

Water Protection

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Water protection is one of the main priorities in Latvian environmental protection policy.

Currently good results have already been achieved. Investment schemes are working successfully; wastewater treatment has been improved significantly. As a result of more efficient accounting and water saving, the total amount of wastewater has decreased two times, proportion of untreated wastewater has decreased by 5% from total amount, but pollution caused by urban wastewater has decreased more than two times. To encourage water management, investment projects are launched and implemented in several populated areas in Latvia.

The Law on Water Management came into force on October 26, 2002, and was the main regulation in water management and protection. The aim of the Law is to establish surface water and groundwater protection and management system that promotes sustainable and rational use of water resources, improves protection of water environment, ensures water protection and facilitates achievement of goals set in international agreements. The Law defines that hereafter water protection measures, their efficiency and usefulness must be controlled within river basins instead of administrative borders. The territory of Latvia is divided in Daugava, Gauja, Lielupe and Venta river basin districts. The Law transposes requirements of the Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council. Several laws and regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers are resultant from the Law of Water Management, water protection is also regulated by the Law on Pollution and resultant laws and regulations.

Three rivers included in the list of European Main Transboundary Surface Waters – Daugava, Lielupe and Venta – are flowing through the territory of Latvia. The water quality problems of these rivers can only be solved by means of international agreements, in compliance with the mechanisms provided in the Helsinki Convention “On Use and Protection of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes” (adopted in 1992). Latvia has ratified the Convention in 1996.

Our partners in water protection are the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Agriculture.

In the field of water protection, Latvia has developed good cooperation with Denmark, Sweden, Finland and the USA. The USA and Germany have provided support in groundwater protection.

<https://www.varam.gov.lv/en/water-protection>