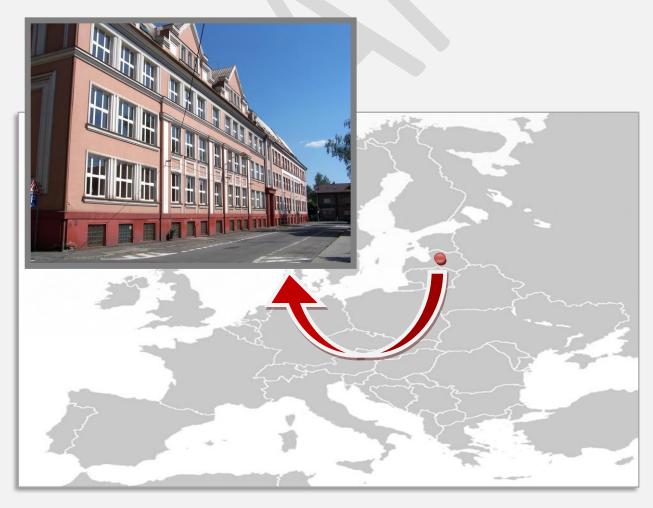# EMEDUS
Europe Media Education

WP3. Formal Media Education

LATVIA

1. Education System

The Ministry of Education and Science is the body that makes decisions on education and sets standards, education content and establishes procedures for teacher training. The education system is administered at three levels: national, municipal and institutional.

Municipalities establish and fund the Education Boards, which manage local education policies and administrate the state budget for schools and staff salaries.

Schools are independent in developing and implementing education programs, hiring staff and in managing themselves.

Formal education in Latvia is compulsory from the age of 5 and lasts 11 years, which includes a pre-school stage of 2 years and 9 years of basic education (one single structure with primary education and lower secondary education). Senior secondary education is not compulsory and offers courses both in general and vocational training. In post-secondary education, vocational training programs are 1 or 2 years while in tertiary, it varies between the academic and professional paths students take, which are taught at university and non-university institutions.

2. Policies in Media Literacy

According to academics, Latvia needs to integrate media literacy in formal education (Krumina, 2009; Belousa and Stakle, 2010). However, there are no current government strategies that promote the inclusion of media literacy in education.

> **There are no current government strategies that promote the incorporation of media literacy in education**

Belousa and Stakle (2010) have highlighted that in a globalized and multicultural society, it would be necessary to implement media literacy in education and in teacher training as a fundamental content due to the gap between the strategies of the National Development Plan 2007-2010 and the actual situation in education.

3. Media Literacy and National Curricula

The *Regulation of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia 2006*, with respect to the issue of national education standards and content of basic education (Noteikumi pair valsts standartu pamatizglītība one mācību pamatizglītības priekšmetu standartiem), contains some references to media education as an integrated theme in various subjects. These subjects relate to critical understanding, the ability to know how to use different sources of information and their content, both traditional and in relation to ICT, as well as the use of cinematographic language as a source of learning. Media Education appears in the curriculum as the subject of Social Science (Sociālās zinības).

In secondary education, the Regulation of the Council of Ministers of September 2, 2008 (noteikumi pair valsts vispārējās vidējās Izglītības standartu one vidējās vispārējās Izglītības mācību priekšmetu standartiem) includes references to the content of media education as the critical understanding and use of different media within the education processes that occur in subjects such as Geography or Psychology.

4. Tools to measure the Level of Competencies

In Latvia evaluation systems for media skills acquisition for students have not been found as there is a lack of specific courses on media literacy.

5. Teacher Media Training

Initial teacher training is a priority for the development of media literacy in the education system. Krumina (2009) notes that the most appropriate action for implementation is the intervention in the area of training future teachers.

> **Teachers are not motivated to promote the development of competencies in new media**

Teacher training practices show little interest in the specific content of media literacy and in the use of media in education because teachers consider them forms of entertainment.

6. ICT in Schools

The keys to the inclusion of ICT in schools can be summarized as follows:

- ICT is taught as a specific subject both in primary and secondary education.

- As a specific objective, ICT use is only considered an interdisciplinary, cross-curricular support for other subjects within the curriculum.

- Teaching ICT must be developed in a unified way as a specific subject.

- ICT use must be implemented in teacher training with respect to functional and methodological skills.

- The number of students per computer is above the European average.

- Almost all computers have a fast broadband connection.

- The use of ICT by teachers is higher than the European average since most have recently attended in-service training programs in ICT.

Annex. Country Key Features

(a)	**Languages**	Latvian (official) 58.2%, Russian 37.5%, Lithuanian and other 4.3% (2000 census)
	Population	2,178,443 (July 2013 est.)
	Major cities	RIGA (capital) 711,000 (2009)
	Government type	Parliamentary democracy
	GDP (Purchasing Power Parity)	$37.04 billion (2012 est.)
	GDP real growth rate	4.5% (2012 est.)
	GDP per capita (PPP)	$18,100 (2012 est.)
	GDP composition by sector	Agriculture: 4.4% Industry: 26.3% Services: 69.3% (2012 est.)
(b)	**GDP per head (PPS)**	58.0 (year 2011) (Index, EU27=100)
(c)	**Year of EU entry**	2004
	Currency	Lats (Ls)
	Schengen area	Member of the Schengen area since 2007
(d)	**Pupils and students (ISCED levels 1-6) (1 000)**	368,7 (year 2011)
	Pupils at ISCED level 1 (1 000)	113,7 (year 2011)
	Pupils at ISCED level 2 (1 000)	61,5 (year 2011)
	Pupils and students at ISCED level 3 (1 000)	87,7 (year 2011)
	Students at ISCED level 4 (1 000)	1,9 (year 2011)

Source: Original authorship, using data from:

(a) *Central Intelligence Agency* (2013). *The World Factbook 2013-14*. Washington, DC [Retrieved from: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html]
(b) European Commission (2012). *Country Fact Sheet: Latvia*. Directorate-General Regional Policy.

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(c) European Union (2013). Member states of the EU. European Union [Retrieved from:
http://europa.eu/about-eu/countries/index_en.htm]

(d) Eurostat (2013). Education and training. Pupils and students (tps00051). File: educ_ilev.xls
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