists' unions in 1997:

Writers' Union -288 members;
Artists' Union - 1 136 members;
Union of Composers - 96 members;
Theatre Union - 1 100 members;
Union of Architects - 527 members;
Cinematographers' Union - 213 members;
Union of Art Photographers - 245 members;
Union of Journalists - 700 members;
Union of Designers - 225 members.

From an understanding that the vitality of the independent sector depends, at least in part, the associations' capacity to co-operate and to network, the artists' unions decided to integrate. As a result, in 1995 the Council of Creative Unions' of Latvia was registered as a union of professional organisations representing the interests of all its associates. Since that time the Council of Artists' Associations has been in dialogue with the government and parliamentary representatives on the problems of the environment of the artist and has participated in work on new cultural legislation and in developing the directions of cultural policy. The Council makes use of the Ministry of Culture's financial help to a very modest degree only; benefiting to a greater degree from the financial and material help of its members.

Concluding the situation of artists' unions in Latvia we would like to stress that the state should have a greater responsibility towards artists than merely being there as a safety net. In the light of the importance of artists in general contributing positively to the creation of a shared post-communist value-system, it is important to assist them through the current very difficult transitional period. This needs to span the generations to ensure that younger artists are prepared to join the artists' unions, which will otherwise be threatened with extinction (perceived as 'survivals' from the old system) and fail to transform into modern, democratic, professional associations.

The number of private foundations is not impressive as yet. However, the existence of 250 (including 6 cultural ones) is an auspicious beginning. We noticed among them a lot of so-called grant-seeking foundations aimed at collecting funds for the realisation of concrete projects or for cultural institutions. One such foundation is the National Opera Foundation, established in order to support the activity of the National Opera in Riga.

Latvian National Opera Foundation

The Latvian National Opera Foundation (LNOF) was established in June 1997 as an independent body, registered as a non-profit organisation under Latvian Law. The ten founders of the LNOF are leading personalities in the worlds of Latvian business and culture, but are not overtly associated with any political party.

The foundation's main goal is to work in a systematised fashion in order to develop a maximally large and effective circle of both corporate sponsorship and patronage for the Latvian National Opera. The LNOF seeks to ensure that the Latvia National Opera has sufficient means in order to maintain high artistic standards, and that in the Latvian National Opera's budget, the percentage of private funding in relation to state funding steadily grows. No less importantly, the LNOF seeks to foster the tradition of philanthropy in Latvia along with a sense of personal responsibility for the status of the social and cultural landscape of the country.

Having become operational at the beginning of the 1997/1998 season, the LNOF can, as of 1 November 1997, point to the following two main successes:

1) The LNOF has established an office without the outlay of any resources of its own, but by soliciting contributions "in kind" from leading companies in Latvia. As of 1 November 1997, the LNOF has secured for its operational needs contributions "in-kind" to the total value of: Ls 48,500

2) In September 1997, the LNOF launched its "Friends of the Latvian National Opera" programme, which seeks not only to solicit contributions from individuals, but also to involve supporters directly in the life of the Latvian National Opera.

These foundations, which have considerable importance as grant-making institutions, are either public or based solely on foreign funds, like the Soros Foundation - Latvia. Owing to their importance in financing culture, we give detailed descriptions in Chapter 4, devoted to that subject.

3.2. National cultural identity and multiculturalism

Dubravka Ugresi: "a culture which focuses only on its own national identity (...) will inevitably end up in a state of isolation of its own making, and which will turn into autism".

3.2.1. The national minorities in Latvia

Latvia has always been a multi-national society. Along with the Latvians, it was inhabited by the Livs, a Finno-Ugric nation, Germans, Jews, Poles, Belarussians, and Russians. At present Latvia is also a multi-national country, with a clear domination of two nationalities: Latvians, constituting 56.49% of the population, and Russians, amounting to about 30.38% of the population, but the majority in all the major cities.

According to the data supplied by the Latvian Ministry of Justice, in February 1996 the ethnic profile of Latvia was as follows:

	citizens	non-citizens	total	%
Latvians	1 389 308	17 705	1 407 013	56,49
Russians	288 217	468 501	756 718	30,38
Belorussians	20 765	86 054	106 819	4,29
Ukrainians	4 365	65 047	69 412	2,79
Poles	38 953	24 490	63 443	2,55
Lithuanians	8 390	27 075	35 465	1,42
Jews	6 562	7 990	14 552	0,58
Gipsies	7 014	771	7 785	0,31
Germans	977	2 676	3 653	0,15
Estonians	1 341	1 604	2 945	0,12
Livs	195	4	199	0,01
Others	3 249	19 349	22 598	1,22
Total	1 769 336	712 266	2 490 602	100

The cultural autonomy of ethnic minorities in Latvia is guaranteed by two laws: "Man and his civic rights and duties" (1991) and "On a free development and rights to cultural economy of Latvian national and ethnic groups". According to the above legislation, "(...) The State guarantees free development of culture for all national and ethnic groups residing in Latvia and promotes integration of aliens in Latvian culture if they so freely choose. (...)"

Latvian national minorities therefore have the right to a free development of their culture and, if they choose so, to integration with the Latvian culture. One of the ways of preserving their own culture is the establishment of cultural associations. These associations are supported from a variety of sources: the countries of origin, the Ministry of Justice's budget or local budgets. The examiners had the possibility of visiting some of them, and talking to their representatives at the Latvian Cultural Centre in Daugavpils. Co-operation between the associations, joint events, etc. impressed them in a very positive way. Such joint work is a key to development of the multicultural society concept.

3.2.2. The Russian population

However, the above picture does not fully convey any sense of the national minorities' problem in Latvia. The situation of the present minorities in the Soviet period was quite diverse. In Soviet Latvia, the Poles, Lithuanians and Belorussians did not have such a privileged position as the Russians. That is one of the reasons why the situation of the Russian population is now different from that of the other minorities. Indeed: the Russians constitute a third of the total population now, and they are the group which up to 1992 held the reins of power. This is certainly a situation full of conflict: in Russians it inspires feelings of betrayal and bitterness connected with loss of their former position, whereas in Latvians - maybe a desire for revenge, and fear of a repeated domination of Russians. The heart of the matter is expressed in very well-chosen words in the two opinions presented below.

Viesturs Karnups, the Latvian-Australian former head of the newly created and recruited Citizenship and Naturalisation Department: "Latvians have nowhere else to go. There is no other Latvia. If this Latvia is not truly Latvia, then the Latvian culture, tradition and language will disappear from the face of the earth. So the Latvians want to see a Latvian Latvia. They would wish a multicultural Latvia only in the sense of a multicultural Australia, in which other cultures and languages are free to develop to a limited extent, but state support for them is seen as a privilege, not a right".

Imants Ziedonis: "Today new demographic forces have swiftly and freely moved into this rarefied space. For the most part, these are Russophile forces that lay claim, by means of various forms of demagoguery, to nothing less than political rights. These forces use the European emphasis on human rights as a shield, so as to keep open the option of dictating - perhaps in the not too distant future - the political tone in Latvia, with the hope of transforming that country into a Russian satellite. All this should be kept in mind when we talk about Latvian cultural identity. Culture, understood as a quality of national self-confidence, can be secure only in politically guaranteed space"

Do Latvians really feel that the reconstruction of their identity is threatened by the Russian element of society? Our interlocutors mentioned the good financial status of the Russian community. They told us that when the Latvians want to organise a festival, they go for a loan to a Russian bank. Is that an exception, or the rule?

Are Russians subject to discrimination, and is their participation in the country's cultural life limited in any way? The representatives of the Ministry of Culture do not have any such fears now. To give some examples, they say that the libraries, museums and the opera are for everybody; cultural project applications are treated in exactly the same way as Latvian ones, the state supports Riga Russian Drama theatre, the theatre in Daugavpils with a Russian company of actors; in Riga there are more Russian schools

than Latvian ones. But, on the other hand, in 1997 out of 108 applications submitted for cultural projects to the Ministry of Culture's grants programme, there were only four Russian applications of which just two were successful.

Recently, the Russian community has shown signs of becoming more active. One effect of grass-roots initiative is the establishment of an association named "Nationally-cultural autonomy of Russian minorities", whose aim is to look after the cultural and educational rights of the Russian population. Is this an example of a growing popularity of the civil society idea among the Russians living in Latvia, or an act of desperation arising out of insufficient attention being paid to Russians in the cultural policy of the Latvian authorities? This is yet another difficult question from the series of questions posed in this part of the report. Finding an answer to it is far from easy but we think it should be asked. The problem of cultural rights of the Russian population exists and this fact has to be faced.

We are concerned that the 'problem' of the Russian population might surface in the future. Indeed, only the future can show whether freedom and equality of cultural rights declared in the government documents will bring positive results. For example, who can predict whether assimilation of Russians, which, perhaps unfortunately, seems to be desired at any price, will not lead to a crisis? But perhaps the scenario will be quite different, and Latvia will decide to create equal conditions for development of two nationalities living side by side.

3.2.3. Importance of the Latvian language for the national identity¹

The homeland in the ideological sense is first of all the country, but also a synthesis of the principal values of national culture. In the Latvian culture, as in many others, it is the language which is of particular importance as principal or inherent value to the country. This is not strange - for a country, for many years deprived of sovereignty and forcefully Russified, the question of a general use of the native language is a fundamental issue in regaining national identity. Of course, alongside the pure language issue, there are other important problems. Consider, for example, the necessity of introducing new school books, correcting the generation of lies and biased pseudo-information. But in order to talk in Latvia about Latvian history or culture, the inhabitants of Latvia should use their own language.

The results of the monthly studies, *Language*, of February/March 1997 (produced by the Market and Social Research Group Baltic Data House) indicates that the native language of Latvians and Russians living in Latvia corresponds to their ethnic origins.

In the case of the remaining nationalities the situation is different, since over half of them consider Russian as their native language, and only 34% now consider their own languages as native. Outside the home, Latvians, as well as Russians, usually use their own language. However, Russians use Latvian at work, in the street and in the shops more often than Latvians use Russian. But Latvians are noticeably more fluent in Russian than Russians are in Latvian. Among those whose native language is not Latvian, about two thirds do not speak it at all or only very little. There is a noticeable trend that the younger the inhabitants, the better their knowledge of Latvian. However, language courses giving opportunities to perfect knowledge of the language are indispensable. They take the form of first of all language classes, instruction by private teachers' and self-instruction materials (books, TV programmes). The main motives for learning Latvian are: daily life necessities, the need to know the state language, and career considerations. These serious motives incur expenses. Latvians may pay up to 10 lats a month for

¹ All readers of our report are warmly encouraged to read the text of Imants Ziedonis' essay entitled "The Identity of Latvian National Culture. The Borders of Borderless Winds", which is included in the National Report.

language lessons (quite substantial sum in relation to average pay). However, for the largest group the most important thing is just learning Latvian (53% to 82%). Next, learning Russian (14% to 32%) and English (21% to 26%) is almost equally important.

Knowledge of Latvian is extremely important for those persons and their offspring, who did not possess Latvian citizenship before 1940 and would now like to obtain it. An important element of the qualification procedure is a language test consisting of an oral and a written examination. In the opinion of Latvians, the test is relatively easy, especially considering that perfect grammar is not required. In the opinion of other nationalities though, the Latvian language is difficult, and it is very hard to master it when using a different language at home. The examiners heard particularly critical remarks in the Russian dominated part of Latvia - Dauvgapils. The remarks concerned high fees for the language courses, and lack of foreign assistance to help out at this crucial time. In the view of those interviewed, the money "does not flow further than 100 kms from Riga".

The right to apply for citizenship is limited by criteria connected with age. For example, in 1996 only people aged 16-23 years could apply for Latvian citizenship. Starting from the year 2003, this right will be granted universally. The system is criticised, since it limits the possibilities of applying for citizenship in a situation where even amongst those eligible, only a small proportion submits an application for citizenship (in the first half of 1996, just over 10% of those entitled to apply). The inhabitants of Latvia do not apply for citizenship for different reasons; one of them being that the application fee is high, another that young men want to avoid military service. Inhabitants without citizenship have the status of residents, which does not entitle them to participation in general and local elections, land ownership or being appointed to posts in the civil service.

Recommendations:

- **The state and municipal authorities should be more responsive to local initiatives in the fields of arts and culture.**
- **Democratisation of public life and activation of society should be stimulated to a greater degree in order to create conditions for the development of civil society.**
- **Public support for the independent sector is vital for its development. The new trend in development of independent organisations in democratic countries is to base their functioning on a partnership with the state.**
- **More favourable legal regulations should be implemented by the state in order to facilitate development of the independent sector in Latvia.**
- **Tolerance and cultural co-operation is important with respect to all the national minorities, and particularly with respect to the Russian element of the population.**
- **In order to minimise tension and threats in the future, it will be important to monitor ways of safeguarding the cultural rights of, and access to resources by the Russian part of society.**

4. OLD AND NEW RULES FOR FUNDING CULTURE

4.1. Public funding of culture

A major problem in cultural support and development, in theory as well as in practice, is the scope and methods of funding it from the public purse. The latter method of funding concerns only those aspects of culture, where adjustment to the market mechanism is difficult or inadvisable in view of the goals of the cultural policy. Public funding, speaking in very general terms happens in two ways: directly or indirectly. Direct funding of culture (similar to other areas of public life) is satisfied by public authorities granting subsidies to cultural organisations. Funding of this type has an 'open' character and its volume is known. The total cost of these subsidies, as well as the criteria and principles applied, are the subject of annual political discussions in the parliament and in the local councils.

Indirect funding happens in various ways, primarily through fiscal measures, either providing encouragement for supporting culture from extra-budgetary sources, or cushioning against the brutal rules of the market with respect to the institutions, organisations and producers of culture, as well as artists (in the domestic and foreign markets). They may also create preferential conditions for development of creativity, or bring down the barriers limiting international exchange and free flow of concepts and ideas. In the case of indirect funding we have to do with the state resigning (partly or fully) from some payment obligations of cultural organisations or projects (or donors supporting the latter) with respect to the budget determined by general legal norms. The most important forms of indirect funding are clearly tax reductions and exemptions. The "cost" of indirect funding is not clearly reflected in the budget, and estimation of the resulting loss to the Treasury (or, from the point of view of beneficiaries - financial benefits) requires detailed research.

Modern countries usually operate a mixed economy in culture, which, along with direct subsidies involves various types of tax reductions and exemptions. In most European countries a system of incentives applied with respect to patrons and sponsors augments the public cultural policy, which is realised primarily on the basis of direct funding of cultural institutions and projects from public means.

4.1.1. Direct public funding: a slight decrease, decentralisation and domination of funding for the institution over non-institutional one

In addition to a noticeable positive change in the direct funding of culture during the 1980's leading to a gradual decentralisation of funding, we must also be sensitive to the potential disadvantages of the new trend. The basic dangers include:

1. a tendency to restrict - subtly but incrementally - budget expenditure;
2. petrification of the old principles for determining cultural financial needs and of the methods of distributing the resources allocated - exhibited first of all in the institutional funding of culture;
3. lack of transparency in the management and decision making processes of the existing system of public funding for culture. The atmosphere surrounding both obtaining and distributing public money for culture is rather opaque. Transparency in the distribution process is still more a 'postulate' for the future rather than reality.

In Latvia, the public resources allocated to culture come from two basic sources: the state budget and the budgets of municipalities. One of the key tasks of the Ministry of Culture is negotiating the amount of expenditure on culture from the state budget for the whole department of culture and art. The most important allocation decisions are taken in the Parliament (Saeima) and in the Ministry of Finance. The decisive vote belongs to the Ministry of Finance, which can reduce the amounts previously agreed in the course of any current financial year. This practice is damaging, as it considerably limits the possibility of responsible and realistic long-term planning and weakens the competence of the Ministry of Culture.

Municipalities decide independently how much money they want to spend on culture.

Statistics presented below in tables and boxes indicate the size and structure of culture funding in Latvia. However it is important to remember that, in Latvian calculation methods, municipal funding includes the regional expenditure (which in fact is transferred from the state), so the interpretation of data can be in a way misleading:

State and municipal funding for culture (fixed money value)

	State funding for culture		Municipal funding for culture	
	In Lats	Share in GDP %	In Lats	Share in central government funding for culture %
1991	615 755	0,43	368 265	59.81
1992	4 117 780	0,41	3 263 315	79.25
1993	9 181 905	0,63	5 906 278	64.33
1994	13 171 655	0,64	7 904 835	60.01
1995	14 045 000	0,60	12 026 838	85.63
1996	19 560 177	0,67	12 847 058	62.31
1997	14 987 868	plan	15 790 000	plan

Source: Ministry of Culture – own calculation

In 1996, the breakdown of public expenditure on culture was as follows:

1. State budget - 61,6%
2. Municipal budgets - 38,4%

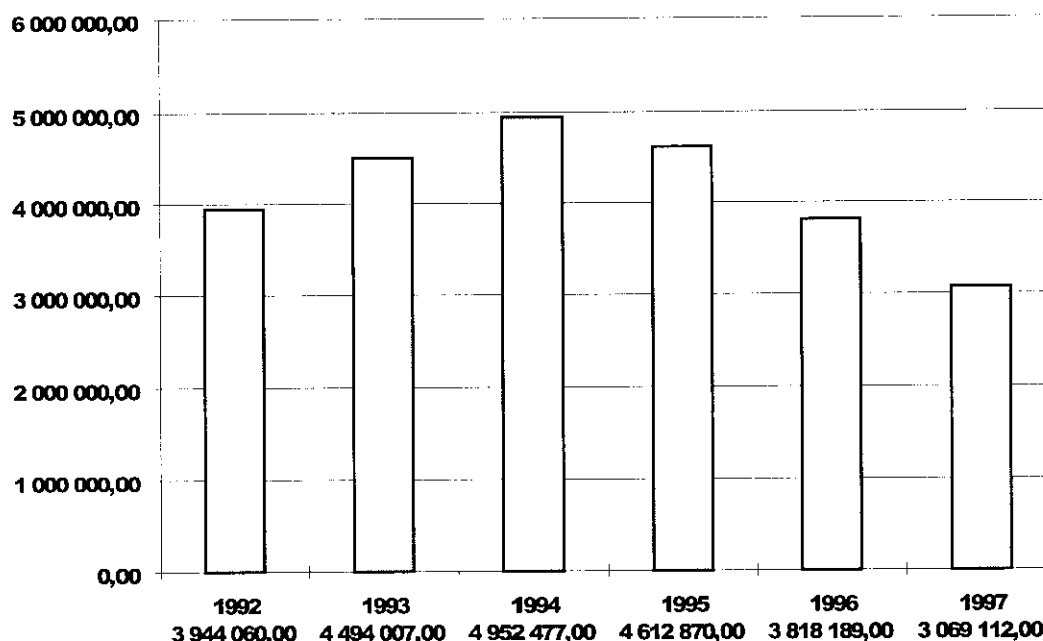
In comparison to the previous year, the share of expenditure from the municipal budgets in total public expenditure decreased but this was not the trend from previous years.

Analysis of the Ministry's budget for culture calculated at 1992 prices indicates growth of its real volume in the years 1992-1994, and then a gradual decrease from 1995 to 1997. The total Ministry budget 1992 prices was as follows (as a deflator we have used the indicator of goods and services prices):

The decrease in the real volume of the Ministry of Culture's budget in the years 1995-1996 influenced negatively first of all new investments, the funds for which decreased from 1097664 Lats in 1995 to 394831 Lats in 1996 r (i.e. from 23.8% to 10.3%). The main expenditures of the Ministry, i.e. expenditures on cultural activity and education, decreased in equal proportions over that period. However, the decrease in budget in the years 1996 - 1997 was reflected in the reduction of expenditure on education from 1483230 Lats to 8100005 Lats. Analysing the Ministry of Culture main spending on culture and education we find that the structure of expenditure in 1995 is slightly atypical, since usually expenditure on cultural institutions exceeds expenditure on cultural education. This was the case in 1994, when the share of expenditure on culture from the Ministry of Culture's budget amounted to 33.8%, and that of the expenses on cultural

Ministry of Culture budget 1992-1997 (in Lats; 1992 prices)

Source: Ministry of Culture - own calculation



education - to 30.7 %, or in 1996: 41.5% on culture, 38.8% on education. In the 1997 plans the share of the expenses on culture was set at 44%, and on education - at only 26.4%.¹

Main heads of expenditure on cultural activities from the Ministry's budget in the years 1996 and 1997 (in Lats) indicates that a majority of the expenditure is allocated to museums, theatres, and libraries. The above structure is as follows:

	1996	1997
Libraries	882 376	1 023 850
Museums	2 192 969	2 088 070
Leaders of folk art groups	174 041	-
Theatres	1 664 311	1 678 513
The Philharmonic	471 600	481 409
Other cultural institutions	386 170	389 740
Protection of cultural monuments	300 755	232 192
Topical cultural undertakings	386 090	395 704
Purchase of works of art,	26 995	27 556
Organisation of exhibitions		
Subsidies for artists unions,		
Cultural periodicals	134 179	86 971
Cultural education	1 483 230	810 005

Source: Ministry of Culture - own calculation.

The volume of the ministerial budget allocated to culture is determined on the basis of planned needs submitted by institutions. This is a method formerly employed in the post-communist countries, frequently criticised for its lack of transparency, imprecision and, let us say, "discretionary" character. There is invariably a tendency to exaggerate the needs since the amounts received are always smaller than those demanded. We find that neither the methods of calculating the costs nor the criteria and principles applied in allocating the grants are known and precise, which constitutes a typical example of deficient economic management and transparency.

¹ Reasons, connected with the change of financing principles are set up in the National Report, page 50.

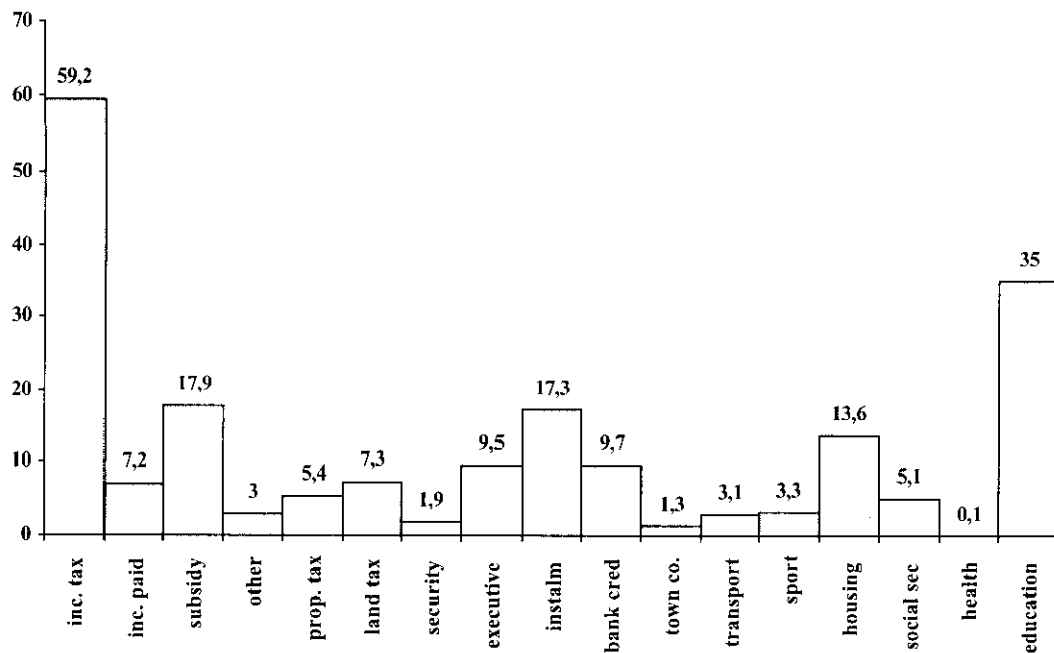
In 1996 only Ls 160900 from the Ministerial budget was distributed *on the cultural projects' competitive basis* - amounting to 4.2% of total budget. There were 68 successful project applications, the most numerous among them were: art (11), music (12), literature (10) and cinema (10). In 1997 the money spent on projects is greater - Ls 186736, and allows grant (fully or partially) to 108 cultural projects.

In municipalities the task of determining cultural needs is usually performed by the committees for culture appointed by regional and local authorities. The only earmarked funds are those passed over from the budget for remuneration. According to the data in the National Report, municipalities allocate to culture on average 7-13% of their budget. The differences between individual authorities are substantial: for example, in 1996 the Riga City Council allocated to culture 2.6% of its budget, the Skrunda City Council - 11%, the Jelgava City Council - 3.3%, and Cesis - 5%.

Riga is given below as an example:

The city of Riga's budget in 1997		
Total earnings	97 960 378 Ls	
Inhabitants' income tax	57 988 504 Ls	59.2%
Income from services paid	7022 698 Ls	7.2%
Remainder of means from the previous year	0 Ls	0.0%
Subsidy	17 564 872 Ls	17.9%
Other earnings	2 970 000 Ls	3.0%
Property tax	5 276 427 Ls	5.4%
Land tax	7 137 877 Ls	7.3%
Total expenses	97 960 378 Ls	
Security, social regulations	1 866 171 Ls	1.9%
Executive institutions	9 351 090 Ls	9.5%
Instalments of finances levelling fund	16 902 436 Ls	17.3%
Bank credits and interest payments	9 474 352 Ls	9.7%
Town council reserve fund	1 274 352 Ls	1.3%
Transport	3 034 500 Ls	3.1%
Sports and culture	3 253 179 Ls	3.3%
Housing facilities, public utilities and environment protection	13 354 791 Ls	13.6%
Social security	5 021 211 Ls	5.1%
Health service	132 813 Ls	0.1%
Education	34 295 805 Ls	35.0%

The City of Riga budget by sources of income in 1997



4.1.1.a. Funding of institutions

In our discussion of direct financing in Latvia, the majority of considerations concern 'institutional' funding. This is a consequence of the huge institutional infrastructure existing in Latvia, and also from the fact that the state still favours the principle of assigning subsidies to institutions rather than to individual cultural projects. Hence the volume of resources handed directly to institutions is large. The institutions financed by the Ministry enjoy various degrees of independence.

It is only artistic institutions - the theatres and orchestras - which have some freedom to allocate their budgets with any degree of discretion since their only specified items of expenditure are the salary votes. Other organisations subsidised by the Ministry are subject to strict budgetary regulations which prevent them from using funds in the way they might choose. We believe that greater flexibility in the use of funds will encourage and assist better strategic planning and productive application and management of the money. This is more likely than current common practice to lead to artistic and audience development. The subsidy should be seen as a means through which cultural organisations can address their social, economic and artistic objectives.

Public institutions still dominate the cultural institutions in general, and they do not fear competition from the private sector. In trying to improve their own financial situation, the cultural institutions take measures aimed at either reducing the costs of their activities or increasing their own income. It can even be connected with a change in the profile of the institution's activities. For example, one might impose or increase the charges for participation in activities organised by houses of culture, targeting those who can better afford it; the profile of those activities is also changed - if it follows current fashions on the market. The majority of the theatres have given up experimental and large cast performances, which has led to the lack of contemporary Latvian plays. Typical actions include also: leasing part of the institution's premises to shops, offices, cafes, galleries; letting them for different types of events and parties; letting advertising space on the buildings' walls; undertaking economic activity or creating foundations which conduct

such activity on behalf of the institution. The institutions create e.g. travel agencies, paid parking lots, commercial agencies and provide printing and copying services.

Public cultural institutions undertake actions such as those detailed above usually using the lacking any training with respect to modern management. It is only rarely that we had any contact with people having professional training in that area. Hence we believe that it is essential to provide training for cultural managers in Latvia.

A threat arising from the current situation of the cultural institutions is that as they try to adjust to operating under market conditions, their product becomes more and more commercial (we shall come back to this problem in Section 6), and in some cases we have even encountered the phenomenon of 'goals substitution', i.e. of economic goals dominating artistic ones.

4.1.2. Indirect public funding: indirect help still an inadequate means of compensating for the decrease in direct state patronage in non-profit spheres of culture

At present, of particular importance in state policy with respect to culture are the tax regulations contained in the legislation concerning the following taxes:

- Income tax on enterprises (the income tax is discounted by 90% for any sum donated to the Culture Foundation, the Latvian Olympic committee, or the Latvian Children's Fund; it is reduced by 85% for sums contributed to public culture, foundations, etc. The overall tax reduction must not exceed 20% of the total tax amount.)
- Taxes and duties on Auctions and Gambling Games (50 % of the budget earnings on the auctions and gambling is allocated to culture).

Taxes Connected with Culture

1. Individual income tax.

The income tax for inhabitants amounts to 25% of annual income. Calculation method: the income tax equals 25% of the sum obtained by deducting the employee's social tax (9% of earnings) from his annual earnings.

2. Social tax.

The employer pays 28% of the earnings of a socially insured person. The employee pays 9% of his earnings.

3. Value added tax.

The value added tax is not imposed on the following items: library services; tuition fees of private educational institutions accredited by state; theatre performances, cinemas, circuses, concerts, events organised by cultural institutions; performances organised by museums, and exhibitions intended for children, and charity; performances of amateur folk art groups; educational and scientific literature, first publishings of Latvian original literature and publications for children that are published in Latvia according to the lists approved by the Ministry of Education and Science, as well as services of the publishing houses necessary for publishing the above; mass media registered in Latvia; feature, documentary and animation films, as well as their production and distribution if it is performed by distributors officially registered in Latvia.

4. Income tax on enterprises

The income tax is discounted by 90% for any sum donated to the Culture Foundation, the Latvian Olympic committee, or the Latvian Children's Fund; it is discounted by 85% for sums contributed to public culture, education, science, religion, sports, charity, health and environmental protection organisations, foundations and institutions financed from the state's budget. The overall tax reduction must not exceed 20% of the overall tax amount.

5. Land tax

The land tax is set each year according to current land valuations.

6. Taxes and duties on Lotteries and Gambling ¹

The income from lotteries and gambling has a great impact on the funding of culture, as the Act on "Lottery and Gambling" provides for allocation of 50% of the earnings to cultural support, and 50% - to sport. Until now the Cabinet of Ministers' regulations have stated that assets allocated to this special budget should be used to support national cultural institutions - Latvian National Opera, Latvian National Library, Latvian National Symphonic Orchestra and others, as well as national cinematography, art education publishing costs, and preservation of cultural heritage. The Cabinet authorises a committee headed by the Minister of Culture and composed of independent people involved in culture and cultural education to decide on the distribution of the proceeds; the committee reports on the use of these funds. In practice, this income constitutes a reserve fund, which can be used for urgent renovation work and other unforeseen events.

In our interlocutors' estimation, existing tax law does not provide enough incentives for culture from private sources. In their opinion, it is unfair that support for certain specific institutions, for example the Culture Foundation, is favoured; the requirement of not exceeding the 20% tax base limit when applying for a reduction is also considered restrictive. Finally, the main issue evoking criticism is a procedural obstacle, in the form of an obligation to apply to be entered on the Ministry of Finance's list of donors entitled to tax reductions.

Our investigations have attempted to discover whether, and in what way, the introduction of indirect funding methods has influenced the scope of public assistance, and what its effects are on the development of culture in Latvia. The answer might be formulated as follows: indirect assistance is still insufficient compensation for the restrictions introduced in direct state patronage for non-profit areas of culture. In the first place, we believe this is connected with tax policy with respect to culture realised by the state. Whilst we did not agree with all of the reservations about the tax system which we heard, we would still emphasise the need to introduce general tax reductions for donations to culture.

Secondly, state tax policy is insufficiently supported by other non-fiscal possibilities. What we have in mind are, for example, solutions such as advocating patronage or creating favourable legal conditions for the development and operation of intermediary institutions (associations, foundations, etc.); determining and disseminating the goals and institutions worth supporting; rewarding the best companies which support culture; developing the method of funding through "projects", which motivates cultural institutions to look more actively for money from non-public sources.

Nevertheless, analysis of the changes in fiscal law which have taken place in Latvia over recent years and of government declarations, gives us grounds for concluding that the practice of indirect funding of culture is growing and will continue to do so in future. Specifically, we have in mind proposals gradually to exclude income on donations for public cultural institutions from the tax base of individuals, and to extend tax concessions for those investing in culture.

4.1.2.a. The Cultural Endowment

In the transitional countries of Eastern and Central Europe, methods of protecting culture in the high-risk period of economic change and building up a complementary source of funding are being developed on quite a wide scale. We have noted the

¹ After the Cultural Endowment started operating in accordance with the law this income is transferred to the Endowment.

allocation of part of the budget proceeds, for example from taxation on profitable sectors of the cultural industries, as well as on gambling, and part of the alcohol excise duty which goes directly to the funds and public foundations supporting cultural development (the so called earmarked taxes/fees). Examples of this type of solution can be found in Hungary, where the Hungarian National Culture Fund gets a fixed percentage of taxation on cultural industries, in Estonia, where 3% of the proceeds from alcohol and tobacco excise duty and 30% of taxation proceeds from gambling are allocated to the Estonian Culture Fund (Kultuurikapital). This is also the solution Latvia is adopting. The initiative "The Law on the Cultural Endowment (CCF)" developed by the Ministry of Culture has been accepted by the Parliament, and promulgated by the President on December 18, 1997. In this way a fund with initial capital for 1998 of 800.000 - 1.000.000 Lats. has been created. The sources include earmarked funds - proceeds from lotteries and gambling, and apportioned share of national budget revenues. Included in the fund's beneficiaries will be creative and research projects proposed by individual artists or groups of artists, as well as individuals and legally constituted organisations.

The Cultural Endowment - funding sources and method of management

The basic sources of the fund were originally intended to be mainly the proceeds from excise duty on tobacco and alcohol, special taxes on lotteries and gambling games, investments in the fund by Latvian as well as by foreign individuals and legal persons for cultural projects, and finally proceeds from business activity.

This model was not finally adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers since the Ministry of Finance objected to the "redistribution" of excise. According to the new approved model, the base capital is to be drawn from lotteries and gambling, as well as from an apportioned share of national budget revenues no less than two million Lats per year, agreed by the Cabinet.

The CCF is administered by a Council appointed by the Cabinet of Ministers. Members of the Council include the Minister of Culture, a representative of the Finance Ministry, a representative of the National Culture Council, a representative of the Artists' Associations Council, and representatives of all the CCF's division councils. The Minister of Culture acts as the State's plenipotentiary on the CCF. The director of the Foundation is appointed by the Council on the advice of the Minister of Culture. The Fund will decide on its allocations four times a year.

This Fund should make it possible:

- to distribute public funds primarily on cultural projects, rather than institutions;
- to access funds from a wider range of sources than with funding from the budget;
- to provide support for important aspects of culture at risk from scarcity of funds remaining at the disposal of the Minister of Culture;
- to involve peer group assessment in the distribution of funds for culture;
- to provide the Minister of Culture with adequate funds from taxation to make good serious shortfalls in the poorer regions of the country, and to save strategically important cultural institutions threatened with bankruptcy. We believe that this will be an important additional source.

4.2. Private funding

In modern democratic countries, in spite of well-developed public support and the dynamic market for culture, there is also a revival in private funding of culture. This is a by-product of limited State capacity as well as a consequence of the great possibilities for private sponsors created within the framework of new methods of private funding. Of particular importance here is the introduction of indirect methods of state support for culture, discussed in the previous section.

Private funding is to some extent an aspect of privatisation in the broad sense. Under that meaning, privatisation connotes the de-nationalisation of state-owned enterprises, the creation of new private companies, replacing state funding sources and state suppliers of public services with private ones and also expansion of non-state institutions (non-for-profit institutions). In the following section we concentrate on the latter: patronage and corporate sponsorship and expansion of the not-for-profit sector.

4.2.1. Patronage and corporate sponsorship

Private funding of culture may be undertaken individually or by companies (enterprises). In the case of individual support, we are concerned with *patronage* or the disinterested donation of money or contributions in-kind [Hofecker, 1993]. In turn, voluntary assistance by companies can take two forms. The first of these is *patronage*; its definition stresses the disinterested nature of the assistance. The second is *sponsorship*, by which we mean supplying money to an institution or group of artists in order to advertise either the company's name, or the goods or services it produces. The money devoted to sponsorship is usually classified as a company advertising expense. As the experience of most new democracies in Europe indicates, the concepts "patron" and "sponsor" are often - wrongly - used interchangeably.

In spite of a rapid growth of the share of expenditure borne by individual patrons and companies, their involvement in funding culture (by comparison with the total volume of public expenditure allocated to this purpose) is very modest. The average is a few percentage points - rarely higher than 5%, as in France or Germany, and 1% in Nordic countries. In new European democracies the phenomenon of private funding of culture is analogous to that in the developed European countries. For example, in Poland the value of financial support obtained from patrons and sponsors in the years 1995 - 1996 was fairly small - in the case of musical institutions the amounts obtained from non-public sources constituted a small percentage of their total income (4-6%), yet for festivals, sponsors were often the most important source of funding (e.g. 12% of income). The interest in spectacular events like festivals exhibited by sponsors is also attested by studies in other countries. Such events are also, of course, of great interest to the mass media, and the advertising opportunity they provide for the sponsor is much larger than anything on offer from the everyday, less spectacular activity of an institution.

The Examiners often encountered the opinion that there are not enough patrons or sponsors, because in the old democracies they come mainly from the middle class, which in Latvia is not yet sufficiently established. Another reason offered is the ineffectiveness of the tax enforcement mechanisms: "(...)the main problem is that poor executive control over the conditions of tax collection permits private entrepreneurs to conceal their profit. Under such conditions, private enterprise has little incentive to sponsor cultural activities." (excerpt from the National Report).

The most common examples of private assistance are those where the donors are more interested in prestige than in obtaining tax benefits. One instance of such a type of support was private assistance towards the reconstruction of the Latvian National Opera. Another example is the assistance of marine companies - the Latvian Shipping Company, Board of Riga Ports, Latvian Council of Ports, Ventspils Trade Port - given to the

reconstructed Danenstern House in Riga to create the Latvian Marine and Shipping Cultural Centre.

It is difficult to estimate the scale of the above phenomenon, since there is a lack of official information concerning the share of contributions from private sources in the income of cultural institutions. Levels of contribution vary considerably but usually they seem to be equal to, or fall below, the European average - a few percent of the total income of cultural institutions or projects.

4.2.2. Not-for-profit sector

Another crucial aspect of private funding is expansion of the not-for-profit sector. The not-for-profit principle requires some comment. This is because the above is far removed from the ethic of state institutions operating in the centrally planned economy period, bringing losses instead of profits, and having to be heavily subsidized in order to function at all. It was not only state institutions functioning in the public arena that were subsidized in former times, but also enterprises in traditionally profitable branches of economy, such as commerce, processing, industry, etc. When talking about the "not-for-profit" principle or about institutions operating on that principle, we do not imply any kind of ineffective economy. On the contrary, these organisations should operate in a way enabling them to achieve a financial surplus (after allowing for grants and any earned income)- but the 'profit' should not be distributed among their owners or shareholders. Instead, it should be devoted to statutory activity.

The not-for-profit principle is employed i.e. by:

- associations (i.e. artists' unions presented in section 3);
- providers (goods and services producing organisations, whose activity in post-communist countries is not yet widespread for reasons such as lack of tradition, or lack of legal regulations etc.); and
- foundations (described in this section as an example of non-public support for culture).

In fact, it is only in the case of foundations operating within Latvia - those supporting culture exclusively, or whose activities include such support - that we can estimate the financial dimension of private funding for culture. After taking account of the expenses of the private non-for-profit sector represented by three large foundations (the Latvian Culture Foundation, the Creative Work Foundation, and the Soros Foundation), the structure of total expenditure on culture in Latvia in 1995 was as follows:

1. State budget - 50%
2. Municipal budgets - 43%
3. Foundations - 7%

What lies behind this 7 per cent? Let us examine the activity of two of the best known and more important foundations in Latvia: the Latvian Culture Foundation and the Soros Foundation - Latvia. Though they are very different (the former was established during the period of decline in the totalitarian system, the latter belongs to the network of foundations established by the American millionaire of Hungarian origin, George Soros, in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe) yet they both support not institutions, but cultural programmes submitted to them in the form of projects. Their financial scope is different; for example, in 1996:

1. The Latvian Culture Foundation had a budget of 267 717 Lats, which corresponded to 1.4% of the Ministry's of Culture budget.
2. The Soros Foundation -Latvia had a budget of USD 4 507 448, or 2 479 095.8 Lats, which corresponded to 13.3% of the Ministry's of Culture budget.
3. In the Soros Foundation-Latvia, the budget allocated to domestic programmes

- amounted to USD 2 881 670, 17% of which - i.e. USD 481 431, or 264 787 Lats (using the exchange rate of 1 USD = 0.55 Lats) was allocated to culture. The above amount is equivalent to 1.4 % of the Ministry of Culture's budget.
4. In addition, the Soros Foundation budget allocated to regional programmes amounted to USD 948 265 of which only 4% - i.e. USD 39 192, or 21 555.6 Lats, was devoted to culture. This is equivalent to 0.1% of the Ministry of Culture's budget.

The volume of assistance provided by both foundations indicates that, next to the Ministry of Culture, the Soros Foundation is now the main actor on the Latvian cultural scene. This, of course, increases the importance of the criteria employed by the Foundation in adjudicating on projects submitted. We learned that the Soros foundation is mainly interested in financing projects submitted by individuals, particularly those not connected with cultural institutions, amongst which they specify the old artists' unions, whose function in the opinion of the Soros staff and board is now out of time, and whose activity should finally cease altogether. An example of the transparency of the Foundation's operation is the model annual report it publishes, presenting its programmes in detail, as well as information about all the projects approved for funding.

Latvian Culture Foundation

The Latvian Culture Foundation (LFC) was founded in 1987. It was the first non-government organisation (NGO) in Latvia, then still part of USSR. The aim of the foundation was and still is the same - to promote culture by channelling profits from state administered and private business to different cultural endeavours. At present the main source of income is private sponsorship. In accordance with the law all the donors and sponsors of LFC programs and projects enjoy substantial tax reduction benefits. All grants and scholarships are endowed as a result of an open tender procedure.

The basic policies of the Foundation are as follows:

- direct, individually targeted support to all cultural activities regardless of their locations;
- encouragement of regionalisation of the Latvian cultural scene;
- encouragement and implementation of alternative projects;
- participation in long-term nation-wide projects.

The programmes realised by LCF include: the programme for celebrating the 800th anniversary of Riga, organisation of conferences, exhibitions and concerts, support for choirs and dance groups, teaching and educational programmes, the Daugava programme, programme for the support of folk art and applied arts.

Soros Foundation - Latvia

The Soros Foundation-Latvia's programmes have five priority areas: Civil Society; Information Technologies, Libraries and Publishing; Arts and Culture; Education; Studies and Travel. Though below we present only the Arts and Culture programme in detail, it should be stressed that all these programmes are connected with supporting the development of culture in Latvia.

The SFL's Arts and Culture Programme

Throughout its existence, the Soros Foundation - Latvia has maintained a special relationship with independent and alternative thought in the field of the arts and culture. The effects of the SFL Arts and Culture Programme have sometimes been high profile, sometimes not; sometimes they have been praised, and at other times - criticised, but the Programme has always sought to expand the range of critically thinking individuals in

Latvia. It has played an important role in cultural life, not least because the government funding for culture has not increased much over the last years, and there is a severe paucity of alternative funding sources .

There are three priorities which are consistently observed in the operations the of Arts and Culture Programme: cultural education, innovation, and inter-sectoral projects. The Programme respects a vertical understanding of the various sectors of culture, thus choosing not to set music, theatre, cinema, etc., apart from the overall concept of arts and culture.

The top priority is cultural education. A video collection of the world's cinema and theatre, Videoakademija, has been established at the Latvian Academy of Culture. Graduates of the Academy's training programme for theatre and film directors are offered the chance to produce their graduate projects, visits by guest lecturers are financed, etc. Students of the Latvian Academy of Music have been supported in their efforts to establish an Internet database on Latvian music, and to participate in several international musical projects. The Latvian Academy of Art has been presented with pottery kilns, as well as computer equipment for its graphic design department.

In support of secondary education in the arts, the Programme has financed the establishment of a computer class at the J. Rozentals School of Art in Riga, and organisation of a summer course for young musicians. The Programme has also sponsored foreign travel of many individuals in pursuit of cultural education.

A new element in this integration process is the Performing Arts Information Centre established in 1996. The Centre offers expert consultations to anyone who wants to develop a project in the performing arts. It also produces Internet home pages on Latvian theatres and the Latvian National Opera. In collaboration with the Soros Centre for Contemporary Arts - Riga, the performing arts staff have also created an electronic art magazine.

As has been the case in previous years, the Programme has maintained close links to the Soros Centre for Contemporary Arts. Several elements of the Centre's annual exhibition (this year entitled GEO-GEO) were supported, and a grant was given to an effort to locate and maintain visual art created prior to 1945.

Recommendations:

Creating a modern funding climate appropriate to the cultural sector will inevitably rely upon changes in traditional practice and some specific steps being taken. We propose the following initial list :

- Introduction of the principle of mixed funding of cultural undertakings from public and private sources.
- End the practice whereby the Ministry of Finance can interfere with the agreed funding process in the course of the current financial year .
- Determine precise, clear principles and criteria for the distribution of public funds for cultural activities matching the cultural policy adopted.
- Introduce greater flexibility in the use of funds by cultural institutions, which will encourage and assist better strategic planning and productive application and management of the money. This underlines the need for completion of methodological work on developing the concept of strategic planning based on cost calculating procedures to be introduced in cultural institutions.
- Extend the system of tax reductions connected with donations for cultural purposes.
- Grant tax exemptions and reductions to non-profit organisations.
- Develop a system of incentives of a non-fiscal nature, for example:

- a system of joint funding by the state and private sponsors of selected cultural projects (matching grants), in which obtaining a state subsidy is conditional upon efforts to identify additional funding sources;
- promote the development of 'nonprofits' acting as intermediaries between sponsors and art;
- a system of recognising and rewarding patrons and sponsors.

SECOND PART

SECTORAL
AND SPECIFIC DILEMMAS
AND OPPORTUNITIES

5. CULTURAL HERITAGE FOR THE FUTURE

The rough outline of the current cultural policy situation in Latvia with regard to cultural heritage is as follows: the basic principles of policy have been developed, the corresponding administration and accompanying services have been created but, due to enormous demands and scarce funds, the state's performance in this area is disappointing. Though most of the problems defined in the National Report arise out of the low levels of prosperity of both the country and its inhabitants, we have also identified organisational and legislative problems.

5.1. Historical monuments protection

Since 1989, the protection of historical monuments has been the responsibility of the State Inspection for Heritage Protection. The Inspection is comes within the Ministry of Culture, and consists of five departments: Administrative Department, Experts' Department, Archaeological Centre, Department of Architecture and Art, Department of Historical Environment, and Museum of Architecture, and Centre of Monument Documentation. At regional level, there are so-called regional inspectors for heritage protection, which in their areas fulfil functions similar to those of cultural inspectors. Historical monuments are catalogued and classified according to their historical, scientific, artistic and cultural importance. Depending on this classification, they can gain national or local status. Monuments can be owned by the state, by municipalities, or by private individuals. The owner of a historical monument is responsible for its condition, i.e. is obliged to cover the cost of its upkeep, restoration etc., which in turn makes him eligible for relevant tax reductions. However, owners are not always able to cover the costs connected with repairs and upkeep of historical properties. Moreover, due to still unresolved ownership issues it is not always even possible to determine the owner. This is a real problem, since there are at least 520 historical monuments in a critical state. In some urban areas as much as one third of all the old buildings require the immediate attention of specialists in the area of historical monument protection. The old part of Kuldiga is unfortunately only one of the numerous examples of the dramatic situation concerning Latvia's old buildings.

We believe it would be helpful to create a special government programme (based not necessarily on direct subsidies, but e.g. on advantageous bank credits) to assist restoration of endangered buildings. Within this programme, projects assigned the highest priority might include those with plans or programmes which use cultural heritage in an active and dynamic way. The Examiners were very impressed at the controlled and sensitive restoration and limited development taking place at Kuldiga, which was maintaining the unique character of the town without denying the needs of the present. Projects combining Latvia's national heritage with the performing arts could become a considerable tourist attraction. This type of imaginative initiative already exists in Latvia, for example at Cesis' Castle of the Livonian Order, where the organisers of the "Evening on Walter von Plettenberg's invitation" have combined a sightseeing visit to a medieval castle, a participatory performance and a meal into one tourist attraction.

5.2. Museums and archives

Latvia has 43 state museums (under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture as well as of other ministries), 58 municipal ones and 93 private ones (together with branches). A majority of these are archaeological and historical museums, including those connected with regional history. Cultural policy on museums is implemented by the Ministry of Culture, where it is the responsibility of a specialist.¹ In the provinces, the people responsible for museums are the cultural inspectors. Both state and municipal museums receive public money for their functioning from either the state or municipal budgets. Private museums are mainly supported through private funding. Private museums are however entitled to apply for the Ministry of Culture's support towards realising projects connected with the history of art and civilisation. All the museums have the right to earn their own income, e.g. from ticket sales. They are additionally supported from private sources, both in cash and in kind (by being donated collections etc.). In the last three years (1994-1996), the number of visitors to museums decreased in the case of state museums but increased slightly for those belonging to municipalities.

There is a plan to establish a National Museums Council, a civic, expert-advisory body and the State Museum Service, an institution whose activities would include protection against works of art being illegally taken out of the country, organisation of professional training for the people working in museums, establishment of information bases about museum stocks, etc. We suggest that the establishment and subsequent efficient operation of these bodies will be essential, since they are dedicated to alleviating the most severe problems of Latvian museums. Cultural policy in this sphere will improve in quality through becoming more responsive to the public, particularly when they have access to a properly organised inventory of artefacts, including those in private museums. There is an opportunity to improve the competence of professional museum staff, which is important when there is a commonly acknowledged problem over finding highly qualified staff due to the very low salaries of museum employees. However, it is difficult to say whether the problem of new acquisitions in museum collections - which is perhaps the most severe of all the problems of Latvian museums, especially now, when there is a rapid growth in antique shops selling works of art which might enrich museum collections, - will be solved without additional financial resources. Museums use different methods for acquiring new exhibits, for example through earning fees in return for renting their halls for exhibitions in the form of works of art exhibited there. But this is not enough. Over recent years, the number of new acquisitions has fallen dramatically in museums coming under ministries other than the Ministry of Culture, whilst in municipal museums it has grown only slightly. In 1997 funds earmarked for acquiring new works of art for the Association of Art Museums only enabled the museums to buy one or two works.

The policy on Latvian archives is the responsibility of the Latvian State Archives' General Management, which comes within the Ministry of Justice. The biggest problem in this area is that neither modern technology nor methods of conservation suitable for different types of archival materials (especially film in the wake of the Film Studios' privatisation) are applied at present.

¹ See footnote nr.2 in the corresponding chapter of the National Report.

5.3. Libraries

There is an extensive network of libraries in Latvia. The municipalities have about 2000 of them (including both specialist and public ones) in all. There are 969 of the public libraries alone. The status of state libraries is enjoyed by the National Library and the Library for the Blind, by three libraries coming under ministries other than the Ministry of Culture, and by 200 libraries operating in various state institutions. The libraries which have disappeared since 1989 were mainly those belonging to bankrupt enterprises, which contained a plethora of ideological material. Libraries are popular, and people's interest in them is increasing. They are used by at least one third of Latvia's population. An average reader visits the library three times a year, and reads ten books on average. There is one library per 1250 inhabitants of Latvia, and 26 library volumes per inhabitant. For Latvian libraries, 1996 was of special importance as the year of their computerisation.

The above undertaking was realised mainly using the means supplied by the government and by the American A.Mellon Foundation. Thanks to computerisation, the Latvian library system can now become linked to the rest of the world.

Public libraries in all countries play a wider role than other cultural institutions. Besides the offering of books, magazines, newspapers and sometimes records and videos they are often information centres including the use of Internet. We find that there is a need of development plans for the public libraries. For such a work the Public Library Manifesto decided by UNESCO in 1994 can function as a progressive point of departure, relevant for libraries in all parts of the world.

Of course the specific problems bedevilling Latvian libraries cannot be forgotten. The first and the most urgent one, is the lack of ability to buy new books. The meagre acquisition funds at the libraries' disposal allow them to spend on average only Ls 0.18 per person on buying new books and journals. The situation of the Riga libraries is better, since the above index equals Ls 0.8 per capita in the city, but in some towns - like Rezekne, for example - it is very low indeed, and amounts to only Ls 0.03. Library stocks are also plagued by thefts of new, expensive books, which diminishes the stocks even further. The importance of this problem can hardly be overestimated. It is the state's duty to see that basic cultural needs are satisfied, and these needs surely include availability of books provided by the library system. We believe that the problem of insufficient ability to purchase books for Latvian libraries demands an immediate solution, which requires addressing at the highest level. The second problem is the absence of a training centre for librarians that would enable them to raise their qualifications, require improvement. The last is certainly the lack of a suitable building for the National Library. In our talks with the librarians from the National Library and in the Ministry of Culture we were assured that, in addition to the awareness of the need to construct this complex, there also exists the will to achieve it, together with well-advanced plans for its construction.

Recommendations:

- **A special government programme (e.g. including the form of advantageous bank credits) should be created that would make it possible to restore endangered historical buildings;**
- **Cultural Heritage sites should be used where feasible in an active and dynamic way. For example, combining them with the performing arts could contribute to the development of profitable cultural tourism;**
- **Stress should be placed on the organisation of training, both managerial and vocational for the staff of museums and libraries;**
- **It is desirable to support (also financially) and organise sectoral programmes, i.e. ones whose framework includes development of museum/school/library co-operation;**

- Application of modern technology and conservation methods suitable for different types of archival materials is indispensable;
- The problem of insufficient funds for book purchases for Latvian libraries needs to be solved. If, due to financial limitations, the above problem cannot be solved through the Ministry of Culture alone, then it requires addressing at the highest level.

6. CREATIVITY

Compared with the cultural policy in the field of national heritage, policy in the area of creativity is much less well developed. In particular, little notice has been paid to the contemporary visual arts. Much more attention tends to have been given to areas such as music and theatre. We suggest there is a need for state policy in creativity to be more developed. In order to gauge the whole of the state's policy in the area of contemporary creativity, we consider in this section the actions undertaken by the state and the working environment of artists; protection of intellectual property rights, participation in cultural activities, and artistic education. In addition, we consider the important issue of amateur and professional practice.

6.1. Visual arts

State intervention in the area of the visual arts is limited to the financing some artists' projects and the organisation of various artistic events, such as exhibitions, symposia, open-air workshops and international co-operation handled by the Association of Art Museums. The institutions belonging to the Association (five museums and one exhibition hall) are financed partly from public means and partly from their own earnings. Results of the Association's work include the organisation of 121 exhibitions in 1995, and 90 exhibitions in 1996. This is rather limited. One could even say that, but for the activities of a committed - but financially weak - Artists' Union, visual artists would be left to their own devices in the face of the ruthless principles of the market economy. The Artists' Union is very active: it organises symposia, and establishes satellite institutions with a non-profit status. In its two galleries, it organised 45 exhibitions in the year 1995, and 77 in 1996. As a rule, artists do not have to pay for the opportunity to exhibit their work, but for example Riga Gallery takes some works from artists for organising their exhibitions. The resources at the Union's disposal come mainly from patrons, from renting offices in the building which belongs to them and - to some extent - from the public budget (mainly from the "funding for projects" vote). The remainder of visual arts activity, excluding both the Association of Art Museums and the Artists' Union, is undertaken purely on a private basis. Latvia has already achieved some successes in this field. At least ten galleries may be classified as both important and recognised, and the art market is slowly beginning to develop. The buyers are tourists, institutions - including the Ministry of Culture (though, it should be noted, only to a modest extent), and - more rarely - individual Latvians. As a rule, Latvians cannot afford to buy a contemporary painting or sculpture, since on average prices range from Ls 200 to Ls 600.

Absence of state help is felt especially strongly in the area of alternative art, where practising artists have little hope of making a living in the market place. Experimental art and other such projects have to count mainly on support coming from the Soros Foundation-Latvia, and the newly created National Endowment (Fund). In our judgement, if the Ministry of Culture is seriously interested in high quality and the development of non-commercial forms of visual arts, then its intervention in this area should be extended.

6.2. Theatre

Cultural policy in drama is the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture. At present there is no single person in the Ministry who is directly responsible for theatre issues and policy. The Latvian theatres are mainly repertory theatres with institutional status. There are eight of them in addition to the National Opera. The theatre in Liepaja is the only one

with municipal theatre status - a very recent development. This is the first theatre to have changed from being a state theatre as a result of the pilot on introducing territorial reform. In addition to the above theatres, there are also five independent theatres. Since only ad hoc funding is available, they must be regarded as 'project' theatres.

The state is responsible for: providing full financial assistance to the theatres of state-level (national) importance; providing partial (shared with municipalities) financial assistance for provincial theatres (like, Liepaja); providing support for children's and youth theatres; providing special subsidies for regional performances by theatre companies of national importance.

Public finance covers an average of 43% of the costs of all the Latvian public theatres, but in individual cases it can reach 60%. The criterion for determining the income level is based on the number of new productions, and the number in the audience. The rest of the money must be raised by other means: ticket sales, other economic activities, sponsorship, private donations, etc. The theatres, which enjoy considerable economic independence (only the salaries are limited), have to incur loans in order to survive. In 1996, the loans totalled Ls 548,634, or about a quarter of state subsidies. In 1997, the state liquidated a significant part of that loan. Although by comparison with 1996, the number of new productions has slightly increased, a continuing trend of decrease in the number of new plays staged is still to be observed. The audience decline, so very pronounced at the initial stage of changes, has been arrested. Attendance levels reflect both the theatre's artistic quality and the managerial skills of the team running the theatre. The best example here is the Latvian National Opera; after it was rebuilt and newly reopened in 1995, the following year saw an increase in the attendance level from 41% to 62%. The Latvian opera is now run in an increasingly efficient and modern way, and hosts many guest performers as well as world famous opera and ballet stars.

Latvian theatre is trying to come to terms with the new (social and financial) conditions for producing drama and is seriously questioning the traditional system of large repertory companies with numerous artistic staff and long-term contracts. This system was widespread not only in Central and Eastern European countries during the last decades, but could and can also be found in many other European countries (for example in Germany and the Nordic countries). For mainly economic reasons this type of organisation is now being challenged. In Latvia it is clear that the stress of financial constraint will demand a new organisational approach, also within the so-called state theatres. Artistically this may not be necessarily detrimental and might actually stimulate directors to be creative within available means. There is a risk, however, that the challenge of increasing income through attracting larger audiences, may lead to a concentration on more obviously commercial and risky productions. A tendency to stage fewer experimental plays and a decrease in new Latvian work which has been noted in Latvia over the last years, indicates that this risk is real and needs to be checked. At the same time, the problem of reorganising Latvian theatres is also a social and economic issue. If large numbers of actors and directors, who were used to fixed, albeit low salaries (the average salary in the theatres amounted to Ls 73 in 1995) are dismissed, there will need to be compensatory support (financial and otherwise) for the independent theatre sector.

The Ministry of Culture has already undertaken work focused on reforming the organisation and financing of Latvian cultural activities. According to the guidelines still under discussion, the reorganisation of theatre should consist first of all in preserving just 2-3 theatres with "state", or "national" status (a law on the so-called "national institutions" is now being prepared¹), whilst the remaining theatres acquire either municipal or regional status (i.e., financed from the municipal budgets). We believe, however, that it is important to ensure that the financial levels set are realistic, and that

¹ See footnote nr.1 p.142.

the real value is maintained. Financing independent theatrical activity will be facilitated by the establishment of National Endowment for Culture fund, aimed at financing cultural projects. We believe that improvement of theatre employees' managerial skills should be a priority, since such an undertaking, though requiring some additional financial outlay, will surely repay the costs in future. Working out a wider range of criteria for allocating subsidies than those currently applied is also desirable. Those now in force encourage commercialisation of theatrical productions and over-abundance of new productions.

In any case, in order to make it easier for theatres to improve their financial situation and to ameliorate the economic position of their personnel, the organisational structure of theatres should be reformed after the assessment of their opportunities for enhancing box office revenues and finding alternative sources of income. The need to alter the legal status of theatres (e.g. transferring the public ownership to a non-profit organisation or foundations) should be considered. At the same time, clearer division of financial responsibilities between the state and municipalities should be established.

6.3. Music

Our meetings with key personnel in the area of state music policy came at the time of a significant change. The state Latvian Philharmonic, which up to then had encompassed five artistic groups, and dealt with the organisation of musical activities in Latvia in a broad sense was subject to reorganisation. The Latvian Philharmonic's main task had been to organise concerts of Latvian domestic performers both at home and abroad, as well as of guest performances of foreign performers and musical festivals, like e.g. the international festival of organ music "Riga's Doms", the "Chamber Music Days" in September, etc. Over recent years, the Latvian Philharmonic has become less active. For instance, the number of concerts had fallen from 1875 in 1990 to 360 in 1996; in 1990, the audience numbered 532.5 thousand, whereas in 1996 only 69.4 thousand. The reasons for such a decrease in activity are of course mainly economic. Unfortunately, the negative effects cannot be ignored. Surveys show that many of Latvia's inhabitants, the young, have never been to a concert. In the last year, active participation in concerts of classical music and choral performances was running at 9%, and in jazz concerts -at 3% of the population.

The reform being implemented aims to give greater autonomy to the artistic groups that have up to now been a part of the Latvian Philharmonic. Of the five previous groups, only two, now with the status of non-profit state companies with limited liability, can count on having both their running costs and maintenance of their infrastructure covered from public resources. These are the National Symphony Orchestra and the State Academic Choir Latvia. One group - the dance ensemble Daile - has been dissolved, and the two others - the LF Chamber Orchestra and a piano trio - can apply for some assistance with their activities from Project funds. In addition, the Latvian Concert Agency has been established. Similarly, as other areas of the professional arts, the municipalities' support for professional musical activities is virtually non-existent. This issue raises real doubts, since at the moment it is difficult to decide whether the organisational changes which have been made are really likely to be effective or not.

The above problems are not the only ones in Latvian music. We have given attention to another three. Firstly, the Latvian music education system with its music school network all over the country is a valuable infrastructure for widening participation in musical life in all its sectors. As Latvia has only two professional orchestras and the number of concerts has dramatically diminished (and is concentrated in Riga) the opportunities for universal participation in musical life has reduced while the working possibilities for musicians have become more restricted. We noted that the Latvian Music

Academy is now exporting a lot of trained musicians to orchestras outside the country. Secondly, the restoration of concert activities at this stage of development may be seen as more important than the Philharmonic's concerts abroad. In 1996 out of a total of 360 concerts, 71 were given abroad, whereas in Latvia only 55 took place outside Riga. Thirdly, the implementation of the youth education programme in music (referred to in the National Report) is of the utmost importance for a positive development of musical life.

6.4. Amateur art

Amateur cultural activities are very popular in Latvia. Groups of people interested in practising music, dance, theatre, as well as arts and crafts, in an amateur way are catered for by cultural centres (the so-called "houses of culture"). The field of amateur art marked by special achievements are the Latvian choirs, constituting a special "trademark" of Latvian amateur culture. The tradition of singing together was used by the Latvians as a key means for expressing political protest. It is no accident that the crucial moment of political change in the late 'eighties and early 'nineties is known as the "singing revolution" period. Both domestic and regional Song Festivals, during which choirs demonstrate their skills to Latvians, taking immense pride in their national songs, enjoy outstanding popularity. On the other hand, festivals of folk music are often organised not only on the domestic, but also on an international scale; the most important of these is Baltica. Next to amateur choirs, the greatest popularity is enjoyed by pop bands, participation in which is constantly growing.

Amateur activity practised in the "cultural centres", the kind of activity encountered most often, is financed by municipalities. The state finances only the generally low salaries of folk art group leaders (266 people in 1995)¹ and the Emilis Melngailis Folk Art Centre, whose task is both organisational and intrinsic in the area of amateur art. However, we should also observe that the Centre itself is an extremely active institution, earning a good deal of its own income. Since 1990, due to financial restrictions the number of cultural centres has decreased by approximately one-third, totalling 588 in 1996. The state of the infrastructure causes concern; some of the buildings require major overhaul. Unfortunately, this is against a background of a large drop in participation in activities organised by the cultural centres - from 4.5% in 1990 to 2.3% in 1995. We find this worrying, especially when the majority of Latvian society is not well-off, and the possibility of self-realisation through amateur art is often the only possibility of contact with art in general. Hence it seems to us that to improve the situation of amateur art in Latvia, the Ministry of Culture should conduct a review of the conditions for practising amateur art (including the infrastructure) and determine priorities. The means might be found from different sources, not only from municipal budgets, but also from the state, from private donors - and perhaps also from international organisations active in the Baltic region.

6.4.1. Amateur versus professional: consequences of the existing division of competence

Analysis of professional and amateur arts funding and the division of competence between the various levels of authority in Latvia indicates that the centre concentrates on creating the conditions for professional art, whereas local authorities look after the amateur field. Of course, the above division is not absolutely clear-cut. As already noted, the Ministry of Culture supports the Folk Art Centre. However, professional artists are rarely invited to the meetings with cultural representatives organised in the provinces.

¹ Starting from year 1997 salaries are paid from municipal budget

During a meeting with representatives of artists in Riga we heard the view that the city is not interested in their activities and does not support them financially; there were even dramatic appeals from professional artists for financial support from local budgets. Such support would certainly help the artists feel more strongly identified with their region of residence and work. It would also give local authorities the grounds for expecting a greater loyalty from local professional artists than hitherto, when the only, or at least major, public patron has been the Ministry of Culture.

The working (even if not found) division of competence between the state-professional art, self-government bodies - amateur art has its drawbacks. In addition to what has already been mentioned there is a lack of competition and co-operation resulting from situating state and self-government cultural institutions next to each other. Competition can be a positive influence on the quality of what is presented, and stimulates greater financial effectiveness in the institutions involved. We heard how much Riga would benefit from having her own cultural institutions, for example a city Concert Hall, Municipal Gallery or Modern Art Museum, especially if the city is to be the cultural capital of Europe in the year 2001. We also learned about unsuccessful attempts of the Riga ballet festival organisers to obtain the city's support. Hoping for this, they even called the event "Riga Festival". Unfortunately, Riga did not grant any support to the festival bearing its name.

At the same time we learned from Riga City Council that they had tried to take over responsibility for selected institutions from the state, but this had proved to be impossible, most probably due to lack of appropriate system solutions. Perhaps the great accolade of choosing a Latvian city as the cultural capital of Europe could help in breaking the deadlock in negotiations between the Ministry of Culture and the authorities of Riga over the division of competence and responsibility for cultural activities.

In parallel with the division of competence between the state and self-government authorities the issue of determining where amateur art ends and the professional begins is also far from easy. However, if we accept that the coexistence of amateur and professional art is productive, then in those areas without state cultural institutions, it is possible that amateur art may lack new stimuli (food for the imagination) from professional contemporary expression and become trapped in only cultivating old art and culture. When looking at amateur art, which is practised with enormous enthusiasm in many regions of Latvia, we had the overall impression that it was not directed to the people interested in contemporary artistic expression, least of all young people. It is likely that one of the underlying reasons is the above arbitrary division of competence "the state - professional art, self-government - amateur art."

6.5. Artists' situation

In our "review" of the state of cultural policy in individual areas of both professional and amateur creativity in Latvia, we have often drawn attention to the low salaries of Latvian artists. The very low salaries for actors and musicians (usually at social minimum level) are the reason for protest, often taking the form of strikes. By way of example, during our stay in Latvia opera and ballet artists employed in the most prestigious Latvian theatre were on strike. The opera director was helpless - the salaries fund is limited in all the cultural institutions. Visual artists are doomed first of all to fight for survival in the market, over which they have virtually no control. But since the art market has only recently started to develop, their earnings are very unstable and rather low. People in other free-lance professions, such as composers, have to resort to getting employment as teachers. Salaries are low but guaranteed. We were informed that at present probably only three composers of serious music in Latvia are able to earn a living solely from composing.

The reasons for the poor financial situation of Latvian artists are many. We enumerate only a few. The first is surely connected with the general financial problems of a country in economic transformation, affecting the whole communal sphere. The second, characteristic of countries undergoing transformation, results from the poverty of the intelligentsia (middle class intellectuals). It is normally members of this social group who constitute the majority of recipients/clients for professional art. The third reason is bound up with imperfections in the existing legislation on intellectual property rights, and needs more detailed explanation.

These inadequacies are mainly the result of the inability to apply penalties for "pirates" breaking the regulations, which creates a black economy. In the area of music recording this is estimated at about 70% of the entire market, including widespread use of creative works without paying the respective fees (e.g. restaurants). Observance of the intellectual property rights in Latvia is protected by a private AKKA/LAA Agency. However, its actions cannot be really effective without state intervention to enforce not only penalties against piracy, but also to introduce appropriate universal solutions, for a example a licensing system for photographic producers.

The fourth problem is the limited financial capacity of unions and associations of artists and writers. In spite of a clause allowing partial financing of such organisations by the state in the law on associations, there are no examples of it being realised in practice. Hence the associations do not have the means to give artists any social security when the latter is not provided by the state. We have observed sporadic attempts of associations to undertake such activity, e.g. the Writers' Union provides health insurance for its members, and compensation for the family in case of a writer's death. Unfortunately, these are only isolated examples, because social protection for Latvian artists is virtually non-existent. Of course, the situation of Latvian artists is also influenced by the falling levels of public participation in cultural activities (this problem will be discussed in more detail in the next subsection). The less the audience's interest, the less are the artists' chances of making a living.

In conclusion, we would like to stress the need to carry out a comprehensive survey of the economic position and social security of Latvian artists in respect of taxation, copyright and neighbouring rights, unemployment benefit and pensions, training and re-training. In the course of this survey, special attention should be paid to what extent, and in which areas, the prevailing general systems of legislation and social security administration can and actually do safeguard the economic and social position of artists, and in which areas special legislation, special treatment and creation of new systems is needed.

Irrespective of this broader survey, the problems of maintaining existing intellectual property rights should be identified, and action intensified against piracy and those not paying their due fees to copyright and neighbouring rights organisations. Action should also be initiated against those misusing (e.g. morally) their legal rights.

The economic position and social status of artists should also be enhanced indirectly, that is, by public financial support to artists' professional associations, especially to the Artists' Union while there is no other system responsible for safeguarding artists social and pension rights. Support should be also be given to maintain facilities provided by these associations, targeted for special programmes and projects (exhibitions, exhibition spaces, international mobility and exchange etc.). In the long run it is the duty of the state to create a system of social protection for artists adjusted to the specific nature of artistic work (taxation, social and unemployment benefits).

6.6. Participation in cultural activities

Estimating the state of Latvian society's participation in culture, we find that it is not satisfactory from the viewpoint of the "interests" of Latvian culture. Only a small percentage of Latvians take part in cultural life outside the home, and that infrequently. The results of a survey on participation in culture conducted in 1996 are clear. The majority of Latvians had contact with culture by watching television (67.8%), reading novels (57.6%) and listening to the radio (51.5%) - all of these activities taking place in the home. Only 12.1% of the population had been to a concert, slightly more - 14.9% - to a museum, and about 30% - to either a concert or the theatre. The group of people uninterested in culture consists mainly of those with low education and prosperity levels.

Culture is an important and obvious means of rebuilding a common value system for the further development of civil society following the collapse of communism. Naturally, this has the added benefit that increased levels of participation and a broadening of the audience for cultural events and manifestations will also help to improve the economic situation of artists and artistic institutions. In a historical sense, habits of cultural consumption - particularly in urban areas - have gone hand in hand with the growth of the middle class, which is seen as so vital to the stability, prosperity and tax base of the new Latvia. It is equally important, however, that local opportunities are available all over the country. Co-operation and involvement at this level also helps build positive identity and local pride and self-respect, based on common actions and local cultural traditions.

In part, this is about provision of appropriate opportunities for active participation in cultural life, and about how they are marketed. Audience development and 'access' issues are of great significance here, not least to engage with young people if their cultural identity and environment is not to be distorted by some of the more meretricious attractions of the western mass-entertainment market. This is a big issue for Latvian museums, art galleries and performing arts institutions which must seek to ensure that they do not become increasingly associated in the mind (rightly or wrongly) with the past. Associated with the need to develop suitable marketing techniques is the whole question of cultural education, both in the schools and in the home environment. Habits of cultural consumption and participation are formed early in life.

6.7. Cultural education

Latvia has many specialist artistic schools, and their organisation appears good at first glance. These schools include 3 academies, 17 secondary schools and 136 elementary schools. Artistic schools come under the Ministry of Culture, and their links with the Ministry of Education are only partially regulated. Education at the elementary level is financed by municipalities, with the salaries being provided by the state.¹ Secondary artistic schools and artistic academies are financed by the state. In practice, the existing system of vocational education in the arts has its problems. The geographical distribution of schools (excepting music) is uneven, having its historical roots in the past. There is also a lack of highly qualified trainers. In spite of these problems, cultural education in Latvia attains high levels, demonstrated by the numerous prizes won by graduates in a range of international competitions and festivals.

At present, in view of severe financial deficiencies in the area of cultural education the authorities are considering the possibility of introducing a new law regulating the organisation and division of competences. In our view, whilst this type of decision should certainly rest with the Latvian government, it would be better to develop an inter-sector programme concerning cultural education that might help to solve the immediate financial problems in Latvian cultural education.

¹ Starting from year 1997 salaries for teaching staff in the schools of general education are being provided from municipalities' budget.

Recommendations:

- Conducting a reform of theatrical activities based on a clear division of responsibility (especially in relation to finance) between the state and municipalities. During work on the Parliamentary act on national cultural institutions, it would be advisable to consider a preferred option of extending its scope to an act regulating all types of cultural organisation (state, municipal, and private non-profit)¹;
- It is desirable to consider transforming some public theatres into theatres operating as non-profit institutions or foundations;
- Financial support for training and professional development should serve as investment in future cultural policy concerning the performing arts;
- It is desirable to elaborate a wider range of criteria for allocating subsidies for artists and cultural organisations than those which have been applied up to now;
- The restoration of domestic concert activity at this stage of development may be more important than foreign engagements by the Philharmonic.
- The implementation of a youth education programme in music is of the utmost importance for positive development of musical life.
- The Ministry of Culture should conduct a review of the current conditions for practising amateur art in Latvia (including the infrastructure) and determine priorities. The means for achieving these should be met from various sources, not only from municipal budgets, but also from the state and private donors (perhaps also from international organisations of the Baltic region);
- There is a need to carry out a comprehensive survey of the economic position and social security of Latvian artists in respect of taxation, copyright and neighbouring rights, unemployment benefit and pensions, training and re-training.
- The economic position and social status of artists should also be enhanced indirectly, that is, by public financial support to artists' professional associations, especially to the Artists' Union while there is no other system responsible for safeguarding artists' social and pension rights during the current transitional period.
- It is a responsibility of the state to develop a system of social protection for artists sensitive to the particular conditions of the sector;
- State intervention in the area of intellectual property rights would be welcome, both concerning introduction of a system of penalties for those breaking regulations by evading payment for use of the artists' and authors' works and to eliminate the occurrence of fraud in the future (producers' licensing);
- In order to stimulate participation in culture, it is desirable to:
 1. stimulate the activity of local communities and the development process of civil society, as well as encouraging local communities to co-operate;
 2. improve the operation of the education system in culture and try to rebuild family home education;
 3. ensure that young people are actively involved in the cultural environment;
- It would be desirable to develop a cross-sector programme for cultural education development.

¹ This recommendation is implemented already by adopting the law on Cultural institutions (October 15, 1998).

7. CULTURAL INDUSTRIES AND MEDIA

At present the *creative industries* provide the basics of the general supply of cultural goods and services, and exert a decisive influence on the shaping of society's taste, aesthetics of the surroundings, and behaviour patterns exhibited in contemporary lifestyles. According to studies conducted in Europe, the majority of both the expenditure on culture and the time devoted to the consumption of industrially produced goods and services. In Latvia, as in the other two Baltic countries - and in most post-communist states for that matter - the importance of the creative industries for cultural policies is not always fully understood. One obvious reason for this is the unstable economic, technological and political conditions in some of the cultural industry sectors.

The panel of examiners did not have many opportunities to discuss the problems of the cultural industries in detail with officials at the Ministry of Culture or other ministries nor with company director. In making the following observations and recommendations, we have mainly to rely the national report and on some international sources (like the Statistical Yearbook of the European Audio-visual Observatory).

Still, we have the feeling that after the initial period of fascination with ideas of freedom of expression, the Latvian people and the responsible decision-makers have now realised that public intervention in the area of the creative industries is crucial and is justified for non-political and non-economic reasons. The fundamental one is striving to protect domestic creativity, as well as the artists and authors, whose contact with the recipients is at present realised first of all through industrially produced goods and services. The costs of manufacturing a single unit of a product that cannot possibly hope to attract the interest to general public and the producer's risk involved are extremely high. Hence contemporary countries support production and distribution of industrial products recognised as important for national culture. The basic instruments employed in achieving this goal are budget subsidies, as well as government orders and warranties. The second extremely important reason for intervention is striving to restrict the negative influence of the price barrier on an average customer's access to culture. In this case, the basic intervention tool is a system of exemptions employed in the area of consumption taxes, especially with respect to VAT.

How are these instruments used in the area of cultural industries in Latvia?

Book publishing

Since 1991, book publishing has been free of censorship. Starting from that time, titles have been published in Latvia without any restriction. The only compelling constraint has been the limited public support for publishing books. State publishing houses have started to undergo privatisation. New initiatives have also emerged: in 1992 there were 100 new private publishing companies, in 1994 - 361, and in 1996 - 382 of them. At first there was a predictably unstable and fluid situation: the old companies went bankrupt, new ones operated for a short time and then disappeared. The sign of the new times is the existence of only one state publishing house Zinatne, which publishes research and reference books, etc. All the other publishing companies are private. Over the last five years, they have gradually increased the number of titles published, but at the same time decreased the print runs. This has been necessitated by adjustment to a more and more capricious market. The majority of books appearing on the market are published in Latvian. While in 1980 60% of books were published in Russian, the proportions have now been reversed to such an extent that in practice the Russian part of Latvia's population has to look to production in Russia rather than Latvia. A non-governmental organisation - the Association of Latvian Publishers - looks after the interests of Latvian publishers. However, only 43 out of the 382 registered publishing companies belong to the Association. This may be a symptom of a number of the registered publishing houses treating book production as a less important side activity.

Summarising, liberalisation did diversify the supply in *the press and in book publishing*, but economic realities, the lack of capital and managerial skills, limited audiences and declining purchasing power, soon forced many new entrepreneurs out of business and paved the way for concentration and inroads by foreign companies.

In the National Report, the state's expectations in relation to books are set out in some detail. Let us quote two, probably the most important of them:

1. Conducting a survey making it possible to identify the national as well as international cultural canon, and securing state financial help for publishing books belonging to this canon;
2. Exemption from the 18% VAT tax on books.

Cinema

After Latvia regained its independence, a National Film Centre was established. It was responsible for drafting legislation aimed at protecting the audio-visual heritage, promoting Latvian films through festivals, fairs and exchange programmes etc. However, the society's efforts were unable to deliver the desired results, since Latvian cinema, in common with the film industries of other European countries in transition, was in a state of collapse. State support was so much restricted that for two years no feature films were produced. The prevailing films on Latvian screens were American (about 60% of all the titles). The rest consisted of French, British, Scandinavian, Russian, etc., and old Latvian productions. At present it seems that some signs of normalisation can be observed: the film budget from public funds has doubled, and the process of privatising the Riga Motion Pictures Studio is nearing completion. The film makers place most faith in foreign co-operation, but with distant countries rather than necessarily with neighbours. We believe that the present situation requires development of a rationale for national film funding, as well as for some active involvement of the state.

Recordings

State intervention is virtually absent from the phonographic market. The music industry is developing according to the general principles regulating economic life, and it is developing dynamically. The market rose by 13% in real terms, to reach \$13 million in 1996. The statistics show a doubling of CD sales to 200 00 units, and a 30% increase in the sales of Mcs. This state of affairs is considered ideal by one part of the music scene but criticised by another. Producers of classical music recording in particular stress the need to have the possibility of applying for public financial support. But not only them. The great problem of the Latvian recording industry is the existence of enormously widespread "piracy", totalling 70% of the market's value. Both producers and artists demanding that the state makes the existing legislation on intellectual property rights more effective and introduces a system of licensing producers.

Periodicals

After 1991, the history of cultural periodicals in Latvia may be characterised as a history of bankruptcies. The old periodicals, without any regular state support, have folded one after another over recent years. Newly established titles often survive only a short time. The price of freedom of speech price has proved extremely high. It is only latterly that some economic stability has come to this market. At present, there are 7 newspapers and cultural magazines published in the Latvian language, and one monthly published in Russian. Most of the existing titles receive some financial support from the Ministry of Culture (Ls 63,234 in 1997).

Television and radio

Not only cultural, but also political concerns, have influenced the re-organisation and public promotion, control and direction of media sectors. New media and new channels of communication - which also disseminate the arts and culture - like *video, cable and satellite broadcasting, text-TV and the Internet* have gradually penetrated the country in the wake of liberalisation.

In television broadcasting there are three national terrestrial channels (one covering the whole country, two for the Riga area), foreign TV broadcasts (especially Russian ones for the large Russian minority are beamed to the country for commercial purposes), and similarly satellite and cable TV have penetrated the markets and increased competition. Latvian public television broadcasts on two channels. The first, general one, is broadcast 66 hours per week solely in Latvian. The second, directed at a more varied audience, is broadcast not only in Latvian, but also in Russian, English, French, Polish and Ukrainian for 49 hours per week. The public TV channel is much more diversified than the commercial programmes (28 channels), mostly entertainment oriented. The Latvian radio structure mirrors that of TV.

Public funds are given exclusively to the public TV channels, constituting about 60% of their total earnings. The remaining revenue comes from advertising, sponsors and television's own earnings. There is no form of a special levy on the population in the form of an obligatory TV licence fee, common in other European countries, and supplying over 33% of total TV earnings e.g. in Poland. Such a form of financing, similarly to budget subsidies, gives public TV a privileged position in relation to the commercial channels. We believe that, given the restricted budget situation in culture, it would be well worth considering the introduction of a TV licence fee, as is common elsewhere. The resources "freed" could be shifted to the most endangered areas of culture - such as new acquisitions for libraries or museums, or the moribund film industry

Recommendations:

- **We suggest that there may be a useful and necessary involvement of national cultural policy in the following creative industry sector:**

Books and Publishing:

- **Conducting a study to identify both a national and international canon, and then granting state financial support to publish works listed in it;**
- **To extend VAT exemption to books.**

Cinema:

- **In the present extreme situation there is a need to work out the principles of film finance and of the state's contributory role.**

Recording:

- **It is essential to tackle phonographic piracy. The state has a duty to make the existing legislation on protection of intellectual property rights more effective, and to introduce a system of producers' licensing, etc.**

Radio and TV:

- **Given budget constraints, not least in culture it would be well worth considering the introduction of a TV licence fee, so that the resources "freed" in this way can be transferred to the most endangered areas of culture, such as new acquisitions for libraries or museums, or the moribund national film industry.**

8. CULTURAL EXCHANGE AND MOBILITY

The National Report discussed Latvia's international cultural relations in detail. Hence we focus only on the most important problems connected with the cultural "opening to the world" following the communist collapse. Along with the changed conditions in all areas of Latvian life, the horizons of Latvia's presence in Europe have also undergone a deep transformation. After 1991, the old principle of central control over the circulation of cultural goods beyond Eastern bloc frontiers, lost all validity. A new factor that has changed the prospects for national culture's presence abroad is the growing importance of regions, especially including the frontier "Euroregions".

At present, the main thrust of Latvia's cultural co-operation rests on two pillars: joining the European institutions, and co-operation with the countries of the Baltic region. We welcome the scenario for cultural development which assumes that over the next generation the participation of Latvia in both global and European processes of changes in the cultural life of society will deepen. This will change the situation of culture with respect to that of the first period of changes following 1991, when it was first largely dominated by economic and political transformation. In the new situation, it will be vital to determine that the development of culture on the one hand helps defend Latvian cultural identity, and on the other stimulates changes helpful in adjusting to participation within European structures. This will be no easy task for a small country with a small market.

In our view, it is extremely important for Latvia to make maximum use of the possibilities offered by the so-called "Baltic potential". Already there are excellent examples of co-operation between the Baltic countries, culture included. The Council of Baltic Sea States was established in 1992, and since then it has achieved remarkable results. The establishment of *Ars Baltica* - a platform for cultural co-operation of individual artists and cultural institutions from the Baltic countries - began even earlier. For Latvia, the Baltic Sea region provides a microcosm of the globalisation process which is rapidly accelerating.

For Latvia to participate actively in international co-operation, some barriers preventing progress need to be removed. Some of those barriers are pretty fundamental, arising out of the country's poor economic situation. There is a lack of support for artists' foreign travel, as well as for their participation in prestigious international festivals and international competitions. We can only hope that, along with the improvement in the general economic situation of the country, the financial prospects for international cultural co-operation will also improve. However, some of the obstructions have organisational roots, and they should be removed as soon as possible. For example, customs regulations are applied in an inappropriate way to cultural exchanges treating all exhibitions of Latvian art abroad in exactly the same way as they treat the export of works of art for commercial purposes. This does not facilitate international cultural exchange.

Recommendations:

- We recommend that the development of policy changes in culture on the one hand helps defend Latvian cultural identity, and on the other hand stimulates changes helpful in adjusting to participation within European institutions. Developing international co-operation can achieve worthwhile results for Latvia by making maximum use of the Baltic potential;
- It is important to create suitable conditions for encouraging foreign cultural exchange, especially including a revision in the current controversial customs regulations.

9. NEW WAYS OF WORKING

Among the many new ways of working in culture we can enumerate: the extensive use of new technologies, responsiveness to grass-roots initiatives, a tendency to network and a growing demand for training cultural administrators and managers. Because the term *training of cultural administrators and arts managers* - is mentioned many times in the National Report, repeated by our Latvian interlocutors, and also by ourselves, when trying to express our views about the problems facing Latvian cultural policy, we devote the last paragraph of our report to this subject. In precise terms, we are not specifying particular training but rather registering the enormous demand for it. Introduction of a free market economy, restricted public financial support for culture, decentralisation of management and fiscal responsibility for culture enforces demand for specialists who in the new economic conditions would be able to submit an application for, and then carry out cultural projects, run impoverished public cultural institutions, or direct the operation of a new private company in the area of culture.

In the initial period of changes, a special discovery was the almost magic term "fund-raising", and it is just these fund-raising skills that were most required from cultural managers and administrators. However, it is not only fund-raising skills that matters here, but also a much deeper knowledge that would provide a basis for rational activity in the area of culture. This activity should be directed not only at results achievable in the short term but should also encourage strategic planning over the longer term. In order to have managers who understand the nature of cultural activity, it will be necessary to organise a system of training. Management training can be offered in two ways. The first is post-graduate managerial studies. The second consists of short courses designed for the employees of museums, theatres, art galleries, etc. Initially, the appropriate human resources in the transforming countries are based on people from the developed countries of Western Europe and the United States. Then, as a rule, the number of domestic trainers will increase. Of course, depending on the available possibilities, it is advisable to make use of the wide range of managerial courses organised in other European countries, especially courses designed for trainees from Central and Eastern Europe.

Our observations on the process of training cultural managers in other new European democracies allow us to form an initial judgement on the stimuli and barriers to its development. The task of identifying the basic imperative for training cultural managers is not a difficult one: it is the constantly growing demand for highly qualified personnel and for a gradual "commercialisation" of the areas which up to now have not been considered as "commercial". On the other hand, the problems which can be a negative influence on appropriate development of cultural management training in transforming countries are much more numerous. They include first of all:

1. Poor co-ordination and only random information about training, deriving from the absence of any regulatory body;
2. Need to identify and implement "training of trainers";
3. Imprecise differentiation of training programmes with respect to the specific needs of work in different sectors: public, private, and especially the newly developing non-profit area,
4. Lack of suitably rewarding prospects for participants in post-graduate courses with respect to future employment in the cultural field.

We hope that an awareness of these barriers will help the Latvians to avoid many mistakes made elsewhere in organising an efficient system for training cultural managers. We are convinced that this type of training is essential in Latvia and is an important basic condition for the successful introduction of new ways of working in culture.

Recommendation:

- An appropriate system of training for cultural administrators and art managers should be developed in Latvia as soon as is practicable.
- Cultural industries and market skills training

10. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1. General conclusions

Examiners were impressed and encouraged by the dedication and determination of the many people they encountered in the course of their investigations. There is a real will to secure and develop Latvian culture under difficult economic conditions during the crucial transitional period. We do not underestimate the difficulties. It seems to us that, even by the standards of the post-communist Baltic countries, some of the problems and tensions in Latvia are particularly complicated.

There are no simple solutions which present themselves. Our general and more specific recommendations are therefore made in the spirit of attempting to offer the most appropriate advice in the present circumstances such as we read them from the outside, but coloured by our knowledge of a range of contemporary systems of financing culture and the problems of promoting and maintaining a modern and vibrant civil society in other European countries.

Latvia is fortunate in having successfully managed to retain such a compelling sense of its own cultural identity - in literature, in song and in dance - despite the homogenising and destructive effects of half a century of communist domination. This is, in itself, a tribute to the strength and vitality of those cultural traditions. However, our analyses suggest to us that there might be a risk of such strength turning into a liability, if it condones any redefinition of Latvian cultural identity in a retrospective way. This would not mesh well with the reality of the contemporary urban culture, least of all in - once again - cosmopolitan and outward-looking Riga. This is why in our conclusions we lay such emphasis on the need to address the difficult issues around the professional/amateur "dilemma", around young people and their cultural education, habits and consumption (particularly commercial products), and the position of the Russian population.

Given that the government's chosen path towards transformation and reconstruction since 1991 has been economically radical and politically pragmatic, it is no surprise that the effects - both direct and indirect - on cultural life have been severe. At the same time, whilst the Ministry of Culture and local authorities have, within generally declining resources, tried to keep as much of the cultural infrastructure in tact as possible, we are not convinced that there has been any sufficiently systematic attempts to identify key priorities at the national level and when necessary be able to make strategic choices. Responsibilities, distribution of competence between the state and local administrations, and financial capacity are clearly of crucial importance here. Hence our serious concerns of the possible detail of the regional government reform.

In the context of transformation from the discredited socialist system and the country's general progress, culture has a major role to play in helping rebuild a unifying value system for society, which seems dangerously lacking at present. Artists were of crucial importance in the restoration of democracy in many countries of Central and Eastern Europe, and they are no less vital to its continued healthy progress. Against this, we have to note the taxing conditions under which artists and performers have to operate, and the generally low status and levels of remuneration of employment in cultural field. Some of these problems can be, at least partially, ameliorated through systemic reforms; others require action which is more specifically targeted.

10.2. Recommendations

First Part: General dilemmas and opportunities

1. Formulating a cultural policy

- It is extremely important to undertake actions aimed at increasing the “credibility” and effectiveness of the document “Main Cultural Policy Postulates of Latvia” defining the fundamental principles of cultural policy in Latvia. It seems to us that in order for it to stop being treated as a collection of ideas having little in common with the policy realised in practice, it is necessary to:
 1. for the Latvian authorities to prepare necessary follow up measures.
 2. to examine the shortcomings in the process of implementation of Main Cultural Postulates and to define clearly the priorities between different areas of culture especially in the light of public funding constraints.
 3. to have a vital debate in the Parliament on the follow up, which we hope will be reflected in the media. A new contribution to such a discussion could be a conference devoted to the results of evaluation of the cultural policy in Latvia conducted within the framework of the Council of Europe programme.
 4. for the Latvian authorities to participate actively in the follow up to the reports “Our Creative Diversity” and “In from the Margins” which rethink the cultural policies of today.
 5. to redraft such a long term programme after a period.
- We find it natural that a country in a state of transition must rely on amending existing legislation. It is important to have a revised, modern legislation but statutes can only represent the framework. We therefore warn against creating a too rigid and detailed a legal framework for culture. Many issues can be resolved by current government decrees, which are often able to react to changes in the environment, newly emerging problems etc. in a more elastic way than legal solutions. In this context we can see the importance of the issue of a well-functioning distribution of responsibility between the Parliament and the Government.

2. Changing responsibility: state, regions, municipalities

- Self-government authorities should be provided with conditions, and financial capability to enable them to determine the direction of their cultural policy according to their own strategy for economic, social and educational development.
- It would be advisable to organise a public debate at local level with participation of central authorities, artists, researchers of culture, and people involved in the practice of culture in order to define the desired scope of competence of local and regional authorities in culture.
- It is necessary to strengthen the co-operation between the Ministry and the local authorities; similarly between the Ministry and the local authorities with the non-governmental sector (like Soros Foundation of Latvia, artists unions, etc).
- The duties of the Ministry should include initiating work aimed at monitoring cultural development, filling gaps in the existing statistics on culture and adjusting the latter to European standards.
- Modern cultural policy requires multiple links between culture and the social and economic development of the country at all levels. It is a task for

the Ministry of Culture to strengthen its co-operation with the other Departments and stimulate the municipalities to establish formal connections of culture with the other areas.

- The Ministry should ensure that the National Council (and any other such bodies) develops into an authoritative and respected independent advisory agency.
- The advisory bodies should be required to co-operate fully with the National Endowment - and vice versa.
- Peer group evaluation provides an important safeguard against any possible political interference in artistic judgements and choices. The advisory structures should be kept under constant review as they evolve, and there should be a regular turnover in membership.

3. Development trends of the Latvian society

- The state and municipal authorities should be more responsive to local initiatives in the fields of arts and culture.
- Democratisation of public life and activation of society should be stimulated to a greater degree in order to create conditions for the development of civil society.
- Public support for the independent sector is vital for its development. The new trend in development of independent organisations in democratic countries is to base their functioning on a partnership with the state.
- More favourable legal regulations should be implemented by the state in order to facilitate development of the independent sector in Latvia.
- Tolerance and cultural co-operation is important with respect to all the national minorities, and particularly with respect to the Russian element of the population.
- In order to minimise tension and threats in the future, it will be important to monitor ways of safeguarding the cultural rights of the Russian part of society.

4. New and old rules of funding culture

Creating a modern funding climate appropriate to the cultural sector will inevitably rely upon changes in traditional practice and some specific steps being taken. We propose the following initial list :

- Introduction of the principle of mixed funding of cultural undertakings from public and private sources.
- End the practice whereby the Ministry of Finance can interfere with the agreed funding process in the course of the current financial year .
- Determine precise, clear principles and criteria for the distribution of public funds for cultural activities matching the cultural policy adopted.
- Introduce greater flexibility in the use of funds by cultural institutions, which will encourage and assist better strategic planning and productive application and management of the money. This underlines the need for completion of methodological work on developing the concept of strategic planning based on cost calculating procedures to be introduced in cultural institutions.
- Extend the system of tax reductions connected with donations for cultural purposes.
- Grant tax exemptions and reductions to non-profit organisations.
- Develop a system of incentives of a non-fiscal nature, for example:

- a system of joint funding by the state and private sponsors of selected cultural projects (matching grants), in which obtaining a state subsidy is conditional upon efforts to identify additional funding sources;
- promote the development of 'non-profits' acting as intermediaries between sponsors and art;
- a system of recognising and rewarding patrons and sponsors;

Second Part: Sectorial And Specific Dilemmas And Opportunities

5. Cultural Heritage For The Future

- A special government programme (e.g. including the form of advantageous bank credits) should be created that would make it possible to restore endangered historical buildings;
- Cultural Heritage sites should be used where feasible in an active and dynamic way. For example, combining them with the performing arts could contribute to the development of profitable cultural tourism;
- Stress should be placed on the organisation of training, both managerial and vocational for the staff of museums and libraries;
- It is desirable to support (also financially) and organise sectoral programmes, i.e. ones whose framework includes development of museum/school/library co-operation;
- Application of modern technology and conservation methods suitable for different types of archival materials is indispensable;
- The problem of insufficient funds for book purchases for Latvian libraries needs to be solved. If, due to financial limitations, the above problem cannot be solved through the Ministry of Culture alone, then it requires addressing at the highest level.

6. Creativity

- Conducting a reform of theatrical activities based on a clear division of responsibility (especially in relation to finance) between the state and municipalities. During work on the Parliamentary act on national cultural institutions, it would be advisable to consider a preferred option of extending its scope to an act regulating all types of cultural organisation (state, municipal, and private non-profit).
- It is desirable to consider transforming some public theatres into theatres operating as non-profit institutions or foundations.
- Financial support for training and professional development should serve as investment in future cultural policy concerning the performing arts.
- It is desirable to elaborate a wider range of criteria for allocating subsidies for artists and cultural organisations than those which have been applied up to now.
- The restoration of domestic concert activity at this stage of development may be more important than foreign engagements by the Philharmonic.
- The implementation of a youth education programme in music is of the utmost importance for positive development of musical life.
- The Ministry of Culture should conduct a review of the current conditions for practising amateur art in Latvia (including the infrastructure) and determine priorities. The means for achieving these should be met from various sources, not only from municipal budgets, but also from the state

and private donors (perhaps also from international organisations of the Baltic region).

- There is a need to carry out a comprehensive survey of the economic position and social security of Latvian artists in respect of taxation, copyright and neighbouring rights, unemployment benefit and pensions, training and re-training.
- The economic position and social status of artists should also be enhanced indirectly, that is, by public financial support to artists' professional associations, especially to the Artists' Union while there is no other system responsible for safeguarding artists social and pension rights.
- It is a responsibility of the state to develop a system of social protection for artists sensitive to the particular conditions of the sector.
- State intervention in the area of intellectual property rights would be welcome, both concerning introduction of a system of penalties for those breaking regulations by evading payment for use of the artists' and authors' works and to eliminate the occurrence of fraud in the future (producers' licensing).
- In order to stimulate participation in culture, it is desirable to:
 1. stimulate the activity of local communities and the development process of civil society, as well as encouraging local communities to co-operate.
 2. improve the operation of the education system in culture and try to rebuild family home education.
 3. ensure that young people are actively involved in the cultural environment.
- It would be desirable to develop an inter-sector programme for cultural education development.

7. Cultural industries and media

- We suggest that there may be a useful and necessary involvement of national cultural policy in the following creative industry sector:

Books and Publishing:

1. Conducting a study to identify both a national and international canon, and then granting state financial support to publish works listed in it;
2. To extend VAT exemption to books.

Film :

- In the present extreme situation there is a need to work out the principles of film finance and of the state's contributory role.

Recording:

- It is essential to tackle phonographic piracy. The state has a duty to make the existing legislation on protection of intellectual property rights more effective, and to introduce a system of producers' licensing, etc.

Radio and TV:

- Given budget constraints, not least in culture it would be well worth considering the introduction of a TV licence fee, so that the resources "freed" in this way can be transferred to the most endangered areas of culture, such as new acquisitions for libraries or museums, or the moribund national film industry.

8. Cultural exchanges and mobility

- We recommend to determine a direction of changes in the area of culture that on the one hand would help defend the Latvians' cultural identity, and on the other hand would stimulate changes helpful in adjusting to participation in European institutions. We find that the direction of developing international co-operation especially desirable for the Latvians is orientation on using the Baltic potential;
- Its is indispensable to create the suitable conditions for realisation of foreign cultural exchange, including especially regulation of many custom issues raising at present a lot of controversy.

9. New ways of working

- A system of training for cultural administrators and art managers should necessarily be organised in Latvia.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

List of the Latvian participants in the discussions with the CE's expert group (in order of meetings).

17 March 1997 Riga

Mr. Rihards Pīks	Minister of Culture
Mr. Aivars Gailis	State Secretary, Ministry of Culture
Ms. Valentina Gavare	Senior Official in charge of Book Publishing and Theatre, Ministry of Culture
Ms. Antra Torgane	Co-ordinator for National Report Research Group
...the team having written the National Report:	
Mr. Peteris Lakis	Rector, Academy of Culture
Ms. Ruta Caupova	Vicepresident, Artists' Union. Chairperson, Council of Creative Unions
Mr. Imants Ziedonis	Poet (from October 1997 Cultural Adviser to Prime Minister)
Mr. Viktors Avotins	Chairperson, Writers' Union

18 March 1997 Riga, Ministry of Culture

Ms. Vija Virtmane	Director of the Culture Policy Department
Ms. Asja Lunga	Head of the Economy Division
Ms. Inta Busmane	Senior Official in charge of Museums
Ms. Gundega Cebere	Senior Official in charge of Visual Art
Mr. Janis Turlajs	Senior Official in charge of Libraries
Mr. Andris Rozenbergs	Deputy Director in charge of International Relations, National Film Centre
Mr. Uldis Lielpeters	Head, State Centre for Cultural Education
Ms. Anna Jansone	Director, Department of Regional Development

19 March 1997 Riga

Ms. Ramona Umblija	President, Culture Foundation (from August 1997 - Minister of Culture)
Mr. Valdis Taurins	Chairman, Executive Board of Culture Foundation
Mr. Juris Lorencs	Member, Executive Board, Culture Foundation
Ms. Inara Baumanē	Director, History Museum
Mr. Arnis Radins	Deputy Director, History Museum
Mr. Janis Kurpnieks	Director, E.Melngailis Folk Art Centre
Mr. Vilis Kokamegi	Specialist of Music, E.Melngailis Folk Art Centre
Ms. Aija Leitane	Deputy Director, E.Melngailis Folk Art Centre
Ms. Daina Raituma	Head of Methodic Department, E.Melngailis Folk Art Centre

Ms. Aira Birzina	Specialist of Choir Music, E.Melngailis Folk Art Centre
Ms. Maruta Alpa	Specialist of Folk Dance, E.Melngailis Folk Art Centre
Ms. Dace Liepniece	Specialist of Theatre, E.Melngailis Folk Art Centre
Ms. Vija Abele	Specialist of Applied Art, E.Melngailis Folk Art Centre
Ms. Signe Pujate	Specialist of Folklore, E.Melngailis Folk Art Centre
Mr. Gints Karklins	Producer of "Liela Gilde", Philharmonic Society
Mr. Grigorijs Cehovals	Managing Director, Riga Russian Drama Theatre
Mr. Zinovijs Segals	Dramaturg, Riga Russian Drama Theatre

20 March 1997 Riga

Mr. Janis Garjans	President, Association of Museums
Ms. Inese Kaire	Director, A.Upits Memorial Museum
Mr. Martins Kuplais	Deputy Director, Ethnographical Open Air Museum
Mr. Andrejs Zagars	Director, National Opera
Ms. Brigita Stroda	Assistent to Director, National Opera
Ms. Silvija Linina	Principal Librarian, Research Department, National Library President, Library Association
Ms. Sandra Ozolina	Deputy Director, National Library
Ms. Dzidra Smita	Head of Department of Library Service, National Library
Ms. Dzintra Mukane	Deputy Director, National Library
Ms. Mudite Vegnere	Executive Director, National Library
Mr. Ilmars Geige	Head, Department of National Affairs, Ministry of Justice
Ms. Aina Balasko	Senior Official, Department of National Affairs, Ministry of Justice
Ms. Daiga Upeniece	Director, Foreign Arts Museum
Ms. Astrida Rogule	Scientific Secretary, Association of Art Museums
Ms. Helena Demakova	Art Critic, Cultural Adviser to Prime Minister (till August 1997)
Mr. Janis Spalvins	Artist
Ms. Aina Muze	Artist
Mr. Aleksandrs Busse	Artist
Ms. Vija Dzintare	Artist
Ms. Juris Petraskevics	Artist
Ms. Lita Beiris	Balley Dancer
Ms. Anita Uzulniece	Cinema Critic
Ms. Sandra Krastina	Artist
Ms. Ieva Iltnera	Artist
Mr. Edgars Verpe	Director, J.Rozentals Art School
Mr. Aivars Akis	Chairman, Union of Photographers
Ms. Laima Zurgina	Cinema Director
Ms. Inga Steimane	Art Scientist

21 March 1997 Riga

Mr. Rolands Jurasevskis	Head, Cultural Department of Riga City Council
Ms. Ilona Vanadzina	Deputy Head, Cultural Department of Riga City Council
Ms. Jolanta Skrupska	Head of Division, Cultural Department of Riga City Council
Ms. Lora Vilkina	Director, Library of Foreign Languages
Ms. Vesma Krage	Director, Centre of Folk Culture and Art "Maza Gilde"
Ms. Dzintra Burgele	Artistic Director, Centre of Folk Culture and Art "Maza Gilde"
Mr. Janis Purins	Director, Brass Band "Riga"
Mr. Imants Kalnins	Director, Riga Children Music School Nr.2
Mr. Peteris Zirnitis	Managing Director, NORDIC Publishing House
Mr. Janis Juska	Managing Director, TAPALS Publishing House, Member of the Board, Association of Book Publishers

In the regions**14 June 1997 Pedvale**

Mr. Ojars Feldbergs	Artist, owner of Pedvale Open Air Art Museum
Mr. Gaidis Bierands	Chairperson, Talsi City Council

15 June 1997

Mr. Valdis Danenbergs	Chairman, Skrunda City Council
Ms. Nellija Kleinberga	Director, Skrunda Cultural Centre
Ms. Daina Zonenberga	Head, Skrunda Children Library
Ms. Antra Zuntnerē	Deputy Director, Skrunda Music School
Ms. Ilze Abola	Head, Skrunda Library

Kuldiga

Ms. Vaira Brudere	Chairperson, Kuldiga Regional Council
Ms. Dace Reinkopa	State Cultural Inspector
Mr. Arturs Liegis	Chairman, Kuldiga City Council
Mr. Edgars Zalans	Head, Department of Regional Development, Regional Council City, Deputy Chairman, Kuldiga City Council
Ms. Ruta Vitkovska	Head of Financial Department, Kuldiga Regional Council
Ms. Gunta Laizane	Deputy Executive Director, Kuldiga City Council
Ms. Liga Brence	Main Cultural Specialist, Kuldiga Regional Council
Mr. Artis Gustovskis	Head, Tourism and Information Centre, Deputy of Kuldiga City Council
Mr. Ojars Peculis	Director, Kuldiga Regional Museum
Ms. Aina Laksberga	Head, Kuldiga Central Library
Ms. Maruta Rozite	Director, Kuldiga Music School
Ms. Inta Abolina	Director, Kuldiga Art and Humanities School
Ms. Inta Burnevica	Director, Kuldiga Cultural Centre
Ms. Anita Meldere	Head, Financial Department, City Council

Ms. Silva Bendrate	Director, Kurzemes Radio
Mr. Viesturs Liepins	Kuldiga's TV
Mr. Normunds Zernis	Director, Edole Castle

16 June 1997 Jelgava

Mr. Raitis Vitolins	Deputy Chairman, Jelgava City Council
Mr. Gunars Kurlovics	Director, Department of Education and Culture, Jelgava City Council
Mr. Juris Strods	Executive Director, Jelgava City Council
Ms. Vera Brauna	Head, Financial Department, Jelgava City Council
Mr. Mintauts Buskevics	Director, Jelgava Cultural Centre
Ms. Lolita Muizniece	State Cultural Inspector
Mr. Peteris Salkazanovs	Deputy Chairman Jelgava Regional Council
Ms. Dzintra Zimaisa	State Cultural Inspector of Jelgava Region, Head of Regional Cultural Centre
Mr. Voldemars Strikis	Rector, University of Agriculture
Ms. Peteris Busmanis	Prorector, University of Agriculture
Ms. Anita Pruse	Director, Students' Club, University of Agriculture
Mr. Valdis Abolins	Director of Jelgava Castle
Mr. Nauris Asaritis	Head of restoration, Jelgava Castle
Mr. Didzis Libietis	Head, Jelgava Palace Museum
Ms. Inara Melgalve	Head, Department of International Relations, University of Agriculture
Ms. Andris Ravins	Chairman of Jelgava Regional Council (from August 1997 - Minister of Agriculture)
Ms. Nellija Empele	Chairperson, Livberze Rural District
Ms. Aija Nadzina	Director, Jelgava Scientific Library
Ms. Gita Grase	Director, G. Elias Jelgava History and Art Museum

17 June 1997 Daugavpils

Mr. Vitalijs Aizbalts	Executive Director, Daugavpils Regional Council
Ms. Rita Strode	Deputy Chairperson, Daugavpils City Council
Mr. Vladislavs Novickis	Head, Daugavpils Polish Society "Promen"
Ms. Stanislava Aleksandrovica	Head, Daugavpils Lithuanian Society
Ms. Geroida Bogdanova	Director, Daugavpils Russian Cultural Centre "Kalistratova nams", Head of Russian Society "Rusici"
Mr. Stanislavs Volodjko	Head, Daugavpils Bielorussian Society
Mr. Janis Kokins	Head, Daugavpils Latvian Society
Mr. Valentins Lukasevics	Poet
Ms. Linda Kilevica	Poet, Journalist
Mr. Janis Piterans	Journalist
Mr. Valentins Maculevics	Director, Daugavpils Theatre
Ms. Inara Mukane	State Cultural Inspector, Daugavpils District
Ms. Vasilisa Pudovkina	Chairperson, Naujene Village Council
Ms. Vija Bregze	Specialist of Culture, Naujene Village Council
Ms. Svetlana Gavrilova	Director, Culture and Sport Centre "Lociki"

Ms. Svetlana Bicāne	Head, Library of the Culture and Sport Centre
Ms. Veronika Karmadonova	Director, Naujene People's House
Ms. Nina Sinkevica	Director, Kraujas Cultural House
Ms. Sandra Scagina	Specialist of Tourism, Naujene Village

18 June 1997 Cesis

Monsieur Andrejs Aglonietis	Dean, Aglona Basilica, Director, Aglona Catholic Grammar School
Ms. Daiga Rubene	Chairperson, Cesis Regional Council
Mr. Imants Timmermanis	Chairman , Cultural Commission, Cesis City Council
Mr. Aino Salmins	Executive Director, Cesis City Council
Ms. Ilze Kalnina	State Cultural Inspector
Mr. Janis Porietis	Director, Cesis Music College
Ms. Anda Vilka	Director, Cesis Museum

19 June 1997 Riga

Ms. Lilita Seimuskane	Adviser, Union of Local Self-Government
Mr. Peteris Petersons	President, Latvian Centre of International Theatre Institute
Ms. Vita Terauda	Executive Director, Soros Foundation - Latvia
Mr. Janis Borgs	Director, Soros Center for Contemporary Arts-Riga
Ms. Brigita Borga	Head of the Arts and Culture Program, Soros Foundation-Latvia
Ms. Aija Paegle	Head, Performing Arts Information Center, Soros Foundation-Latvia
Mr. Gatis Smits	Co-ordinator, Performing Arts Information Center, Soros Foundation - Latvia
Ms. Inese Paklone	Director, Copyrights Agency AKKA
Ms. Anita Sosnovska	Head, Department of Documentation, Copyrights Agency AKKA
Ms. Rikke Helms	Director, Danish Cultural Institute
Ms. Daina Ostrovska	Adviser, British Council
Ms. Merete Kvernrod	Director, Nordic Information Bureau

20 June 1997 Riga

Mr. Pauls Putnins	Deputy Chairperson, Saeima Education, Culture and Science Commission
Ms. Anta Rugate	Member, Saeima Education, Culture and Science Commission, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Culture

19 November 1997 Riga

Mr Andris Mellakauls

20 November 1997 Riga

Ms. Ramona Umblija	Minister of Culture
Ms. Asja Lunga	Head of Economic Division, Ministry of Culture

Ms. Ludmila Butele President, Russian Culture Centre in Latvia; Member
of the Board of Autonomy of Russian Culture
Association in Latvia

Ms. Ruta Caupova Vice President of Artist Union; Chairperson of
Council of Creative Union

21 November 1997 Riga

Ms. Lilita Seimuskane Advisor, Union of Local Self-Governments

Mr. Peteris Salkazanovs Chairman, Commission of Education and Culture,
Union of Self Governments

Ms. Anna Jansone Director, Department of Regional Development,
Ministry of Culture

Mr Peteris Bankovskis President, Culture Foundation

Appendix 2

LATVIA: Essential Background Facts and Figures

Latvia

The Republic of Latvia (64,589 sq.km) is situated in north eastern Europe, on the east coast of the Baltic Sea. The country is bounded by Estonia on the north and by Lithuania on the south west. To the east there is a frontier with the Russian Federation and to the south east with Belarus. Latvia is a parliamentary republic which was originally established on 18 November 1918. Sovereignty and independence ended with the Soviet invasion in June 1940, followed by Latvia's illegal incorporation into the USSR in August 1940 Nazi occupation (1941-1945) and further years of Soviet occupation (1945 to 1991). The Republic of Latvia continued to exist de jure throughout the years of Soviet rule. Occupation and incorporation into the USSR was not recognised by some western countries. Latvia restored its de facto independence on 21 August 1991.

The demographic context

As of 1 January 1997, there were 2,5 million registered residents in Latvia. A majority (1,72 million) live in cities. A variety of ethnic groups are represented: 55,3% Latvians, 32,5% Russians, 4% Belarussians, 2,9% Ukrainians, 2,2% Poles, 1,3% Lithuanians, 0,4% Jews, 0,3% Gypsies, 0,1% Estonians, 0,1% Germans and 0,9% other ethnic groups. The present Latvia demographic situation is a legacy of the policies pursued during the Soviet era. Throughout the Soviet years migration connected with intense industrialisation was the primary source of Latvia's intense population growth, leading to a large-scale increase in the number of non-Latvians in Latvia. Today, ethnic Latvians are a minority in the seven largest cities of Latvia, including its capital Riga. Nevertheless, more than 70% of the registered residents in Latvia are Latvian citizens (about 400 000 of whom are of non-Latvian origin).

The Parliament

The highest legislative body is the single chamber 100-seat Saeima, elected for three years in direct proportional election. The first democratic elections since 1931 were held in June 1993, and the second elections in October 1995. Both elections demonstrated an active multiparty system and were considered by OSCE and Council of Europe observers to be free and fair elections. Political parties must receive at least 5% of the national vote in order to gain seats in the Saeima, according to the Law on Elections (a 4% requirement existed for the June 1993 elections).

The elections in 1995 included 19 political groups and saw 71,9% of eligible voters participating. Eight political groups/parties cleared the 5% barrier to win seats in the Saeima.

The current Saeima consists of the following political forces: Democratic Party "Saimnieks" (18 seats), Latvia's Way Party (16 seats), Fatherland and Freedom Party (14 seats), Latvian National Independence Movement/Green Party (8 seats), "For Latvia" Movement (8 seats), Latvia's Unity Party (7 seats), Latvia Farmers' Union-Latvia Christian Democrat Union-Latgale Democratic Party coalition (7 seats), "For the People and Justice" faction (6 seats), Socialist Party coalition (5 seats) and 10 independent members. The next regular elections to the Saeima will be held in October 1998.

The President is the Head of State and the Commander - in - Chief the national defence forces. The President is elected by the Saeima (after receiving at least 51 votes by secret ballot for a three - year term and cannot hold office for more than six consecutive years.

The Government

The executive power is held by the Cabinet of Ministers formed by the Prime Minister. Currently, in accordance with the Law on the Composition of the Cabinet of Ministers, there are 12 ministries. The governing coalition is formed by: Democratic Party "Saimnieks", Latvia's Way Party, Fatherland and Freedom Party, Latvian National Independence Movement, Latvia's Farmer's Union, and Unity Party.

The economics

After the renewal of Latvia's independence in 1991 the all-embracing programme of economic reforms began with an aim to move from a centrally planned economy to a market economy. The governmental activities guaranteed rapid liberalisation of prices, foreign trade and system of currency exchange, as well as development of the privatisation processes. After a huge decrease in production in 1991 and 1992 (amount of GDP in 1993 was just 42% from the amount of 1990) the macro-economic environment improved. In 1996 GDP increased on 2,8%, budget was minimal (1,9% from GDP), essential decrease of inflation, as well as increase of export amount were observed. Discussing the development of the Latvian economy compared to other countries in transition, we have concluded, that in 1996 increase of GDP is relatively small. In a number of states in transition where the terms of GDP increase were positive, it is higher than in Latvia. If in Latvia in 1996 it was 2,8% against previous year (1995 - 0,8%, 1994 - 0,6%), than in Estonia it was 3,4%, in Lithuania - 4,0%, in Poland - 6,0%, Slovak Republic - 6,9%. However, the forecast that the increase of GDP in 1997 will be 4-5% and inflation will decrease till 8-9% exists. Although Latvia in the economic sphere starts to achieve a level of other states of Central and Eastern Europe, however, GDP per capita is one of the lowest in all Eastern Europe. In 1995 GDP per capita was 3 237 USD, in Estonia - 4 051 USD, in Lithuania - 4 000 USD, in Hungary - 6 604 USD, in Bulgaria - 4 852 USD. In Latvia it is 5 to 10 times smaller as in member states of EU.

Starting from 90ies inflation in Latvia created economic, as well as social problems. Compared with other states in transition, at present the level of inflation is rather low thanks to the state and Latvian Bank activities regarding decrease of inflation (strong monetary and fiscal policy). Inflation in Latvia has decreased rapidly. In 1992 it achieved 950%, in 1993 - exceeded a little bit 100%, in 1994 it decreased already to 36%. In 1995, 1996 it stayed unchanged, at the end of 1996 it was approximately 18%. In August of 1997 inflation decreased rapidly - till 8,6%. Stability of prices and decrease of inflation till level of a digit has become as main aim and achievement of Latvian economic and monetary policy. It is predicted, that in 1997 inflation will decrease slightly to exceed 8-9%, but by the year 2002 - down to 5%.

As an important factor of inflation could be considered slow increase of inhabitants income, which is linked to limits of fiscal policy. During last two years the increase of salaries was smaller than the increase of consumer prices. Therefore the purchasing power of workers has decreased. Nominal salaries after a rapid increase in 1994-1995 stabilise, however, they are still low compared to salaries in Central and Eastern Europe, taking into consideration official statistical data. The level of unemployment in Latvia in 1996 was 7,2% among economically active inhabitants - 90,8 thousand persons. However, it is necessary to consider so called hidden unemployment (incomplete working day, compulsory unpaid vacations, other forms), the registration of which is not put in order yet.

The important responsibility is high credit rating ("A" rating regarding long term debt in official currency and "BBB" rating regarding long term debt in foreign currencies), which is granted by one of most influential credit rating agencies "Standards & Poor's", which in estimation of the state, take into consideration such economical

CULTURAL POLICY IN LATVIA

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measures and factors as state external debt, balance of payment, tax policy, stability of prices. This rating is one of the highest among states of Central and Eastern Europe.

Privatisation

One of the essential factors in the economic transition is privatisation. The privatisation process has progressed remarkably during the last 3 years. As an illustration, the share of people employed in the private sector reached 64% of total employment in 1996 and 59% of GDP was produced by the private sector in 1996. At the beginning of 1996, the Cabinet of Ministers handed over 318 state enterprises, companies and their structural units for privatisation. Currently, the Government has handed over to the Privatisation Agency almost all state property units planned for privatisation. From the point of view of decision making, privatisation has almost been completed. According to government plans, 75% of the state owned enterprises should be privatised by the end of 1997. It is planned for the time being to retain approximately 160 units in state ownership-mainly companies of infrastructure and social designation. In order to accelerate privatisation of state enterprises to perform it in the most effective way and to take into account the feasibility of further development of the enterprises, various privatisation methods are normally combined. The Privatisation Agency has established several approaches to privatisation, envisaging application of similar privatisation undertaking and procedure to a definite enterprise group: organising international tenders, the sale of the enterprise shares by public offering, sale of enterprise shares to employers and direct sale or auction of the enterprise. The liquidation process, which is running parallel to privatisation, facilitates the tripping of debt from insolvent enterprises before they are transferred from the state to private ownership. Following changes in liquidation procedures, liquidated firms may now be sold in prices or as one unit, which should accelerate the process. At present, the Privatisation Agency is in the process of privatising energy companies - Latvijas Gaze (gas), Latvenergo (electricity) and Ventspils Nafta (oil) - as well as Latvian Shipping Company.

Till 1995 eleven state cultural enterprises (Riga Motion Pictures Studio, Sound Record Studio, periodicals "Karogs" and "Maksla", etc) were handed over to the Privatisation Agency. The process of privatisation is almost complete. For example, Riga Motion Pictures Studio as a former state owned enterprise is to be transformed into a shareholding company with 30% belonging to the State, 30% to the land-owner and the remaining 40% to be sold on the public offer. There are 93 private museums and more than 360 private publishing houses. State publishing houses are undergoing gradual privatisation.