

Protocol Guide

Republic of Latvia

*Ministry of Foreign Affairs
State Protocol*

2008

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Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of State Protocol I should like to congratulate you on your accreditation in Latvia.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs hosts 36 resident and 65 non-resident foreign embassies, a diplomatic representation, three consulates-general, six international organisations, 22 honorary consulates and an honorary consulate-general.

The State Protocol of the Ministry is committed to providing high quality and efficient services to the foreign diplomatic community, according to obligations set out in international law. This guide has been compiled by the State Protocol in order to explain procedures and practice of Latvian Protocol. It should be considered as a general guideline and not a legally binding document. The guide will be available on the MFA website and it will be amended regularly. The current Protocol Guide should not be regarded as a completed document, and the State Protocol welcomes suggestions from missions to assist in further improvement of the guide.

Particular attention has been paid to diplomatic privileges and immunities and to the common practical issues, which members of the missions may encounter in Latvia. It should be noticed that some privileges are provided on the basis of international practice, depending on reciprocity. The status of the staff of different international organisations is primarily governed by the agreements Latvia has concluded with those organisations. These agreements are not specifically referred to in this Guide.

It is both assumed and hoped that every mission will avail itself of the privileges and immunities to which the mission and its members are entitled, and that at the same time, all who enjoy the privileges will respect the laws and regulations of the host country.

I hope that this Protocol Guide will facilitate the arrival of the new members of diplomatic missions and consular posts and that your stay in Latvia will be an enjoyable experience both for you and your families!

Juris Bone

Head of State Protocol

THE STATE PROTOCOL

The State Protocol conducts activities concerned with diplomatic protocol and state ceremonies.

The duties of the State Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs include the activities of the President, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic with foreign heads of state and government and diplomatic representatives accredited to Latvia.

The State Protocol is in charge of organising high level visits and state ceremonies and also takes part in organising high-level international conferences, summits and forums held in Latvia.

It handles matters concerning foreign diplomatic and consular missions and international organisations in Latvia, monitors the application of the 1961 Vienna Convention on the Diplomatic Relations and the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Affairs, and takes care of matters related to diplomatic immunity and privilege.

The Structure of the State Protocol

The State Protocol consists of two departments:.

Department of Visits and Ceremonies

There are following divisions:

The President's Protocol Division, which is principally concerned with the functions / activities of the President, co-ordinating and organising visits abroad and those made by foreign heads of state in Latvia.

The Prime Minister's and Foreign Minister's Protocol Division is in charge of the organisation of visits made by foreign heads of government and ministers of foreign affairs. The Division is responsible for the preparation of accreditation and farewell visits by Heads of Diplomatic Missions.

Diplomatic Corps Department

There are following divisions:

Diplomatic Privileges and Immunities Division

This division monitors the provision of diplomatic privileges and immunities implemented in Latvia to foreign diplomatic and consular missions, international organisations and their staff, on the basis of international conventions, multilateral and bilateral agreements, international practice and national law.

The Division carries out registration of staff of foreign missions and international organisations and arranges the admission of military attachés. It co-ordinates the registration of motor vehicles and, where possible, driving licences, as well as customs clearances. Fiscal privileges are also the responsibility of the Division.

Division of Diplomatic Clearances

The Division renders assistance in obtaining flight diplomatic clearances for military aircraft and naval vessels, radio and firearms licences and Old Riga driving permits, as well as supervises the introduction and granting of agrément to ambassadors.

Both departments are directly answerable to the Head of the State Protocol.

1. PROTOCOL OF VISITS

1.1. General information

The Department of Visits and Ceremonies of the State Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for the organisation and logistics of incoming and outgoing visits by Heads of State and Government, and Ministers for Foreign Affairs. Incoming visits of Speakers of Parliaments, as well as outgoing visits of the Speaker of the Saeima (the Latvian Parliament) are the responsibility of the Protocol Division of the Saeima.

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For incoming and outgoing visits of other line ministers and EU Commissioners, the respective protocol departments in their ministries are responsible.

1.2. Categories of visits

Visits are divided into state, official, working and private visits. Transit visits and visits due to technical reasons are also included.

1.2.1. Heads of State

State Visits

On arrival the Head of State paying a state visit will be usually welcomed by:

- Minister of Foreign Affairs or another minister delegated by the Head of Government,
- Head of the State Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
- Ambassador of the visiting state accredited to the Republic of Latvia,
- Ambassador of the Republic of Latvia accredited to the foreign state concerned,
- Head of the President's Protocol division

Official Visits

On arrival the Head of State paying an official visit will be usually welcomed by:

- Head of the State Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
- Ambassador of the visiting state accredited to the Republic of Latvia,
- Ambassador of the Republic of Latvia accredited to the foreign state concerned,
- Head of the President's Protocol division.

Working Visits

On arrival the Head of State paying a working visit will be usually welcomed by:

- Head of the State Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
- Ambassador of the visiting state accredited to the Republic of Latvia,
- Ambassador of the Republic of Latvia accredited to the foreign state concerned,
- An officer of the President's Protocol division

1.2.2. Heads of the Government

Official Visits

On arrival the Head of Government paying an official visit will be usually welcomed by:

- A high-ranking official delegated by the Head of the Government,
- Head of the State Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
- The Ambassador of the visiting state accredited to the Republic of Latvia,
- The Ambassador of the Republic of Latvia accredited to the foreign state concerned,
- A Protocol officer

Working Visits

On arrival the Head of Government paying a working visit will be usually welcomed by:

- Head of the State Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
- Ambassador of the visiting state accredited to the Republic of Latvia,
- Ambassador of the Republic of Latvia accredited to the foreign state concerned,
- A Protocol officer

1.2.3 Ministers for Foreign Affairs

Ministers for Foreign Affairs paying official and working visits will be welcomed by:

- Head of the State Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
- The Ambassador of the visiting state accredited to the Republic of Latvia,
- The Ambassador of the Republic of Latvia accredited to the foreign state concerned,
- A Protocol officer

1.2.4. Private visits and transit visits

Heads of State and Government, Ministers for Foreign Affairs arriving in Latvia on private visits or in transit will be provided VIP-lounge treatment at the Riga International Airport, and, where required, accorded security provisions during their stay in the country.

Costs for the VIP-lounge for the aforesaid VIPs and their spouses may be borne by the Latvian Government.

1.3. Programme of visits.

Although each programme is entirely agreed on and developed by the Protocol Departments of the countries concerned, it will usually contain the following:

1.3.1. State Visit of the Head of the State:

- Official welcome/farewell at the airport
- State welcoming ceremony at Riga Castle
- Exchange of decorations (State Visits only)
- Exchange of gifts
- Meeting with the President of the Republic of Latvia
- Flower-laying ceremony at the Freedom Monument

- Meeting with the Chairman (Speaker) of the Saeima (Parliament)
- Meeting with the Prime Minister (the Prime Minister usually comes to the official residence)
- Visit to the Occupation Museum
- State Dinner
- Courtesy call on the Mayor of Riga
- Visit to an institution of culture or science, a public address or lecture.
- Visit outside Riga
- Courtesy- return function (luncheon, dinner, reception) hosted by the guest country in honour of the visit of the Head of State (State Visits only)

1.3.2. Official visit of the Head of the Government:

- Official welcome/farewell at the airport
- Official welcome and flower-laying at the Freedom Monument
- Meeting with the Prime Minister
- Official luncheon/dinner
- Meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Courtesy call on the President of the Republic of Latvia
- Courtesy call on the Chairman (Speaker) of the Saeima (Parliament)
- Visit to the Occupation Museum
- Visit to an institution of culture/ science, public address/lecture.

1.3.3. Official visit of the Minister for Foreign Affairs:

- Official welcome /farewell at the airport
- Meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Official flower-laying ceremony at the Freedom Monument
- Official luncheon/dinner
- Courtesy call on the President of the Republic of Latvia
- Courtesy call on the Chairman (Speaker) of the Saeima (Parliament)
- Courtesy call on the Prime Minister
- Visit to the Occupation Museum
- Visit to an institution of culture/ science, public address/lecture

1.3.4. Members of the Official Delegation

On request the State Protocol may arrange separate programmes for the members of the official delegation during state and official visits.

1.3.5. The Unofficial Delegation

Programmes for the unofficial delegation are usually arranged by the respective foreign Embassy. The Latvian side may render assistance in booking accommodation and making transport arrangements in relation to the visit programme.

1.3.6. Working Visits.

The duration of a working visit usually does not exceed one or two days, and usually it takes place only in the capital.

1.3.7. Private Visits.

The programme for a private visit is arranged by the respective foreign Embassy.

1.3. 8. Visits in Transit and Visits due to Technical Reasons.

Security measures are provided during transit visits and visits due to technical reasons.

1.4. Practical Information

The State Protocol will designate a Protocol Officer to be responsible for arranging the visit to Latvia. It is advisable that the Embassy also designates one person to liaise with the Protocol Officer.

1.4.1. Lists of Participants

To facilitate seating and transportation arrangements, lists should be submitted to the State Protocol as early as possible indicating the participants of meetings and other events. The list of the delegation should include the following: full name, title and order of precedence.

1.4.2. Language

The State Protocol shall be notified as to what language the VIP prefers to speak during official meetings, and whether an interpreter is required or if the guest is bringing an interpreter.

1.4.3. Arrival/departure

- **VIP lounge:** The State Protocol is responsible for booking the VIP lounge at the airport.
- **Passports and luggage:** A member of the visiting delegation shall be designated to collect passports and luggage tags prior to landing in Latvia and will hand them over to the Latvian protocol officer in charge at the airport upon arrival and departure. A member of the Embassy staff, or a designated member of the delegation, should assist with luggage handling on arrival and departure.
- **Special flights :** An application for overflight and landing permission for the aircraft must be submitted by the Embassy concerned to the State Protocol of the MFA at least a week before arrival. The Embassy is responsible for making all the necessary arrangements regarding the flight. The same applies to booking a hotel and arranging transportation for the crew of the aircraft.

1.4.4. Local Transportation

The Latvian side provides transport for the VIP, his or her spouse, the official delegation and their luggage, where necessary.

If the number of persons of the delegation exceeds the number stated in sub-section 1.5.1, it is the responsibility of the Embassy concerned to cover expenses for the rest of the persons. Journalists accompanying the delegation use vehicles provided by the Embassy, however, the State Protocol will render assistance if requested.

1.4.5. Accommodation:

For VIPs and official delegations hotel reservations will be made by the State Protocol.

1.4.6. Security

Security provisions during the visit are the responsibility of the Latvian Government. Security officers of the visiting state escorting the VIPs are requested to respect the regulations of the Republic of Latvia concerning firearms.

Accompanying bodyguards of the VIP must be identified well in advance, and the following information shall be submitted to the State Protocol: full name, passport number, ID number, date and place of birth. If the bodyguards are armed, full details must be provided concerning any firearms to be brought in Latvia, specifically: type and number of firearms, quantity and calibre of ammunition.

If the security officials accompanying VIP wish to bring along communication equipment, the frequencies and the capacity of radio equipment must be notified in advance to the State Protocol providing the number and type of transmitters, the required and reserve operating frequency, the period of time for which the permit is needed.

1.4.7. Dietary Restrictions or Preferences

Any dietary restrictions of the VIP or any other member of the official delegation, as well as particular preferences or any other information which might be useful, should be submitted to the State Protocol well in advance.

1.4.8. Medical Care

Medical care for the VIP, his or her spouse and the official delegation is provided for the duration of their stay in Latvia.

In order to make all the necessary arrangements, the State Protocol requests the following information and details to be submitted as early as possible prior to the visit:

- blood group of the VIP and his or her spouse,
- information regarding any special health precautions to be taken by the VIP and by members of the official delegation, or
- any other special information that needs to be taken into account during the State visit

1.4.9. Exchange of Gifts and Decorations during Visits

- **Exchange of Gifts and Decorations during State and Official Visits**

Gifts

The visiting Head of State and the President of the Republic of Latvia usually exchange gifts during state and official visits, if the Protocol services of both states have agreed about it in advance.

The exchange of gifts may be done directly or indirectly.

Direct exchange of gifts is practised between the Heads of States during state and official visits

The official delegations exchange gifts indirectly, i.e, through Protocol.

The spouses of the Head of State of the guest country and the President of the Republic of Latvia, the aides-de-camps of the host and guest countries, heads of the relevant Presidential protocol of both states, and the official press may attend the ceremony.

Other categories of visits do not foresee the exchange of gifts as an essential requirement of Protocol. The State Protocol takes this opportunity to issue a reminder that in all cases the exchange of gifts should be initiated by the visiting state.

Decorations

In the case of a State Visit, an exchange of decorations may be arranged.

- **Exchange of gifts between Heads of Government and Ministers for Foreign Affairs during Official Visits.**

Acting on the visiting state's initiative to exchange gifts during the official visit of the Heads of Government and Ministers for Foreign Affairs, the exchange of gifts between the VIPs is traditionally carried out directly.

1.4.10. Other arrangements

Information about any other appointments arranged by the Embassy which have to be included into the programme shall be submitted to the State Protocol in advance. This should also contain information about any sightseeing that is scheduled or requested etc.

1.4.11. Programme for accompanying spouse

The State Protocol will be pleased to arrange a separate programme for the official guest's accompanying spouse during state and official visits. The State Protocol would appreciate being informed about his or her special interests as early as possible. A Protocol officer will be designated to take charge of the programme.

1.5. Financial Aspects of the Visits

1.5.1. Expenses covered by the Latvian Government:

The Latvian side covers the expenses for the following number of persons:

for Heads of State:

State visit	up to 15 persons: 1(VIP)+14 or 2 (VIP+spouse)+13
Official visit	up to 10 persons: 1(VIP)+9 or 2(VIP+spouse)+8

for Heads of Government

Official visit	up to 10 persons: 1(VIP)+9 or 2(VIP+spouse)+8
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for Ministers for Foreign Affairs

Official visit	up to 5 persons: 1(VIP)+4 or 2(VIP+spouse)+3
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However, the size of the official delegation, the number of persons to be accommodated and transportation provided may be modified according to the principle of reciprocity, which may increase or reduce the stated limits.

The financial aspects of working visits are agreed on during the development of the visit programme and the principle of reciprocity is observed.

The size of an unofficial delegation is not restricted.

The expenses for the official delegation during state and official visits referred above include:

- Hotel accommodation;
- Meals and transportation in connection with the official programme;
- Use of the VIP centre at the Airport.

1.5.2. Expenses not covered by the Latvian Government during state and official visits:

Any other expenses, e.g. telecommunication services, mini-bar, laundry, dry cleaning, incurred by members of the official delegation are not covered by the Latvian side, except those of the Head of State or Government and Foreign Minister.

The financial aspects of a forthcoming working visit are usually initially co-ordinated by State Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and by the Protocol service of the State concerned. The principle of reciprocity may be applied.

Advance Team

In connection with the preparation of the state and official visits, an advance team may arrive in Latvia before the visit of the VIP. The size of the advance team is not limited. Financial expenses of the advance team will not be covered by the Latvian Government. The same applies to official guests and delegation members who arrive in Latvia before the official programme begins, or remain in the country after it has ended.

1.6. Standard of Visits

1.6. 1. Visit by a Head of State

	State Visit	Official Visit
Invitation	Official invitation of the Head of the State	Official invitation of the Head of the State
Arrival	<p>Welcome at the airport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minister of Foreign Affairs or minister delegated by the Head of the Government, • Head of the State Protocol, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, • Ambassador of the visiting state accredited to the Republic of Latvia, • Ambassador of the Republic of Latvia accredited to the foreign state concerned, • Head of the President's Protocol division <p><i>Red carpet, Guard of Honour, State flags</i></p>	<p>Welcome at the airport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of the State Protocol, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, • Ambassador of the visiting state accredited to the Republic of Latvia, • Ambassador of the Republic of Latvia accredited to the foreign state concerned, • Head of the President's Protocol division <p><i>Red carpet, Guard of Honour, State flags</i></p>
	<p>State Welcoming Ceremony (at Riga Castle) Welcome by the President of the Republic of Latvia and his/her spouse, if the Guest is accompanied by his/her spouse, and the official delegation.</p> <p><i>Red carpet, anthems, Guard of Honour, State flags.</i></p>	<p>Official Welcoming Ceremony (at Riga Castle) See: a State Visit</p>
Departure	At the airport- as for the welcoming ceremony	At the airport- as for the welcoming ceremony
Flags	State flags of the Republic of	State flags of the Republic of

	Latvia and the Guest's State are flown on the places of arrival/departure, Guest's official Residence, and in the venues according to the programme of the visit.	Latvia and the Guest's State are flown on the places of arrival/departure, Guest's official Residence, and in the venues according to the programme of the visit.
Accompanying persons during the visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of the State Protocol, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, • Ambassador of the visiting state accredited to the Republic of Latvia, • Ambassador of Latvia accredited to the state concerned, • and their spouses, if the Head of State is accompanied by his/her spouse, • Head of the President's Protocol division 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of the State Protocol, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, • Ambassador of the visiting state accredited to the Republic of Latvia, • Ambassador of Latvia accredited to the state concerned, • and their spouses, if the Head of State is accompanied by his/her spouse, • Head of the President's Protocol division
Accommodation	Official delegation- up to 15 persons	Official delegation-up to 10 persons
Transport in the state	Official delegation- up to 15 persons	Official delegation-up to 10 persons
Security	Provided	Provided
Traffic police	Provided	Provided
Escort	Provided	Provided
Medical aid	Provided	Provided
Gifts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually direct exchange, also for the spouses of the Heads of the State. • Delegation- indirect exchange. <p><i>Gifts are exchanged following the Guests' initiative</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually direct exchange, also for the spouses of the Heads of the State. • Delegation- indirect exchange. <p><i>Gifts are exchanged following the Guests' initiative</i></p>
Exchange of decorations	May take place	Not envisaged

Official meals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A state official function (State Dinner) persons. • Official speeches by the President of Latvia and the Guest. • Anthems of the States • The Head of the Guest's State hosts an official courtesy return function (luncheon, dinner or reception). • Official toasts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official dinner or reception or luncheon • Official speeches
Visit programme	Printed State Visit programme provided	Printed Official Visit programme provided
	Working Visit	
Invitation	Head of State's invitation or Guest's initiative	
Arrival	<p>Usually no official welcoming ceremony.</p> <p>Welcome by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of State Protocol, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, • Ambassador of the visiting state accredited to the Republic of Latvia, • Ambassador of the Republic of Latvia accredited to the foreign state concerned, and their spouses, if the Head of State is accompanied by his or her spouse, • Officer of the President's Protocol division 	
Departure	As for the welcoming ceremony	
Flags	State flags of the Republic of Latvia and the Guest's state are flown on the places of	

	arrival/departure, Guest's official residence, and in the venues according to the programme of the visit.	
Accompanying persons during the visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambassador of the visiting state accredited to the Republic of Latvia, • Ambassador of the Republic of Latvia accredited to the foreign state concerned, • their spouses, if the Head of State is accompanied by his other spouse, • Officer of the President's Protocol division 	
Accommodation	Accommodation for VIP and his or her spouse	
Transportation	On the basis of the principle of reciprocity, or at the expense of the Guest's state	
Traffic police	Provided	
Security	Provided	
Medical aid	Provided	
Gifts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually not exchanged. • Indirect exchange of gifts <i>acting on the Guests' initiative</i> 	
Exchange of decorations	Not envisaged	
Hospitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official working luncheon or • Dinner for the official delegation 	
Visit programme	A printed working visit programme provided	
	Private Visit	Visit in transit, or due to technical reasons

Invitation	No invitation.	In transit, technical reasons
Arrival	<p>VIP lounge</p> <p>Welcome by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambassador of the visiting state accredited to the Republic of Latvia and his or her spouse, if the Head of State is accompanied by his/her spouse, • Officer of the President's Protocol division 	<p>VIP lounge</p> <p>Welcome by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officer of the President's Protocol division
Departure	As for the arrival	As for the arrival
Flags	Flag of the visiting guest's state	Flag of the visiting guest's state
Security	Provided upon request	Provided upon request
Hospitality	VIP lounge costs for the VIP and his and her spouse	VIP lounge costs for the VIP and his other spouse

1.6. 2. Visit by a Head of Government

	Official Visit	Working Visit
Invitation	Official invitation of the Head of Government	The invitation of Head of the Government or at Guest's initiative
Arrival	<p>At the airport Welcome by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a high-ranking official delegated by the Head of Government and his or her spouse, if the Guest is accompanied by his or her spouse. • Head of State Protocol, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, • Ambassador of the visiting state accredited to the Republic of Latvia, • Ambassador of the Republic of Latvia accredited to the foreign state concerned, • State Protocol officer <p><i>Red carpet</i></p> <p>Official Welcoming Ceremony and Flower laying at the Freedom Monument</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome by the Head of the Government and his or her spouse, if the Guest is accompanied by a spouse. • Guard of Honour inspection and greeting of the Guard of Honour. • National anthems • Official flower laying • Presentation of the official delegations 	<p>Usually no official welcoming ceremony . Welcome by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of State Protocol, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, • Ambassador of the visiting state accredited to the Republic of Latvia, • Ambassador of the Republic of Latvia accredited to the foreign state concerned • and their spouses, if the Guest is accompanied by his other spouse • State Protocol officer <p><i>Red carpet</i></p>

Departure	At the airport- as for the welcoming ceremony	At the airport- as for the welcoming ceremony
Flags	State flags of the Republic of Latvia and the Guest's state are flown on the places of arrival/departure, Guest's official residence, and in the venues according to the programme of the visit.	State flags of the Republic of Latvia and the Guest's state are flown on the places of arrival/departure, Guest's official residence, and in the venues according to the programme of the visit.
Accommodation	Official delegation(up to 10 persons)	On the basis of the principle of reciprocity, but not exceeding 10 persons, or at the expense of the Guest's state.
Transport in the state	Official delegation(up to 10 persons)	On the basis of the principle of reciprocity, but not exceeding 10 persons, or at the expense of the Guest's state.
Security	Provided	
Medical assistance	Provided	
Gifts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually direct exchange of gifts by the Heads of the Government and their spouses, <i>acting on the Guest's initiative.</i> • Delegation- indirect exchange 	Usually not envisaged.
Hospitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official dinner or luncheon for the official delegation. • Official toasts. 	Working luncheon or dinner for the official delegation
Visit programme	Official visit programme	Working visit programme
	Private visit	Visit in transit, or due to technical reasons
Invitation	No invitation.	Transit, technical reasons
Arrival	VIP lounge Welcome by the State Protocol officer	VIP lounge Welcome by the State Protocol officer
Departure	As for the arrival	As for the arrival

Flags	Flag of the visiting State	Flag of the visiting State
Security	Provided under request	Provided under request
Hospitality	VIP lounge costs for VIP and his or her spouse	VIP lounge costs for VIP and his or her spouse

1.6. 3. Visit by a Minister for Foreign Affairs

	Official Visit	Working Visit
Invitation	Official invitation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs	Invitation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs or Guest's initiative
Arrival	<p>Welcome by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of State Protocol, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, • Ambassador of the visiting state accredited to the Republic of Latvia, • Ambassador of the Republic of Latvia accredited to the foreign state concerned, • their spouses, if the Guest is accompanied by his or her spouse. <p>• State Protocol officer</p> <p><i>Red carpet.</i></p>	<p>Welcome by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of State Protocol, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, • Ambassador of the visiting state accredited to the Republic of Latvia, • Ambassador of the Republic of Latvia accredited to the foreign state concerned, • their spouses, if the Guest is accompanied by his other spouse. <p>• State Protocol officer</p>
Departure	Analogue to the welcoming ceremony	Analogue to the welcoming ceremony
Flags	State flags of the Republic of Latvia and the Guest's state are displayed at the places of arrival/departure, in the venues according to the programme of the visit, Guest's official residence	State flags of the Republic of Latvia and the Guest's state are displayed at the places of arrival/departure, in the venues according to the programme of the visit, Guest's official residence
Accompanying persons during the visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of State Protocol • State Protocol officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Protocol officer

Accommodation	Official delegation (up to 5 persons)	On the basis of the principle of reciprocity, but not exceeding 5 persons, or at the expense of the Guest's state.
Transportation	Official delegation (up to 5 persons)	On the basis of the principle of reciprocity, but not exceeding 5 persons, or at the expense of the Guest's state.
Gifts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually direct exchange of gifts by the Ministers and their spouses, <i>actin on the Guest's initiative.</i> • Delegation- indirect protocol exchange 	Usually not envisaged
Hospitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official dinner or luncheon for the official delegation. • Official toasts. 	Working luncheon or dinner for the official delegation
Visit programme	Official visit programme	Working visit programme
	Private visit	Visit in transit, or due to technical reasons
Invitation	No invitation.	Transit, technical reasons
Arrival	VIP lounge Welcome by the State Protocol officer	VIP lounge
Departure	VIP lounge	VIP lounge
Flags	Flag of the visiting State	Flag of the visiting State
Security	Provided	Provided
Hospitality	VIP lounge costs for VIP and his or her spouse	VIP lounge costs for VIP and his or her spouse

2. THE DIPLOMAT IN LATVIA

2.1. Arrival and Departure of Members of Diplomatic Missions

2.1.1. Notification of appointments

In conformity with Article 10 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961), Missions are requested to notify the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereinafter- Ministry) as soon as possible of the appointment, the dates of arrival and final departure of members of diplomatic missions and career consular posts, as well as members of their families and private servants (other than persons resident in Latvia and not entitled to privileges and immunities).

In addition to the above, the State Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereinafter- the State Protocol) requests the Missions to submit a list of diplomatic staff twice a year.

2.1.2. Identity cards (ID-cards)

The State Protocol issues identity cards (hereinafter- ID cards) to members of missions, consular posts and international organisations, administrative-technical staff, as well as private servants, honorary consuls general and honorary consuls for the term of office or residence in Latvia.

Missions should take note of the fact that the Ministry does not accept the assignment of Latvian nationals or permanent residents as diplomatic agents in Latvia. Similarly the Ministry does not issue ID cards to locally engaged staff of missions who have permanent residence in Latvia.

ID card holders are advised to carry their ID cards with them in order to be able to prove their identity and their registration with the State Protocol.

ID cards are granted to the family members of the staff of missions, consular posts, international organisations and administrative-technical staff.

The Ministry does not issue ID cards to:

- family members of service staff and private servants;
- family members of staff of missions, consular posts, international organisations and administrative-technical staff who are Latvian nationals or permanently resident in Latvia;
- family members of honorary consuls general and honorary consuls.

2.1.2.1. Types of Identity cards

Persons subject to accreditation are issued ID cards of six categories (A,B,C,D,E,F), depending on their status and eligibility to privileges and immunities:

- category A (red) – to heads of mission and members of the mission who enjoy privileges and immunities under international law;
- category B (yellow)- to members of administrative and technical staff of mission who enjoy restricted privileges and immunities under international law ;

- category C (white) – to heads and members of the representations of international organisations who enjoy privileges and immunities according to relevant international treaties;
- category D (blue)- to career consular officers who enjoy privileges and immunities under international law;
- category E (grey)- to honorary consuls general and honorary consuls of foreign states;
- category F (green)- to members of the service staff of a mission and to private servants.

2.1.2.2. Registration of new staff members

For registration of a new staff member the mission shall submit to the State Protocol the following documents:

- a completed registration form which is available from the State Protocol, Division of diplomatic privileges and immunities and on the English version of the Ministry's website under "Protocol"- Standard forms. *Application form for ID card for foreign diplomats.*
OR
"Diplomatic and consular representations" *Application form for ID card for foreign diplomats.*
- Filled in electronically or by hand using block letters, it has to be signed by the applicant and the Head of Mission, and the seal of the mission must be affixed;
- a copy of the passport;
- 2 (two) photos;
- Please note that photos (30x40 mm) should be no older than six months. The name of the applicant as well as the name of the mission should be written on the back of both photographs;
- a Verbal Note.

Missions and consular posts are requested to return the ID cards of departing members of missions and consular posts and their family members to the State Protocol within a week of their final departure from Latvia or the termination of their functions. The State Protocol may delay the issuance of an ID card to a newcomer until the predecessor and his family members have returned their identity cards.

An ID card is issued for a period of three years, unless the validity of the person's passport is shorter. Where a person is appointed to the mission for a period less than three years, the ID card shall be issued, at the request of the mission, for a specified period of time.

Application form for ID card for foreign diplomats

[\(Word.doc format, size 48,0 KB\)](#)

[\(Adobe.pdf format, size 91,0 KB\)](#)

2.1.2.3. Lost ID Card

If your ID card is stolen, please immediately inform the nearest Police station. In the event the ID card is lost or stolen, the mission shall forward a note with an enclosed

application for a new ID card, a copy of the passport and 2 photos (see section No. 1.2.2). If the ID card has been stolen, a copy of the police report shall be also attached .

2.1.2.4. Extension of ID card

The procedure for extension of ID cards is identical to that of registration of new staff members (see section No. 1.2.3.). The expired ID card shall be attached to the Verbal Note or submitted to the State Protocol at the moment of delivering the new card. The mission should apply for extension of ID cards before the expiry of old ID cards.

2.1.3. Family members

Family members of staff of the mission, if they are not citizens or permanent residents in the Republic of Latvia, are issued ID cards of the same category as the accredited person. They enjoy the same diplomatic or consular immunities and privileges in the territory of the Republic of Latvia as the registered person.

The following persons are regarded as family members of the staff of the mission:

- spouse of the person concerned. This applies both to officially registered and non-registered marriages, the only criterion being the recognition of the marriage by the government of the respective sending state. This recognition may be demonstrated by a copy of the marriage certificate or other confirmation provided by the respective Ministry of Foreign Affairs on recognition of the person as a spouse by the government of the respective state;
- unmarried children under the age of 18 who reside exclusively in the principal household or join the household during visits to Latvia;
- unmarried children under the age of 21 attending an institution of graduate studies in Latvia on a full-time basis who continue to form part of the household and depend on it financially.

In exceptional cases ID cards may be issued to other persons, if the registered person regards them as members of his or her family and who are part of his or her household. Each such case is considered on an individual basis upon receipt of a Verbal Note with reasonable arguments/justifiable reasons from the mission.

For registration, each family member shall fill in the application form (see section No. 1.2.3.) individually and a copy of his/her passport shall be included, together with 2 photos . For minors, the application form shall be signed by a parent and the Head of Mission.

2.1.4. The Diplomatic List

The Diplomatic List, including also the Directory of International Organisations and Honorary Consuls, is produced from the Protocol database. It is updated twice a year.

The Diplomatic List gives telephone, fax and e-mail details for use by members of the public.

However, the State Protocol may ask the embassies for emergency after hours and mobile telephone contact numbers to be used in case of emergency. This information will not be made public.

As of 1 January 2008, the Diplomatic List will not be published in a hard copy format. The content of the List will appear on the Ministry's website at: www.mfa.gov.lv.

Missions are encouraged to access the List on the website for current information.

Although the website is updated regularly, the State Protocol will request missions to check the accuracy of the computer printout of the mission's entries. The latter will be communicated to the missions and posts twice a year. It is essential that posts respond to this communication, even if no amendments to their entries are required.

2.2. Arrival and Departure of Heads of Mission

2.2.1. Agrément

In accordance with Article 4 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961), Agrément shall be sought for the person proposed to be accredited as the Head of Mission to the Republic of Latvia.

Agrément shall be received before the person concerned officially arrives in Latvia or his or her identity is made public. The request for Agrément shall include a curriculum vitae of the person proposed to be accredited as the Head of Mission.

A request for Agrément may be submitted to the Head of State Protocol. Such requests may be made in the form of a Verbal Note or letter from the mission concerned in Riga, or from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the sending state or, in case of non-resident missions, by communication through the Latvian mission in the capital where the Head of Mission resides.

In cases where the Head of Mission is to be accredited to more than one state and the head is to reside outside Latvia, it is customary to await the Agrément of the country in which the prospective head of the mission is to reside. If the new Head of Mission is not to reside in the same place as his predecessor, the Republic of Latvia should also be notified to that effect in compliance with Article 5, paragraph 1 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961).

Once Agrément has been given, State Protocol will notify the sending state through the diplomatic channels concerned. The granting of Agrément can then be made public as desired.

2.2.2. Arrival of Ambassador-designate

The Ambassador-designate, who will reside in Latvia, is free to arrive in the country at any time following the notification of the Agrément.

As soon as State Protocol is provided with Ambassador-designate's date of arrival along with a request for a date for the presentation of the Letters of Credence, the State Protocol will schedule the date of the presentation of the Letters of Credence with the Chancery of the President.

As soon as the date of the ceremony for the presentation of the Letters of Credence is set, the Ambassador-designate will receive from the State Protocol notification

concerning the date of the above-mentioned ceremony and an aide-memoire concerning the presentation of credentials from State Protocol prior to his or her arrival in Riga.

Upon his or her arrival in Riga, the Ambassador-designate will be greeted at Riga International Airport by a State Protocol officer. Although Ambassadors-designate are free to choose the time and day of arrival in Riga, the State Protocol would appreciate it if their arrivals were not to coincide with weekends or national holidays, or take place out of office hours.

For non-resident Ambassador-designate, it is recommended that he or she arrives **at least one day** before the ceremony of the presentation of the Letters of Credence. Usually the official programme of the accreditation visit should not exceed 3 working days.

On arrival to take up his or her post as a Head of Mission the expenses concerning the VIP service at Riga International Airport will be covered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. For non-resident Ambassadors transfers from/to the Airport or any other place of the arrival/departure, as well as transfers in Riga, according to the visit programme, will be covered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well.

Ambassadors do not take up their functions and/or any public duties in Latvia until they have presented their Letters of Credence to the President of the Republic of Latvia.

Likewise, the Head of Mission-designate may not enter into contact with other Ministers or Secretaries of State, or with members of the Saeima (Parliament) or other elected representatives of the institutions, or with officials from other Ministries, and may not entertain in an official status until his or her Letters of Credence have been presented to the President of the Republic of Latvia, an act which marks the formal completion of his or her accreditation procedures.

In accordance with Article 13 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961), precedence among Ambassadors depends on the date of presentation of the Letters of Credence to the President.

2.2.3. Presentation of the Letters of Credence

2.2.3.1. Presentation of copies of the Letters of Credence and Recall

- Copies of the Letters of Credence and Recall of his or her predecessor are presented to the Minister of Foreign Affairs if the programme of the accreditation visit envisages an official call on the Minister before the accreditation ceremony at the President. In other cases copies of the Letters are presented to the State Secretary or Head of the State Protocol.
- Once the Minister of Foreign Affairs (State Secretary or Head of the State Protocol) has received the copies of the Letters of Credence and Recall of his or her predecessor, the Ambassador-designate may contact the Ministry on a working basis.
- Were there any need for contacts to be made or specific meetings to be held due to a *force majeure* situation, the new Ambassador should inform the Head of State Protocol.

- Similarly, the new Ambassador should refrain during this period from giving public interviews or making official declarations to the mass media.

2.2.3.2. Practical aspects for the preparation of the ceremony

The State Protocol is in charge of the organisation of the ceremony of presentation of the Letters of Credence. All practical aspects are arranged in close cooperation with the mission of the relevant country. The Embassy concerned will be supplied with all the necessary information, particularly detailing the ceremonial aspects of the ceremony of the presentation of the Letters of Credence.

When the date of the ceremony has been determined, the Embassy is requested to forward the following information to the State Protocol:

- Time of the arrival and departure (if not resident) of the Ambassador, including the flight number;
- Names of accompanying persons;
- Working language to be used at the audiences;

2.2.3.3. Courtesy call on the Head of the State Protocol

On the predetermined date (usually on the day of presentation of the Letters of Credence) the Ambassador-designate pays a courtesy visit to the Head of State Protocol.

2.2.3.4. Ceremony of presentation of the Letters of Credence

Dress code: dark suit, diplomatic or military uniform, national dress.

Venue: Chancery of the President of the Republic of Latvia, Riga Castle.

Official languages: Latvian and English

- **Arrival at the President's Chancery**

On the day of the ceremony, at the time advised in the programme, after courtesy calls at the Ministry, the Ambassador leaves for Riga Castle for the Ceremony of the presentation of the Letters of Credence. The Ambassador, escorted by State Protocol, boards limousine and the motorcade proceeds to the Riga Castle. The Ambassador's party should comprise the spouse of the Ambassador (if wished) and maximum three persons of the diplomatic staff of the Embassy, including the Defence Attaché.

The State Protocol will provide following vehicles to take the Ambassador and his or her suite to Riga Castle:

- for Ambassadors residing in Riga: a limousine (VIP)
- for non-resident Ambassadors: a limousine (VIP) and a motor-car (VIP's suit)

The President's Protocol officer will greet the Ambassador and his or her party in the lobby of Riga Castle and will invite the Ambassador, his or her party and the Head of State Protocol to the Green Hall, where they will wait for the beginning of the ceremony.

- **Description of the Ceremony of the Presentation of the Letters of Credence**

Following the first fanfares, the Head of State Protocol will accompany the Ambassador and his or her suite to the Dorothea Salon next to the Hall of Coats of Arms.

They will enter the Hall of Coats of Arms and walk directly towards the centre of the hall. The Ambassador will make a light bow by head to the President of the Republic of Latvia. The accompanying party will follow the Ambassador and take their places behind him.

The Head of State Protocol will introduce the Ambassador to the President by saying in Latvian *“Your Excellency, President of the Republic of Latvia, I have the honour to present to you the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to be accredited of the Republic of..... H.E.”*.

As soon as this short presentation ends, the President will make a small sign to the Ambassador requesting him or her to introduce himself or herself to the President of the Republic of Latvia, saying : *“Your Excellency, I have the honour to present and to express my.....”*.

The Ambassador will then approach the President and stop at a distance of two steps so that he or she will be able to hand over his or her Letters of Credence to the President of the Republic of Latvia. As the Ambassador approaches the President, the Ambassador’s party will move several steps as indicated by the relevant officers of the President’s Protocol division of State Protocol.

Then he or she will hand over the Letters of Credence together with the Letters of Recall of his or her predecessor to the President, who will reply accordingly. After the presentation of the Letters of Credence, an official photo will be taken of the President together with the Ambassador.

Following that, the Ambassador will request permission from the President to introduce his or her party with the words: *“Your Excellency, may I present to you the member(s) of my staff?”*

At the end of the official ceremony the President will invite the Ambassador to the Golden Hall for a brief conversation in the presence of the President’s Political Adviser and a representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Ambassador’s spouse and one other person of the diplomatic staff of the Embassy may be present.

The ceremony is over after a short conversation and the Ambassador, together with the accompanying suite, are escorted by the Head of State Protocol to the courtyard of Riga Castle, where the cars are waiting. The Ambassador boards the limousine and an officer of State Protocol will accompany him or her to the hotel, the place of residence or to a location where another meeting is to take place.

2.2.3.5. Gifts

According to the traditions of Latvian Protocol it is not customary for gifts to be presented (neither directly nor indirectly) to the President during the Ceremony of the Presentation of the Letters of Credence.

2.2.3.6. Duration of the accreditation visits of the Head of Mission

a) Resident Head of Mission

Accreditation visits of a resident Head of Mission include courtesy calls on the President of the Republic of Latvia, Speaker of the Parliament, Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Secretary of State of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. These visits are organised by the State Protocol and included in the official programme.

Other appointments should be arranged by the Ambassador's office.

b) Non-resident Head of Mission

Accreditation visits of a non-resident Head of Mission usually do not exceed 3 working days. The Programme may include courtesy calls on the President of the Republic of Latvia, Speaker of the Parliament, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Secretary of State of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Upon Ambassador's wish other calls, such as on the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, ministers of the Cabinet, the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, the Chairman of the European Affairs Committee etc., may also be organised by the State Protocol.

At the same time, the State Protocol would advise non-resident Heads of Mission to avoid courtesy calls to the Prime Minister, as they are not practiced.

The State Protocol would request the Embassy to convey the information concerning other appointments for the accreditation visits of the Ambassador in advance.

2.2.4. Departure of a resident Head of Mission

The mission shall inform the State Protocol of the date of termination of office of the Head of Mission in Latvia by means of a Verbal Note. The Ambassador should call on the Head of State Protocol. A programme for the Ambassador's farewell visits is agreed on this occasion. According to Latvian Protocol, the Ambassador pays official farewell visits to the President of the Republic of Latvia, the Speaker of the Saeima and the Minister for Foreign Affairs and to the State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Other farewell visits, taking into account the Ambassador's preferences, can also be arranged by the State Protocol.

A farewell luncheon is usually arranged for Ambassadors resident in Riga and their spouses, and hosted by the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

An officer from State Protocol will escort the Ambassador to Riga International Airport to bid farewell. The State Protocol will appreciate if departures would not take place on weekends and national holidays, or out of office hours.

The expenses concerning the VIP Lounge service at Riga International Airport will be covered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

2.2.5. Departure of a non-resident Head of Mission

Missions shall inform the State Protocol of the date of termination of office of Heads of Mission in Latvia by a Verbal Note. In order to arrange the programme of the Ambassador's farewell visit, State Protocol would appreciate being informed about the arrival of the Ambassador in due time.

The following information shall be conveyed to the State Protocol:

- Time of the arrival and departure of the Ambassador, including the flight number;
- Names of accompanying persons;
- Hotel reservation (if needed);
- Working language to be used at the audiences;
- List of intended farewell calls.

The respective Embassy will be supplied with the information setting out the details of the Ambassador's programme in Riga.

The State Protocol's officer will escort the Ambassador and his delegation along the programme of the visit.

On departure from Riga the Ambassador and his accompanying party will be escorted by an officer of the State Protocol to Riga International Airport. The State Protocol will appreciate if their departures do not coincide with weekends and national holidays, as well as out of office hours.

The expenses concerning the VIP Lounge Service at Riga International Airport, as well as transfers from/to the Airport and in Riga, with respect of the programme of the visit will be covered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well.

2.2.6. Appointment of Chargés d'Affaires ad interim

In accordance with Article 19 of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, if the post of head of mission is vacant, or if the head of mission is unable to perform his duties, a Chargé d'Affaires ad interim shall act provisionally as head of the mission. The name of the Chargé d'Affaires ad interim shall be notified, either by the head of the mission in a letter bearing his or her signature or, in the case where he or she is unable to do so, by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the sending state to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the receiving state.

In cases where no member of the diplomatic staff of the mission is present in the receiving state, a member of the administrative and technical staff may, with consent of the receiving state, be designated by the sending state to be in charge of the day-to-day administrative affairs of the mission. Such person will have the title of Chargé d'Affaires.

Please note that a Chargé d'Affaires ad interim may not appoint another Chargé d'Affaires ad interim.

2.3. Appointment of Defence Attachés

Article 7 of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations makes provision, in the case of appointment of Defence, Naval, Army and Air Attachés to the staff of missions, for the receiving State to require that the names of all such appointees be submitted in advance for its approval. Missions should submit names and a brief biography to the State Protocol, Ministry of Foreign Affairs at least four weeks before the planned arrival date.

Military personnel may be appointed to the Republic of Latvia only after the sending state has secured the Latvian Government's consent to the establishment of a defence

office within the mission. The approval of the appointment will be communicated to the Mission by means of a Verbal Note.

2.3.1. Notification of arrival and departure

Defence, Naval, Army and Air Attachés who have been approved remain subject to the provisions of Section 2.1 Arrivals and Departures of Diplomatic Missions.

2.3.2. Courtesy visit to the Minister of Defence

On arrival the Defence Attaché should pay his first courtesy visit to the Minister of Defence or, in the latter's absence, to the State Secretary of the Ministry of Defence.

No special accreditation ceremony is envisaged.

2.3.3. Other calls at the Ministry of Defence (hereafter - MoD) and its subordinated institutions

The defence attaché should feel free to pay whatever calls he wishes.

The list below is meant to be a recommendation for the setting up of courtesy visits at the Ministry of Defence and National Armed Forces:

- Deputy Secretary of State (Defence planning), (MoD)
- Director of the International Relations Department, (MoD).

- The Commander of National Armed Forces (NAF),
- The Chief of NAF Joint Headquarters,
- The Commander of Land Forces (LF),
- The Commander of Naval Forces (NF),
- The Commander of Air Forces (AF),
- The Commander of National Guard (NG).

The Embassy shall request the Protocol and Visits section at the Ministry of Defence to make appointments for the visits in advance.

Contact:

Ms. Maija Strazdiņa, Chief of the Protocol and Visits section, MoD

Tel: +371 6733 5043

Fax: +371 6724 3115

e-mail: maija.strazdina@mod.gov.lv

2.3.4. Identity cards

Along with the diplomatic and consular corps, Defence Attachés are registered at the State Protocol of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and issued an identity card. (See subsection 2.1.2 Identity cards-ID cards).

2.4. The Consular Corps

2.4.1. Consular functions

The establishment of a consular post in the Republic of Latvia requires the Latvian Government's prior consent and its approval of the seat, classification and consular district, in accordance with Article 4 of the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Affairs. New post proposals should be addressed to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia. If the proposing country has a diplomatic mission in Latvia, the mission may initiate the request by a Verbal Note to the Ministry. A consular post headed by a career consular officer may also seek consent for a new consular post to be established in this way. If, however, the proposing country does not have diplomatic representation in Latvia, or is represented by honorary consular officers only, the request should come direct from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the sending state's capital through the nearest, most convenient Latvian mission.

When a country proposes to establish a new consular post headed by a career consular officer, the request to establish a post should address the projected scope and volume of the workload of the new post.

Where a country maintains diplomatic representation in Latvia, members of the mission may perform whatever consular functions are required in accordance with Article 70 of the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Affairs and Article 3(2) of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. Members of diplomatic missions (i.e. based in Riga) may perform such functions throughout Latvia, regardless of the existence of any consular post or its approved consular district.

2.4.2. Consular districts

The number of consular districts corresponds to the number of representations the relevant foreign state has been granted permission to open.

The consular district of the Embassy includes also consular districts of other consular representations.

Overlapping of consular districts is not allowed.

2.4.3. Classification of consular posts

Consular posts in Latvia are classified as Consulates-General and Consulates.

2.4.4. Career Heads of Consular Post - admission to functions

The head of a consular post shall be provided by the sending state with a document, in the form of a commission or similar instrument, made out for each appointment, certifying his capacity and showing, as a general rule, his full name, his category and class, the consular district and the seat of the consular post. The sending state shall transmit the commission or similar instrument through the diplomatic or other appropriate channel to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs as specified in the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Affairs, Article 11.

In due time the Latvian Government will issue an authorisation termed also an Exequatur admitting the head of a consular post to the exercise of his functions (Article 12).

Pending delivering of the Exequatur the head of a consular post is admitted on a provisional basis to the exercise of their functions (Article 13).

As soon as the head of a consular post is admitted even provisionally to the exercise of his functions, the Latvian Government shall immediately notify the competent authorities of the consular district. It shall also ensure that the necessary measures are taken to enable the head of a consular post to carry out the duties of his office and to have the benefit of the provisions of the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Affairs.

2.4.4.1. Notification of arrival and departure

Career consular officers who have been approved remain subject to the provisions of Section 2.1- Arrivals and Departures of Members of Diplomatic Missions .

2.4.4.2. Courtesy visits at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Ministry advises that career Heads of the Consular posts should pay their courtesy visits to the State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, or in his absence, the Undersecretary of State for Legal and Consular Issues, as well as to the Director of the Consular Department.

If a consular post is temporarily headed by the Deputy Head of the Consular post the latter should pay a courtesy visit to the Undersecretary of State for Legal and Consular Issues, or in his/her absence- to the Director of the Consular Department.

2.4.4.3. Immunity and inviolability

Immunity

Under the provisions of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, consular officers and consular employees enjoy immunity from jurisdiction in respect of acts performed in the exercise of their consular duties. Career officers also enjoy immunity from arrest or pre-trial detention, except in the case of a grave crime and pursuant to a decision given by the competent judicial authority. However, consular officers may also be arrested or subjected to restrictions on their personal freedom in execution of a final and irrevocable court judgment.

Inviolability

Under the provisions of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, the following are inviolable:

- the consular premises;
- the consular archives;
- the official correspondence of the post;
- the consular courier;
- consular officers, to a limited extent.
- Consular officers who are nationals of or permanently resident in the receiving state only enjoy immunity from jurisdiction and personal inviolability in respect of official acts performed in the exercise of their duties.

Based on reciprocity, career consular officers are normally equated with the diplomatic staff of missions. In accordance with the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Affairs, a diplomatic mission may also exercise consular functions, in which case the status of the staff will continue to be governed by the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations

2.4.4.4. Identity cards

As with the diplomatic corps, career consular officers and their family members are registered at the State Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and are issued an identity card.

(See sub-section 2.1.2 Identity Cards (ID-cards))

2.4.5. Consular Posts headed by Honorary Consuls

Latvia's practice related to the establishment of honorary consulates and the admission of honorary consuls is based on the provisions of the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Affairs.

2.4.5.1. Establishment of Consular Posts headed by Honorary Consuls

The Latvian practice related to the establishment of consulates headed by honorary consuls and the admission of honorary consuls is based on the provisions of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations.

The establishment of a consular post in Latvia requires prior consent of the Latvian Government and its approval of the seat, its classification and the consular district (Articles 4 and 68).

New post proposals should be addressed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. If the sending country has a diplomatic mission in Latvia, the mission may initiate the request with a Verbal Note to the Ministry. If the sending country does not have diplomatic representation in Latvia, the request to establish a consular post must come directly from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the sending state.

Any proposal to establish a consular post headed by an Honorary Consul should be supported by an explanation of the scope and the volume of consular services to be provided by the post.

2.4.5.2. Appointment of Honorary Consuls

The appointment of an Honorary Consul reflects a formal agreement between a sending government and a receiving government, as outlined in the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Relations.

A nominee for appointment as an Honorary Consul in the Republic of Latvia will normally be a Latvian citizen or permanent resident who has some substantial connection with the sending state. The nominee must be of sound character and should enjoy a good reputation in the local community. He or she should have the capacity to communicate and maintain good relations with the local authorities in the consular district. The Latvian Government, in consultation with the relevant State authorities, will consider the personal qualities of each nominee and may reject a nomination where it has doubts about the nominee's suitability. The nominee's full curriculum vitae, current home and business address, telephone, fax and e-mail contact details should be provided with the nomination.

2.4.5.3. Admission to functions

Provided that the sending state's proposal is acceptable, the MFA shall request the sending state to provide the Ministry a commission or similar instrument for the purpose of issuing an Exequatur.

Honorary Consuls will normally be given a commission by the sending government, outlining the consular functions they are empowered to perform. Before they exercise functions, however, Honorary Consuls must be formally accepted by the Latvian Government. Such confirmation is constituted by the Exequatur issued by Ministry of Foreign Affairs and conveyed to the post when the nomination is approved.

2.4.5.4. Accreditation

Honorary Consuls along with other members of the Consular Corps are formally recognised by the State Protocol. The State Protocol will provide Honorary Consuls with an ID card as evidence of the Honorary Consul's status ((See sub-section 2.1.2 Identity Cards (ID cards)). Identity cards are usually issued for a term of three years at a time. Honorary Consuls should ensure that ID cards remain valid. Please note that ID cards are not issued to the family members of Honorary Consuls.

2.4.5.5. Immunities and privileges

The 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (Chapter III) lays down provisions on the facilities, privileges and immunities applying to honorary consuls and consular posts headed by them.

In accordance with the provisions of the Vienna Convention, Honorary Consul's privileges and immunities are limited.

Honorary consuls in Latvia enjoy immunity from jurisdiction in respect of official acts and from giving testimony concerning matters connected with the exercise of those official functions. It is important to note that honorary consuls are not immune from arrest or detention.

A consulate headed by an honorary consul enjoys exemption from customs duties only on the following articles, provided that they are for the official use of the consulate: coats-of-arms, flags, signboards, seals and stamps, books, official printed matter, office furniture, office equipment and similar articles supplied by or at the insistence of the sending state.

The purpose of the privileges mentioned above is obviously not to benefit individuals but to ensure the efficient performance of the functions of missions and consular posts.

In Latvia, consular posts headed by honorary consuls are not allowed to designate diplomatic or consular couriers, or to use diplomatic or consular bags.

2.4.5.6. Flags

Consular posts headed by honorary consuls may display the national flag and coat of arms of the country they represent. This practice is useful in designating the consular premises for the purposes of both clients and the local authorities. Car pennants, however, should not be flown except on specific occasions when the vehicle is being used solely for official business of the sending state.

2.4.5.7. Motorvehicles

The official motorvehicle of the Honorary Consul is may be registrated with a special CH number plate.

The procedure for the registration or cancellation is described in sub-section 7.4. "Registration and cancellation of motor vehicles".

2.5. REPRESENTATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Privileges and immunities are granted to the Representations of International Organisations in accordance with the bilateral treaties and agreements between Latvia and the respective International Organisation.

In conformity with the concluded bilateral treaties and agreements between Latvia and the respective International Organisation, the Representation of the latter is requested to notify the State Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as soon as possible of the appointment, arrival and final departure of its head, members, as well as members of their families and service staff (other than persons resident in Latvia and not entitled to privileges and immunities).

The Representations are requested to notify to the State Protocol about changes in personnel stating the actual function or position of the person concerned, and the name of the person being replaced.

2.5.1. Courtesy visits to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Ministry advises the heads of the Representations of the International Organisations to pay courtesy visits to the Secretary of State, or in his absence, the Under-Secretary of State (2nd Political Directorate) and the Director of the Department for International Organisations and Human Rights).

2.5.2. Identity cards

Along with the diplomatic and consular corps the members of the Representations of International organisations are registered at the State Protocol of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and issued an identity card. ((See sub-section 2.1.2 Identity Cards (ID-cards))

In addition to the aforementioned, Representations shall submit lists of their staff to the State Protocol twice a year.

2.6. STATUS OF FOREIGN GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND PERSONNEL

The 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, Article I, foresees that "premises of the mission" are the buildings or parts of buildings and the land ancillary thereto, irrespective of ownership, used for the purposes of the mission including the residence of the head of the mission.

Offices which are not within mission's premises and which do not fulfil a genuinely diplomatic function are not regarded as constituting parts of foreign embassies.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is not in a position to accept persons as members of missions who have functions other than those that fall within the officially accepted sphere of diplomacy.

3. DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY

The term ‘immunity’ in the broadest sense covers both inviolability and immunity from jurisdiction. Inviolability means that the Latvian Government may not take any such measures as the arrest and remand in custody of individuals, forced access to and seizure of buildings, and seizure of goods. Immunity from jurisdiction means that Latvian courts are not competent to hear disputes where the defendant enjoys immunity from criminal or civil jurisdiction.

At the same time, Diplomatic missions and consular posts, their staff and their families must respect the law of the Republic of Latvia. Article 41, section 1 of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, reads:

“Without prejudice to their privileges and immunities, it is the duty of all persons enjoying such privileges and immunities to respect the laws and regulations of the receiving State. They also have a duty not to interfere in the internal affairs of that State”.

A diplomatic agent, and his family members who are part of his or her household, enjoy immunity from Latvian jurisdiction as specified in the Vienna Convention. So do the administrative and technical staff, and their family members. However, if family members are engaged in gainful activities in Latvia they do not enjoy immunity in connection with such activities.

3.1. Persons enjoying diplomatic immunity

Under the provisions of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, the following persons enjoy at least some degree of immunity:

- diplomatic agents and members of their families forming part of their households;
- members of the administrative and technical staff and members of their families forming part of their households;
- members of the service staff in respect of acts performed in the course of their duties.

Persons enjoying diplomatic immunity cannot be arrested or withheld by the police and cannot be fined or punished otherwise (1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, Article 31). Only the sending state can waive a person’s diplomatic immunity.

If a person enjoying diplomatic immunity commits an offence, the police will forward its report to the State Protocol at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In serious matters, or in case of repeated offences, the State Protocol will notify the Mission involved

3.2. Immunity from civil jurisdiction

A diplomatic mission, consular post, diplomatic agent, consular officer or member of administrative or technical staff may receive a summons in a civil case.

If a privileged person is summoned to appear in a Latvian court of law, he should not await developments but should engage an attorney immediately. The Ministry will be willing, upon request, to give informal advice to diplomatic missions on how to deal with these matters.

3.3. Immunity from criminal jurisdiction

Members of diplomatic missions, and members of their families who form part of their households, enjoy immunity from criminal jurisdiction. If there are suspicions that an offence has been committed by a privileged person, the relevant legal institutions will request the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to establish whether the suspect enjoys such immunity. In the case of serious criminal offences, the Ministry can request that immunity be lifted. The Ministry may also issue a warning, via the head of the mission. In more serious cases the person concerned will be declared a *persona non grata* and asked to leave the country.

3.4. Traffic offences

If a person who enjoys diplomatic or consular privileges commits a traffic offence, he or she is liable to be fined like all 'ordinary' citizens. Although privileged persons enjoy immunities which preclude prosecution under administrative or criminal law, the host country is confident that the privileged person respects its law and thus will agree to pay the imposed fines in the event of a violation.

If members of diplomatic missions come into contact with the police, either when an official report is being drawn up on an offence or on any other occasion, they should inform the police of their status **immediately** by showing their Ministry of Foreign Affairs identity card, so that the police can treat them with the respect to which they are entitled by virtue of their position. It should be noted that showing the identity card does not relieve the bearer of the obligation to show other documents (e.g. driving licences, vehicle registration documents) upon request.

3.5. Driving under the influence of alcohol and police powers

The Ministry would like to refer to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic relations (1961) and remind that without prejudice to their privileges and immunities, it is the duty of all persons enjoying such privileges and immunities to respect the laws and regulations of the receiving State.

Thus, if the police have reasonable grounds to assume that a privileged person is driving under the influence of alcohol, drugs or certain medicines, they may take preventive measures to ensure that the driver does not endanger himself or others. In the interests of public order the police have the right to take action against the violator to eliminate his or her further participation in the road traffic, using measures that do not contradict the Vienna Conventions. The police have the right to flag down a privileged person and ask to identify himself or herself. The privileged person must show the police his or her diplomatic identity card and, if asked to do so, hand it over for verification. The police do not, however, have the power to confiscate identity cards. They must return the card to the privileged person once they have checked his or her identity. The police may also use testing equipment such as breathalysers. The breathalyser test shows whether a driver has exceeded the statutory limit. This is currently a blood alcohol level of 0.5 per mille % per litre of exhaled air. Privileged persons are requested to cooperate with these tests as the tests provide a simple way of determining whether a driver is in fact driving under the influence of alcohol. At the same time they cannot be compelled to do so. In controversial situations the privileged person may request the presence of an Embassy representative.

The Ministry highly appreciates Embassies and diplomats who demonstrate a responsible attitude and respect for the laws and regulations of the receiving state,

setting a positive example of diplomats as persons of high ethical standards and culture. At the same time, the Ministry and the respective authorities would like to request them to assess the given situation self-critically, and to co-operate with Latvian institutions.

3.6. Arrest and tests

A privileged person who enjoys immunity from criminal jurisdiction may not be arrested or compelled by the police to take a breath, blood or urine test at a police station. Here too, however, the Ministry would request privileged persons to cooperate.

3.7. Criminal proceedings and other measures

If they discover that a privileged person has been driving under the influence of alcohol, drugs or medicines, the police will draw up an official report. They will also notify the State Protocol at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which will in turn inform the head of the embassy or consulate of the incident.

If a privileged person has caused serious injury to a third party while under the influence of alcohol, drugs or certain medicines, the sending state may be requested to recall the person concerned. *In addition, in cases where a privileged person has not caused serious injury, but has twice been stopped while driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, the sending state may be requested to recall him or her.*

If necessary, Latvian authorities may request the sending state to waive the immunity of a privileged person, so that criminal proceedings can be instituted and any sentence passed can be enforced. Failing such co-operation, the sending state may be requested to recall the person concerned.

In case of serious violations of law, the involved privileged person may be declared a *persona non grata* (Article 9, Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, 1961).

4. SECURITY

4.1. Protection of personnel and premises

The Government follows its obligations under the Vienna Conventions on Diplomatic and Consular Relations for the protection of diplomatic and consular missions and their staff very seriously. It takes all appropriate steps to protect the premises of diplomatic missions and consular posts against any intrusion or damage and to prevent acts of aggression towards missions and consular posts or impairment of their dignity.

The security of the ambassadors and embassies, consulates- general and consulates is the primary responsibility of the Government. . The primary operational responsibility of law enforcement and public order rests with the State police.

The protection of diplomatic and consular missions is provided on the basis of assessment of threat.

Missions and consulates should first of all contact the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the State Protocol, to report threats or risks to safety of buildings, or to embassy or consulate staff. The Ministry will then contact the relevant authorities who will take appropriate measures.

Naturally missions and consular posts should themselves take all necessary measures to protect their premises, as is customary, in the case of their offices and residential accommodation. Adequate insurance against fire and burglary should be obtained.

For advice on the protection of diplomatic offices and residential accommodation diplomatic missions should contact the Property and Investment Policy Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (tel. +371 67016 454). The request will then be forwarded to the appropriate police authorities who will provide the relevant advice. If a diplomatic person wishes to report an offence directed against a mission and consular post, or any other matter concerning security which does not require immediate action of the State Police, a report should be sent to the Property and Investment Policy Department.

4.2. Emergency situations

If police assistance is required, the following procedures are suggested:

In the event of an emergency (including accidents) diplomatic missions and consular posts can always call:

MFA 24-hour hot line tel. : +371 6701 6201

National emergency number : 112 or 02

State Police, 24-hours hot line: +371 29511718

In emergency situations, such as fire, missions should call 01, the emergency number of the State Firefighting and Rescue Service or 112, the national emergency number directly.

4.3. Demonstrations

The freedom to hold demonstrations is a constitutional right. Latvia has defined very clearly both the limits within which this right may be exercised and the limits within which the competent authorities may impose restrictions on demonstrations. The municipal authorities must be notified of demonstrations in advance, in writing. It is expected that the Municipality of Riga will inform the Embassy concerned about anticipated demonstrations.

It is the task of the police to ensure that demonstrations proceed in an orderly manner. Impeding the normal course of business of embassies and consular posts is prohibited. The mayor is, therefore, empowered to give directions which demonstrators must obey, and may give orders to terminate a demonstration if these directions are not complied with. The aim is to comply with the obligation laid on the receiving state by the Vienna Conventions of diplomatic and Consular Relations to take all appropriate steps to protect the premises of diplomatic missions and consular posts against any intrusion or damage and to prevent any disturbance of the missions or posts or impairment of their dignity.

4.4. Elections

Missions must inform the State Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs well in advance about the date of the elections and planned polling stations. Requests for the required security measures to be provided should also be forwarded to the Ministry well in advance.

5. FIREARMS

5.1. Import of firearms for security service personnel accompanying high-level foreign visitors

Pursuant to the legislation of the Republic of Latvia, security service personnel accompanying high-level officials of foreign states or international organisations may carry B category semi-automatic repeat action or single shot short barrelled firearms in the Republic of Latvia while performing their duties and at that location after co-ordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and receiving permission from the State Police.

During visits of high-level officials of foreign states or international organisations, the State Police may permit foreign security personnel to import into the Republic of Latvia and carry automatic firearms and ammunition. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs shall advise the diplomatic representation of the state in question or the relevant international organisation of the need for such permit.

Personnel of foreign armed forces may carry and use firearms during their stay in the Republic of Latvia for the performance of their duties only.

The State Police shall issue a permit to import and export a weapon after receiving a request from State Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a copy of the note of the diplomatic or consular representation of the relevant state for the period of time indicated in the request.

State Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs shall submit the request to the State Police not later than one working day prior to the anticipated import of the firearm or pneumatic stun gun and ammunition into the Republic of Latvia.

In order to receive a permit to import and carry arms, an embassy shall submit to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs a note containing the following information:

- Name and surname of the employee of the security service;
- Passport number;
- Dates of import and export of the relevant weapon;
- State/states from where and to which the weapon is imported and exported;
- Type of transport used to enter and leave the Republic of Latvia;
- Type of weapon, calibre, registration number, number of cartridges.

5.2. Import of weapons by staff members of foreign diplomatic and consular representations

Pursuant to the legislation of the Republic of Latvia, members of staff of foreign diplomatic and consular representations in the Republic of Latvia may, after co-ordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and receiving a permit from the State Police, purchase, keep or carry and use in the performance of their duties, B category semi-automatic repeat action or single shot short barrelled firearms whose calibre does not exceed 9mm. In order to acquire and possess a firearm or firearm component, the applicant must have a justifiable purpose for its use. A licence must be acquired in advance of the import of the firearm to Latvia.

Members of staff of foreign diplomatic and consular representations who have received from the State Police a permit for import, export or transit of a firearm, may take across the border of the Republic of Latvia B category short barrelled firearms in their holster, but without cartridges in the magazine.

In order to receive an import or export permit for a firearm, an embassy shall submit to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs a note containing the following information:

- Name and surname of the importer;
- Passport number;
- Date of import;
- Type, calibre, registration number of the firearm and number of cartridges.

The imported firearms shall be registered with the State Police within three days.

Prior to the registration a mandatory test shot should be carried out at the Forensic Department (Bruņinieku 72B, Riga, LV 1009, tel.: +371 6720 8754), as provided by the legislation of Latvia.

The mission may request the issue of a firearm carrying licence only after a test shot has been carried out.

In order to receive the licence, the Mission shall submit an application to the State Protocol with the following information:

- Name and surname of the carrier;
- Number of diplomatic or service passport;
- Required term of the permit (up to 5 years);
- Type, calibre, registration number of the firearm and number of cartridges;.
- Confirmation from the Forensic Department that the test shot has been completed.

In addition, the firearm's owner's photo (3 x 4 cm) should be attached to the application.

If, due to unforeseen circumstances, the activities necessary for registration of the firearm cannot be carried out within the prescribed three days, the weapon shall be handed over to the State Police until the registration of the weapon is completed.

5.3. Game shooting

Foreigners have the right to hunt in Latvia after receiving hunter's permit documents of the Republic of Latvia. In compliance with the Law on Hunting, persons residing abroad can obtain a hunting licence without passing a test in Latvia, provided that they have a valid hunting licence issued in their country of residence. This facility has been extended to diplomats and to members of the administrative and technical staff of Embassies, provided they are not citizens or permanent residents of Latvia. These certificates are issued by the State Forestry Service Central Office.

Applications for hunting licences should be sent to:

State Forestry Service

Valsts mežu dienests

Address: 13. janvāra iela 15, Riga, LV 1932

Tel. +371 6721 2776,

Fax. +371 6721 1176

Link to homepage: www.vmd.gov.lv

To receive a licence, the following documentation must be provided:

- copy of passport
- copy of hunting licence
- copy of registration certificate for firearm

Currently, the hunting licence fee is the following:

- 1-day hunting licence - 5Ls,
- 10-day hunting licence - 25 Ls,
- Game shooting season (March 21 until March 20 the following year) -70 Ls .

The carrying of a rifle for game shooting purposes is permitted only after a certificate has been issued allowing the person concerned to possess such a weapon.

Applications for game shooting rifles must specify the category, make, serial number and calibre of the weapon. The applications must be endorsed by the Head of Mission and sent to:

2nd unit (System of licenses and permissions) of Prevention Bureau of the Central Public Order Police Department of the State Police

Valsts policijas Galvenās kārtības policijas pārvaldes Prevencijas biroja 2. nodaļa(Licenzēšanas un atļauju sistēma)

Address: Stabu iela 89, Riga, LV 1009

Tel.: + 371 67208188

e-mail: lasn@vp.gov.lv

Legislation:

1. Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 760, 23 December 2003, Amendments of 23 March 2004 (No. 162)

Hunting Regulations

2. Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 109, 2 March 2004

Regulations regarding State Fees for Issuance of a Hunter's Certificate, a Hunter's Seasonal Card and Hunting Permit, for Issuance of a Permit for a Foreign Hunter to Hunt in the Territory of Latvia and for Issuance of a Permit to Export Hunting Trophies from Latvia, as well as Procedures for the Export of Hunting Trophies.

6. RADIO TRANSMITTERS

Pursuant to Article 27 of the VCDR, a foreign mission may install and use a wireless transmitter only with the consent of the receiving state.

The request supported by an application must be presented through the State Protocol, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The application should indicate the technical parameters describing the radio equipment:

- The desired frequency;
- The system of radio contacts to be used;

- Information on the location where the radio equipment and antenna are to be installed;
- Radiation class;
- Signal intensity.

Application forms may be obtained from:

Electronic Communications Office

Elektronisko sakaru direkcija

Elizabetes 41/43, Riga, LV 1010

Tel: +371 6733 3034, +371 2632 0800; +371 2640 6612

Fax: +371 6728 2275,

e-mail: esd@esd.lv

Link to homepage: <http://www.esd.lv.veidlapa.htm>.

Consent shall be given by the Electronic Communications Office after assessing the electromagnetic compatibility of the radio equipment indicated in the application.

If the security officials accompanying high-level visitors wish to bring along communication equipment, the frequencies and the power of radio equipment must be notified in advance to the State Protocol providing the following information:

- Number and type of transmitters;
- Desired and reserve frequency;
- The period of time for which the permit is needed.

In the event the radio equipment causes harmful radio interference, the ECO may change the permitted technical parameters and other conditions for use, including cancellation of the permit.

7. MOTOR VEHICLES

It is considered acceptable for the personal use of the member of the Mission and his or her spouse or partner who is not a Latvian citizen or permanent resident of Latvia, to register one motor vehicle and one motorbike with the Latvian diplomatic number plate per person.

There are no restrictions with the respect to the number of trailers which can registered with Latvian diplomatic number plates.

7.1. Tax exemption

Customs duty exemption for motor vehicles imported in Latvia by Missions accredited and residing in Latvia, diplomatic agents and career consular officers, administrative-technical staff who are not nationals of Latvia or permanently resident in Latvia and their spouses, members of representations of international organisations and their family members enjoying diplomatic privileges and immunities under international law, is granted under the provisions of the Council Regulation (EEC) No 918/83 of 28 March 1983 setting up a Community system of relief from customs duty. Article No. 133 of the Regulation envisages the relief pursuant to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 18 April 1961 and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations of 24 April 1963, or by virtue of international agreements.

In compliance with the Article 36.1. and 37. 2. of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, customs duty relief is applied to motor vehicles imported into Latvia from a third country for the official use of the mission, as well as for the personal use of members of the Mission.

If an already exempted vehicle is sold to a non-privileged person, the Mission or the privileged person shall pay customs duty according to the actual tax rate on the day when the vehicle is sold. If the vehicle is sold to another privileged person, it may be sold free of taxes.

It should be noted that Latvian legislation does not foresee a time frame after which the customs duty should not be paid.

Reimbursement of VAT for motor vehicles purchased in Latvia follows the same procedure as for other goods and services, as stipulated by the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 64. Value added tax refunded under the procedure specified in the Clause 38.3 of the Regulation shall be repaid to the state budget, or this amount shall be deducted from the amount of refundable tax calculated in accordance with future applications, if the Diplomatic Mission or a representation in the Republic of Latvia, within three years following the date of purchase and registration of a vehicle in the Republic of Latvia, shall sell or otherwise transfer this vehicle to another person or institution not indicated in the sub-clause No.1.1.of the Regulation.

Clause 39 of the Regulation denotes that in the event a person associated with a representation in the Republic of Latvia leaves the territory of the Republic of Latvia, and who has been refunded value added tax paid on the purchase of a vehicle as provided in the Regulation, sells or otherwise transfers the vehicle to another person or institution not mentioned in Sub-clause 1.1 of this Regulation, within three years following the purchase and registration of the said vehicle in the Republic of Latvia, 1/36 of the refunded tax for each month remaining until the end of the period of three years is repayable to the state budget.

7.2. Insurance

Compulsory Motor Owners TPL Insurance (OCTA)

Under the Latvian law, Motor Owners Third Party Liability Insurance (OCTA) is compulsory. No exceptions are made for members of diplomatic missions.

The Insurance policy can be arranged via an insurance agent or insurance company.

OCTA insurance policies are valid in the territory of the European Union, Swiss Confederation, Lichtenstein, Norway and Iceland.

KASKO

Insurance indemnity in the case of accident depends on the risk coverage included in the insurance policy. In this respect the Ministry recommends KASKO, known also as “Comprehensive Insurance”, as it covers damages (e.g. collision, vandalism, theft, fire, glass breakage, etc.) regardless of the reasons and the person responsible

Additional information concerning insurance of motor vehicles is provided by:

Motor Insurers' Bureau of Latvia

Latvijas transportlīdzekļu apdrošinātāju birojs

9 Lomonosova iela

Riga, LV-1019

Phone: +371 6711 4300

Fax: +371 6711 4333

web page: <http://www.ltab.lv>

E-mail: ltab@ltab.lv

7.3. Driving licence

Members of Missions (whether EU- member states and not EU member states) must possess a valid national driving licence. If the period of the driving licence has expired, Latvian driving licences may be obtained according to Latvian legislation.

Additional information may be obtained from the Road Traffic Safety Directorate, Riga City Division (CSSD Rīgas pilsētas nodaļa).

The address of the Riga City Division of the Road Traffic Safety Directorate:

Road Traffic Safety Directorate (CSDD), Riga City Division

Ceļu satiksmes drošības direkcija, Rīgas pilsētas nodaļa

Address: Bauskas iela 86, Riga, LV 1006

Telephone: +371 6702 5777, + 371 6702 5789

E-mail: riga@csdd.gov.lv

Link to homepage: <http://www.csdd.lv>

Working hours: Monday- Friday: 8:30- 19:00, Saturday: 8:30- 16:00

7.4 Registration and Cancellation of the Registration of Motor Vehicles

7.4.1. Registration

Motor vehicles of foreign missions, persons with diplomatic and administrative technical status are registered at the Road Traffic Safety Directorate, Riga City Division (CSSD Rīgas pilsētas nodaļa).

The registration of motor vehicles is carried out in accordance with the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 446 “Regulations of the Registration of Motor vehicles” (30 April 2004).

Motor vehicles shall be issued special number plates:

- **CD-** for vehicles of Diplomatic Missions, International Organisations, Representation of the European Commission to Latvia, as well as their diplomatic agents as registered at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia;
- **CC-** for vehicles of consular offices and career consular officers;
- **C-** for vehicles of the administrative technical staff.

Persons with diplomatic and administrative technical status are entitled to one diplomatic car registration. In the case where they are accompanied by their spouses, they are also entitled to one diplomatic car and motorbike registration.

For the registration of a motor vehicle, a Mission should submit to the State Protocol a Verbal Note indicating the owner of the vehicle, the make and model of the vehicle, and the number of the chassis. An approved application will be forwarded to the CSDD Riga City Division.

It should be noted that the vehicle should be physically present at the registration for inspection. The registration fee is paid at the cash desk of the CSDD Riga City Division in accordance with the price list for the registration of motor vehicles.

If documents are submitted for the registration of a motor vehicle by the diplomatic mission's or agent's authorised person who is a Latvian citizen or a permanent resident, the latter has to present the following:

- a proxy confirmed by the diplomatic mission concerned;
- a Latvian national passport or a permanent resident's passport or Latvian driving licence.

In the case where documents are submitted for registration by a diplomatic agent, the latter has to present his or her ID card as issued by the State Protocol.

Additional information concerning the registration is available at:

Road Traffic Safety Directorate (CSDD), Riga City Division

Ceļu satiksmes drošības direkcija, Rīgas pilsētas nodaļa

Address: Bauskas iela 86, Riga, LV 1006

Telephone: +371 6702 5777, + 371 6702 5789

E-mail: riga@csdd.gov.lv

Link to homepage: <http://www.csdd.lv>

Working hours: Monday- Friday: 8:30- 19:00, Saturday: 8:30- 16:00

7.4.2 Cancellation of the registration

If a vehicle with CD, CC, or C registration plates is removed from Latvia permanently, sold, or to be destroyed, it should be taken out of the registration before this action has been undertaken.

Missions shall inform the State Protocol of the cancellation of the vehicle's registration by a note, indicating the following:

- the reason for cancellation of the registration (indicating whether the vehicle will be sold, exported or destroyed);
- owner/user of the vehicle,
- make and model of the vehicle,
- the number of the diplomatic registration plate to be removed from the register.
- In case of a sale, the status of the person the vehicle will be sold to, i.e. whether a person with diplomatic status or without, should be indicated.

For the cancellation of the vehicle's registration, the Embassy should forward a note to the State Protocol. On the basis of the note the State Protocol will prepare a letter and forward it to the CSDD Riga City Division.

Further, the diplomatic agent or the authorised member of the Mission shall present at the CSDD:

- the registration certificate;
- the diplomatic registration plates.

When the diplomatic agent completes his or her mission in Latvia, the person concerned has to cancel the vehicle's diplomatic registration and to request the CSDD to issue a transit registration certificate and transit number plates. Transit number plates are valid for up to 30 days.

Vehicle registration documents and diplomatic licence plates are the property of the Latvian Government and should be returned to the Riga City CSDD once the vehicle is removed from the register. The Ministry would like to remind that failure to observe the correct procedure can cause delays in issuing the next vehicle registration certificate and diplomatic licence plates to the Mission or a new member of the Mission.

7.4.3. Loss of diplomatic licence plates

If the diplomatic licence plates or one of them are lost, stolen or damaged, the Mission or a member of the Mission shall apply for the new ones. New diplomatic licence plates, as well as new vehicle registration documents, will be issued.

It should be noted that the lost diplomatic licence plates cannot be renewed.

7.4.4 Sale of the motor vehicle

A motor vehicle which is bought without paying customs duty and/or VAT may be sold without payment of such duty and/or VAT to a diplomatic agent enjoying exemption from customs duty and the taxes. If the vehicle is sold to a non-diplomatic person then customs duties and taxes shall be paid by the vendor.

Before selling the vehicle in Latvia, the vehicle's diplomatic registration plates shall be returned to the CSDD, to be replaced by Latvian ones.

In the case where the vehicle has been previously imported from abroad, a customs allowance for its purchase, as well as the original copies of the vehicle's foreign registration documents should be also presented at the CSDD.

7.4.5. Annual Technical Inspection

According to the Road Traffic Law (4.11.97 cl.16.7.) and also in the interests of road safety all vehicles have to undergo an annual technical inspection. No exclusion is made for vehicles owned by foreign diplomatic missions and diplomatic agents in Latvia. The technical inspection of a vehicle is valid for one year, and must be repeated within that period. It is performed by the Road Traffic Safety Directorate (CSDD). If the technical condition of the vehicle complies with the essential requirements a technical inspection sticker will be issued.

It should be noted that diplomatic missions and diplomatic agents do not have to pay annual motor vehicle tax, but they have to pay for the technical inspection.

Further information at: <http://www.csdd.lv/?lngID=EN&pageID=1181214280>

7.4.6. CSDD fidelity line

Committed to transparency and the provision of high quality services CSDD has introduced a new service: the fidelity line. When calling 67025757 you can leave a message concerning:

- unsatisfactory attitude or impolite treatment when providing the services;
- improper behaviour by employees of CSDD;
- any unpleasant occurrence experienced at the office of CSDD. This information can be anonymous.

7.5 Parking in Riga

7.5.1. Parking for Vehicles of the Mission

Requests in the form of a Verbal Note concerning the Mission's intention to create a parking place outside the Mission should be forwarded to the Property and Investment Policy Department, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which will inform the municipal authorities. The municipal authorities have full autonomy as regards their policy on reserved parking lots. For new embassies the Municipality of Riga reserves 2 parking lots on the public road outside the main office (the Chancery) of a Mission. These parking lots may be used only by vehicles belonging to the Mission and members of the Mission, and not by visitors.

Additional information is be provided by the Property and Investment Policy Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, tel.+371 6701 6130.

7.5.2. Parking near the Ministry

Vehicles with CD,CC, C or CH number plates have the right to temporary parking in front of the central entrance of the Ministry.

7.5.3. Parking and Penalties for Parking Offences

Parking zones are indicated by special P-zone signs. Pay & Park ticket machines are in operation in many parts of Riga. For the convenience of drivers, several multistory parking places have been opened in Riga. In these locations payment for parking is compulsory.

Vehicles with diplomatic number plates are subject to parking laws and regulations. No exemptions from charges for parking are possible, since the charges are levied by the Municipality for specific services rendered. Members of the Missions are therefore requested to meet their obligations voluntarily, despite their privileged status.

7.6. Driving restrictions in Old Riga

In order to preserve the historical and architectural value of Old Riga, driving in that part of the city is specially regulated by means of a special Old Riga vehicle permit system. These permits are free of charge.

To receive a permit missions and international organisations are requested to submit their application to the State Protocol, indicating the make of the vehicle and the number of the state diplomatic licence plate assigned to it. The State Protocol will then forward its recommendation letter to the Old Riga Permit Commission of the Riga City Council. The sessions of the Commission take place twice a month.

Permits can be obtained at the Old Riga Permits' Commission upon presenting a proxy.

The Old Riga Permits Commission

Ģertrūdes iela 36, room 50, 6th floor ,
tel.+371 6721 7429

7.7. Traffic regulations

Traffic Regulations are to be observed by any person who is driving a vehicle. No exception is made for persons having diplomatic immunities and privileges.

Detailed information may be obtained from:

Road Traffic Safety Directorate (CSDD), Riga City Division

Ceļu satiksmes drošības direkcija, Rīgas pilsētas nodaļa

Address: Bauskas iela 86, Riga, LV 1006

Telephone: +371 6702 5777, + 371 6702 5789

E-mail: riga@csdd.gov.lv

Link to homepage: <http://www.csdd.lv>

Working hours: Monday- Friday: 8:30- 19:00, Saturday: 8:30- 16:00

8. LOCAL STAFF

In principle there is no objection to the local recruitment of administrative technical staff, or private servants, if they are Latvian nationals or permanent residents in Latvia.

According to the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, locally engaged staff who are Latvian nationals or permanent residents shall not be entitled to privileges and immunities. The State Protocol does not issue ID cards to the aforementioned category either. Nevertheless missions are requested to submit lists of local employees to the State Protocol twice a year, upon request by the Ministry.

8.1. Social Insurance

According to Paragraph 3, Article 33 and Paragraph 2, Article 37 of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, diplomatic agents or consular employees who employ persons who are citizens of the country of residence or permanent residents shall observe the obligations which the social security provisions of the receiving State impose upon employers. In Latvia, a social security system has been established by the Law on State Social Insurance. The law does not foresee state mandatory social insurance of inland employees working at diplomatic or consular posts accredited to the Republic of Latvia, however the law provides that the person in question may join the State social insurance voluntarily, which qualifies that person for receiving of a State old-age pension in the amount depending on the performed contribution.

Further information available at:

The State Revenue Service

(Valsts ieņēmumu dienests)

Smilšu iela 1, Riga, LV-1978

tel. +371 6702 8761, +371 6702 8703;

tel/fax +371 6782 0273

Link to homepage: <http://www.vid.gov.lv>

8.2 Annual leave

Paid annual leave is considered part of the social security provisions in Latvia. Thus, Latvian citizens and permanent residents in Latvia employed by a foreign diplomatic mission are entitled to full annual leave, as stipulated in the Latvian Labour Code.

Link to homepage: <http://www.legal.lv/doc/daraba/Atputas>

9. EMPLOYMENT OF SPOUSES

Neither the Vienna Conventions nor Latvian law contain any specific regulations prohibiting or limiting the employment of spouses or other family members of the members of missions. For work outside the mission they are, however, bound by the general regulation relating to foreigners who wish to work in Latvia. When taking up work in another EU country a work permit is obligatory, with the exception of nationals of EU member states, as well as those of another State of the European Economic Area.

Latvia has also concluded bilateral agreements with several states concerning the gainful occupation of family members of missions with a view to facilitating their employment in the receiving state.

According to the Vienna Conventions, spouses and dependent children do not enjoy immunity from civil and administrative jurisdiction in the case of actions relating to any professional or commercial activity exercised by them. Nor do they enjoy exemption from taxes or social dues on income from such activity.

Applications for work permits should be submitted to the Office of Migration and Citizenship Affairs (OCMA), Residence permit division.

More information can be obtained at:

Office of Migration and Citizenship Affairs (OCMA)

Pilsonības un Migrācijas Lietu Pārvalde (PMLP)

Address: Čiekurkalna 1. līnija, building 3, Riga LV 1026

OCMA informative tel. +371 8000 7657

Preliminary signing-up tel. +371 6782 9750

fax. +371 6721 9654

e-mail: pmlp@pmlp.gov.lv

<http://www.pmlp.gov.lv>

10. EMPLOYMENT OF PRIVATE SERVANTS

The Mission shall submit to the State Protocol a Verbal Note indicating the employment of a private servant by a member of the Mission, a copy of the passport of the employee, a completed application form and 2 photos (see chapter 2.I.2. Identity cards (ID-cards)) for obtainment of accreditation. The ID-card is issued for the period not longer than the term of posting of his or her employer in Latvia.

Family members of private servants are not accredited at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Their presence in the Latvian territory is regulated by the Immigration Law.

The relevant member of the Mission shall ensure that his or her private servant leaves Latvia after expiry of the work contract.

11. TAXES

According to the Vienna Conventions, diplomatic missions, career consular posts, international organisations as well as diplomats, career consular officers and members of administrative-technical staff, members of their families, as well as members of the international organisations are exempt from all national, regional and municipal taxes, personal or real. However, indirect taxes which are normally incorporated in the price of goods and services are not included in this general exemption from taxes.

Information about the Latvian tax system is available on the web site of the State Revenue Service- the tax administration of the Republic of Latvia- at www.vid.gov.lv. A publication entitled The Latvian Tax System is available on the website of the Ministry of Finance at : www.fm.gov.lv.

It should be also noted that reciprocity may be taken into account when exemptions from taxes and duties are granted.

11.1. Reimbursement of Value Added Tax (VAT) and Excise Tax

According to the 1961 Vienna Convention, Article 34, a diplomatic agent shall be exempt from all duties and taxes normally incorporated in the price of goods and services, e.g. VAT. Based on reciprocity, reimbursement of VAT, which at present in Latvia amounts to 18 per cent of the retail price, is granted to missions and their diplomatic staff and their accompanying family members according to the provisions laid down in the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 64 (16.01.2007) *“Procedure for application of the Value Added Tax on supply of goods and services to Diplomatic and Consular Representations and Representations of International Organisations registered in the republic of Latvia or another Member State of the European Union and persons associated with these Representations, Institutions of the European Community, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and Armed Forces of its Member States and their personnel and procedure for refunding Excise Duty on Excise Goods purchased in the Republic of Latvia”* passed in accordance with the Law *“On Value Added Tax”*, Section 7, Paragraph 1, Clause 6, and the Law On Excise Tax, Section 20, Paragraph 4.

The reimbursement of VAT is thus done by courtesy and on reciprocal basis provided the goods are for use by:

- a) diplomatic and consular missions in the Republic of Latvia, their diplomatic and consular agents, as well as to the family members of the persons referred for personal use. Staff members other than diplomatic agents are not entitled to the exemption. The administrative and technical staff of missions may import their removal goods exempt from VAT when they settle down in Latvia for the first time;
- b) offices of international organisations, and their employees who in the territory of the Republic of Latvia enjoy diplomatic status.

11.1.1. Reimbursement of VAT for goods and services acquired for the official needs of representation.

VAT is reimbursed on:

1. Vehicles:
 - 1.1. motor-cars of all types;
 - 1.2. motor cycles, mopeds, bicycles;
 - 1.3. obligatory vehicle equipment, spare parts and repair costs;
 - 1.4. lubricants and fuel for vehicles.
2. Interior decoration objects: (for example: furniture, carpets, curtains, curtain rods, blinds, table cloths, crockery, table and wall clocks)

3. Musical instruments: (for example: pianos, grand pianos, organs).
4. Office equipment (for example: computers, computer parts and computer accessories, printers and their spare parts, scanners, copiers and their spare parts, calculators, telephones and fax machines)
5. Household appliances:
 - 5.1. Electrical appliances, (for example: washing machines, mangles, irons, sewing-machines, dishwashers, freezers, refrigerators, heaters, cleaning equipment, fans, humidifiers, air conditioners, stoves, ovens, mixers, coffee grinders, coffee machines, grills, roasters, toasters, projectors, lamps etc.);
 - 5.2. audio and video equipment (for example: radio sets, tape-recorders, acoustic equipment, amplifiers, loudspeakers, microphones, television sets, video recorders, video cameras, antennas;
 - 5.3. photographic equipment (for example: cameras, stands, camera lenses, flashes).
6. Stationery.
7. Printed matter (for example: business cards, invitations, programmes, brochures, visual presentation materials, official forms, letterheads, table cards, menus).
8. For residential premises of representations and their Heads:
 - 8.1. Designing, construction, repairs and building materials for the construction and repairs of these premises;
 - 8.2. goods and services for maintenance and cleaning;
 - 8.3. lease services;
 - 8.4. public utilities (electricity, gas, water, heating supply, sewerage services, waste collection and disposal).
9. Security and alarm systems. Security services.
10. Payment for parking spaces. Rent of garages.
11. Fire prevention equipment.
12. Telecommunication services.

11.1.2. Reimbursement of VAT for goods and services acquired for personal use of privileged persons

VAT is reimbursed on:

1. Vehicles:
 - 1.1. motor-cars of all types;
 - 1.2. motor cycles, mopeds, bicycles;
 - 1.3. compulsory vehicle accessories, spare parts and repair costs;

- 1.4. lubricants and fuel for the vehicles.
2. Interior decoration objects (for example: furniture, carpets, curtains, curtain rods, blinds, table cloths, plates and dishes, table and wall clocks)
3. Office equipment (for example: computers, computer parts and computer accessories, printers and their spare parts, scanners, copiers and their spare parts, calculators, telephones and fax machines)
4. Household appliances:
 - 4.1. Electrical appliances (for example: washing machines, mangles, irons, sewing-machines, dishwashers, freezers, refrigerators, heaters, cleaning equipment, fans, humidifiers, air conditioners, stoves, ovens, mixers, coffee grinders, coffee machines, grills, roasters, toasters, projectors, lamps etc.);
 - 4.2. audio and video equipment (for example: radio sets, tape-recorders, acoustic equipment, amplifiers, loudspeakers, microphones, television sets, video recorders, video cameras, antennas);
 - 4.3. photographic equipment (for example: cameras, stands, camera lenses, flashes).
5. Security and alarm systems. Security services.
6. Telecommunication services.

Value added tax and excise tax shall be refunded to the administrative technical staff of diplomatic missions and consular posts and family members of the said persons, once on the goods and services purchased over a period of four months starting from the day when the State Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has received notification on arrival of the respective person in the Republic of Latvia.

11.1.3. Restrictions

VAT and excise tax shall be refunded to the diplomatic representations in the Republic of Latvia, provided that the amount of transaction indicated in each tax invoice, including VAT, exceeds LVL 125.

This restriction shall not be applicable to charges for telecommunication services, rent/ lease of premises, electricity, gas, heating supply, centralized water supply, sewerage services and waste collection and disposal services, security services, as well as fuel purchased for vehicles.

The excise tax on purchase of fuel shall be refunded for a maximum of 250 litres a month per each passenger car registered in the Republic of Latvia in the name of the respective diplomatic representation and the privileged person in the Republic of Latvia.

VAT and excise tax shall be refunded to privileged persons, provided that the amount of transaction indicated in each tax invoice, including VAT, exceeds LVL 35, but the restriction shall not be imposed on charges for telecommunication services and fuel purchased for vehicles.

Reimbursement is granted only for purchases of new articles. No reimbursement is given for antiquities, works of art as well as second-hand items purchased in Latvia.

Goods that are subject to the value added tax or excise tax refund may not be used for commercial purposes.

Value added tax refunded under the procedure specified in the Regulation No. 64 shall be paid into the state budget or this sum shall be deducted from the sum of the refundable tax calculated in accordance with the subsequent applications, if:

- a representation in the Republic of Latvia, within one year from the purchase date, sells or otherwise alienates for the benefit of another person or institution the goods (except for cars), the value of which (excluding the value added tax) exceeds LVL 1000 per unit;
- a privileged person, within one year from the purchase date, sells or otherwise alienates for the benefit of another person or institution not mentioned in clause 1.1. of this Regulation the goods (except for cars), the value of which (VAT exclusive) exceeds LVL 500 per unit;
- a representation in the Republic of Latvia, within three years following the date of purchase and registration of a car, sells or otherwise alienates this car for the benefit of another person or institution;
- a privileged person leaving the Republic of Latvia sells or otherwise alienates for the benefit of another person or institution a car within three years following the purchase and registration of such car in the Republic of Latvia, 1/36 of the refunded tax for each month remaining until the end of the period of three years shall be paid into the state budget.

Pursuant to the procedure for refund of VAT and excise tax, applicable to representations or privileged persons of the Republic of Latvia in the respective foreign country, the representations and privileged persons of this foreign country at the recommendation of the State Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs may be eligible to refund of VAT and excise tax without the above mentioned restrictions.

In order to enable the application of a special procedure for refund of VAT and excise tax, diplomatic missions or consular posts of the respective country shall submit to the State Protocol an application describing the procedure for refund of VAT or excise tax to representations or privileged persons of the Republic of Latvia in the respective country, enclosing with their application the suggestions on additional easements for the refund of the paid VAT or excise tax to be applied in Latvia.

The State Protocol shall review the application, and not later than within 30 days as of the date of the receipt of the application shall make a decision on the special procedure for refund of VAT to the respective representation and privileged persons. The State Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs shall communicate the taken decision in writing to the applicant and the territorial institution of the State Revenue Service specifying the future procedure for refund of the value added tax or excise tax.

11.1.4. Application for VAT and Excise Tax reimbursement to goods and services acquired for the official needs of representation and to resident diplomats.

The application for a refund of the value added tax and excise tax (Annex No.1) together with the attached supporting documentation (originals) shall be submitted to the State Protocol on quarterly basis for reimbursement. Application forms are available at the State Protocol and on the Ministry's homepage <http://www.mfa.gov.lv>

When claiming for a refund of the excise tax on fuel, the application should indicate also the passenger vehicles registered in the Republic of Latvia in the name of the relevant representation, privileged person or the European Community institution in the Republic of Latvia.

If the excise tax is imposed on goods as presented in the value added tax invoice, the refundable excise tax charge shall be calculated on the quantity of goods as specified in the value added tax invoice and on the basis of the applicable excise tax rate valid on the date of purchase. The value added tax invoice shall be treated as a supporting (source) document proving the purchase of excise goods.

11.1.5. Application for VAT and Excise Tax reimbursement to goods and services acquired for the personal needs of administrative-technical staff of missions.

VAT and excise tax shall be refunded to the administrative technical staff of missions and consular posts of non-community states and EU Member States and family members of the said persons, once on the goods and services purchased over period of four months starting from the day when the State Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has received notification on arrival of the respective person in the Republic of Latvia.

Applications together with the supporting documents shall be submitted to the State Protocol. Within a period of 10 (ten) working days the State Protocol shall verify whether the applicant is eligible to the refund of the VAT and excise tax, certify this by the signature and the official seal in Section II of the application form and forward the application together with the included supporting documents to the territorial institution of the State Revenue Service relevant to the legal address of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The applications on the basis of which the VAT or excise tax has been refunded, as well as any supporting documents (originals) attached to the application, shall be kept on file with the respective territorial institution of the State Revenue Service. If the applicant for any reasons needs to receive back the original of a supporting document, he or she must submit the copy of the supporting document, certified pursuant to the procedure provided for in legislation.

Legislation:

1. Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 64 (16.01.2007) "Procedure for application of Value Added Tax on supply of goods and services to Diplomatic and Consular Representations and Representations of International Organisations registered in the Republic of Latvia or another Member State of the European Union and persons associated with these Representations, Institutions of the European Community, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and Armed Forces of its Member States and their personnel and procedure for refunding Excise Duty on Excise Goods purchased in the Republic of Latvia" passed in accordance with the Law "On Value Added Tax", Section 7, Paragraph 1, Clause 6, and the Law On Excise Tax, Section 20, Paragraph 4.

*2. Appendix 1 to Cabinet Regulation No 64, dated 16 January 2007
Application for Refund of Value Added Tax and Excise Duty to Representations in the Republic of Latvia, Persons Associated with Representations in the Republic of Latvia, and Institutions of the European Community in the Republic of Latvia*

3. Appendix 3 to Cabinet Regulation No. 64 of 16 January 2007

Goods and services acquired for the official needs of the representation in the Republic of Latvia that are subject to refund of value added tax from the state budget

11.1.6. VAT exempt purchases in other EU countries

Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 531, 19.07.2005 “*Regulations on the Approval of Excise Duty and Value Added Tax Exemption Certificates*” and Amendment of the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 422, 26 June 2007 provides the procedure for approving in the Republic of Latvia excise duty and value added tax exemption certificates duly prepared in accordance with the requirements of European Commission Regulation (EC) No. 31/96 of 10 January 1996 on the Excise Duty Exemption Certificate as well as the procedure for granting the right to use the Certificate without approval.

A mission, international organisation or a diplomatic agent accredited to Latvia may buy goods and/or services in another EU- country exempt from VAT and Excise duty using the exemption form “VAT and excise duty exemption certificate (Directive 77/388/EEC- Article 15 (10) and Directive 92/12/EEC- Article 23(1)”(Annex No.2).

A buyer who requires VAT-exempt invoicing must complete the relevant EC forms and submit them to the State Protocol for confirmation.

The officially recognised languages in the Republic of Latvia for completing the Certificate application form shall be Latvian or English. It should be noted that the name of the applicant must be clearly marked on the form. The form must be signed and stamped. The State Protocol confirms the duty-free imports and returns 3 pages of the application to the mission.

The Certificate duly approved shall grant the privileged person the right to:

- purchase, free of excise duty, the excise goods indicated in the Certificate in another member state of the European Union;
- purchase, free of excise duty, the excise goods indicated in the Certificate from an excise goods warehouse within the territory of the Republic of Latvia;
- purchase, free of value added tax, the goods indicated in the Certificate and receive services in another member state of the European Union.

In the event the privileged person purchases goods or receives services for official use, the State Protocol may grant the applicant the right to use the Certificate without approval for a period of time not exceeding 12 months. If a decision is made to grant the applicant the rights to use the Certificate without approval, the State Protocol will advise in writing the Applicant, indicating the period of time for which such rights are granted and the State Revenue Service, indicating the person who is granted the right to use the Certificate without approval, the period of time for which the right is granted and the date and number of the decision granting the right to use the Certificate without approval. In the event a decision is made not to grant the applicant the right to use the Certificate without approval, the State Protocol shall within five working days advise the Applicant in writing, indicating the reasons for refusal.

Legislation:

1. Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 531, 19.07.2005 “Regulations on the approval of the Excise Duty and Value Added Tax Exemption Certificate”

(Amendment: Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 422, 26 June 2007)

2. EUROPEAN COMMUNITY CERTIFICATE VAT AND EXCISE DUTY EXEMPTION (Directive 77/388/EEC - Article 15 (10) and Directive 92/12/EEC - Article 23 (1))

11.1.7. VAT reimbursement to non-resident diplomats

VAT is not reimbursed to non-resident diplomats. If they are diplomats in another EU country they may, however, from their country of residence make use of the EU VAT exemption scheme described above.

11.2. CUSTOMS DUTIES

Missions are exempt from customs duties on goods, including motor vehicles and alcoholic beverages, imported from the countries outside the European Union, for official use.

Diplomatic agents and career consular officers are exempt from customs duties on:

- household articles and luggage, as well as the luggage of members of their families forming part of his household;
- other goods, including motor vehicles and alcoholic beverages, imported for their own use, or for the personal use of members of their families forming part of his household.

Members of the administrative and technical staff of missions and their families members may import their personal removal goods exempt from customs duties in connection with their first assignment to Latvia, provided they are not Latvian nationals or permanently resident in Latvia. Such effects should arrive not later than four months after their arrival in Latvia.

Representations of International Organisations and their personnel who are not Latvian citizens or permanent residents in Latvia may import and export goods for the official use of the representation and their personal use exempt from import and export taxes in concordance with bilateral treaties concluded between Latvia and the relevant international organisation.

A consulate headed by an honorary consul enjoys exemption from customs duties only on the following articles, provided that they are for the official use of the consulate: coats-of-arms, flags, signboards, seals and stamps, books, official printed matter, office furniture, office equipment and similar articles supplied by or at the instance of the sending state.

The purpose of the privileges mentioned above is obviously not to benefit individuals but to ensure the efficient performance of the functions of missions and consular posts.

Duty-free imports shall therefore not exceed the quantities necessary for the direct use by the missions, consular posts or the persons concerned.

The State Protocol wishes to remind that the members of the service staff, locally employed staff, honorary consuls (except the cases mentioned in sub-section 2.4.4.6) and foreign government agencies, such as tourist offices, cultural institutes and trade

representations and their staff, do not enjoy exemption from customs duties under the Vienna Conventions or under Latvian law.

Goods that are exempt from customs duties are also exempt from value added tax and excise duty.

11.2.1. Procedure

Applications from missions for exemption from custom duties intended for their chanceries, or for the personal use of those members of their staff who enjoy such exemption, stamped and signed by the head of mission, must be submitted to the State Protocol for verification before being submitted to the customs authorities.

The application should specify the articles in question, i.e. nature of goods, quantity, value, country of purchase and supplier as well as information as to consignee (with regard to motor cars, information should include the chassis and engine numbers as well as the make and the year), as well as indicate through which Customs Control Point the goods will be imported.

If goods received exempt from customs duties are sold to a buyer not entitled to engage in duty-free import of goods, the duties and taxes must be paid as required by the regulations in force at the time of the customs declaration.

Customs control points (CCP) in Riga Muitas kontroles punkti(MKP)

Administration :

The Riga regional office of the State Revenue Service

Address: Citadeles 1, Riga, LV 1010

Tel. +371 6704 7302,

Tel/fax. +371 6704 7301

Working hours: Monday- Fridays 8.30- 12.00 & 12.30- 17.00

E-mail rigas.muita@rm.vid.gov.lv

Link to homepage: <http://www.vid.gov.lv>

LIDOSTAS MKP (Airport's CCP)

Location: International Riga Airport

Tel. +371 6720 7108

Tel./fax. +371 6720 7043

Working hours: Monday-Sunday, 24 hours

Link to homepage: <http://www.vid.gov.lv>

12. MISCELLANEOUS

12.1. Export and Import Authorisation for Works of Art

Exportation and importation of works of art and antiques from and into Latvia is governed by the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 8 (7 01. 2003). These Regulations prescribe the procedures by which works of art and antiques (hereinafter - cultural objects) are exported from Latvia and imported into Latvia, as well as procedures for the temporary exportation of cultural monuments.

In order to protect national cultural values and to prevent the exportation (including sending by post) of stolen or lost cultural objects, the State Inspection for Heritage Protection (hereinafter - Inspection) at the Ministry of Culture is in charge of taking decisions regarding the exportation of cultural objects. The Inspection shall issue a permit of a specific form for the exportation of cultural objects (hereinafter — permit).

Procedure for the issue of a permit

In order to receive a permit, the owner shall submit a note together with a list of the cultural objects and a colour photograph thereof in three copies (not older than 10 years), in which the photograph of the cultural object shall be easily visible and identifiable to the State Protocol. The minimum size of the photograph shall be 8 x 12 cm, the maximum size — 10 x 15 cm. The State Protocol will forward the submission to the Inspection.

If the photograph of the cultural object (for example, books, post cards) does not provide complete information regarding the relevant object, the Inspection has the right to request that, instead of a photograph, the applicant submits a detailed description of the cultural object to be exported.

If large cultural objects are intended for exportation, the Inspection has the right to conduct an examination of the cultural object at its location.

For the exportation of each cultural object a separate permit shall be issued. If it is intended to export several cultural objects, the Inspection shall determine whether one or several permits shall be issued.

If it is necessary that a cultural object be exported in order to exhibit it in a foreign state, or due to other reasons (for example, for restoration, expert-examination, a training programme), the Inspection shall determine temporary exportation of the cultural object. The temporary exportation of a cultural object shall also include its re-importation into Latvia in full and within the specified time period.

The term of the validity of the permit shall not exceed 12 months after its issue. If the term of validity of the permit expires, but the permit has not been utilised, the applicant, within a time period of 15 days from the expiry of the term of validity of the permit, shall return the permit to the Inspection.

Importation of Cultural objects into Latvia

When a cultural object is imported into Latvia, the owner thereof shall complete a customs declaration. The customs authority shall certify it with a seal and signature.

If a person upon entering Latvia does not present to the customs authorities the cultural object for which temporary importation is provided for, it shall be considered that the person has purchased this cultural object in Latvia.

If after temporary exportation of a cultural object it is imported into Latvia, the owner shall register the relevant cultural object with the Inspection within a period of 15 days after importation.

When registering a cultural object at the Inspection, the owner shall confirm in writing that the imported cultural object is the same cultural object to which the temporary exportation permit was applied. In case of doubt, the Inspection has the right to request that the owner presents the re-imported cultural object.

Legislation:

Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 8, 7 January 2003

Exportation of Works of Art and Antiques from Latvia and Importation into Latvia

Further information:

State Inspection for Heritage Protection

Valsts kultūras pieminekļu aizsardzības inspekcija

M. Pils iela 19, LV 1050, Riga

tel. + 371 6722 9272, fax +371 6722 8808

Link to homepage: <http://www.mantojums.lv>

12.2. Diplomatic Clearance of Foreign Aircraft

Regulation No. 667 (06.09.2005) of the Cabinet of Ministers provides the procedure for granting permission to subjects of international public law to use Latvian airspace for the performance of public functions by flights of foreign aircrafts as understood by Article 3 of the December 7, 1944 Convention on International Civil Aviation.

These Regulations shall not apply to aircraft intended for military needs of member states of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation performing monitoring and defence. Foreign aircraft intended for military needs of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation performing battle tasks defending Latvian airspace shall be ensured priority in the use of airspace as opposed to civil aviation aircraft.

Flights of state aircraft of foreign states to, from, or over Latvian territory may only be undertaken with permission. The application for each flight shall be submitted through diplomatic channels to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs not later than:

- 7 days prior to the anticipated entry of a foreign aircraft into Latvian airspace
- 45 days prior the anticipated entry of a foreign aircraft into Latvian airspace if during a two month period more than 4 flights are envisaged to be carried out.

Application for a flight permit shall indicate:

- the state where the foreign aircraft is registered;
- the number of foreign aircraft and type and registration number of each aircraft;
- the serial or identification number of the foreign aircraft;
- the identification signal of the foreign aircraft;
- the number of the crew and passengers of the foreign aircraft;
- the purpose of the flight of the foreign aircraft;
- the airfield and time (co-ordinated universal time) of departure of the foreign aircraft;
- the airfield and time (co-ordinated universal time) of arrival of the foreign aircraft;

- the place (point of entry) and time (co-ordinated universal time) of crossing the Latvian border;
- the landing airfield of the foreign aircraft in Latvia (if landing is planned);
- the air route of the foreign aircraft in the territory of Latvia;
- the time the foreign aircraft will depart from the Latvian airfield (if landing is planned);
- the time of crossing the Latvian border (point of exit from the territory of Latvia);
- additional information (request for fuel intake, aircraft parking, passport control).

Application for arrival permit of foreign aircraft intended for military needs shall indicate, in addition to the afore-mentioned information:

- the name, surname and military service rank of the captain of the foreign aircraft;
- the number and military service rank of the crew of the foreign aircraft;
- the number of passengers, and the name, surname and military service rank of each passenger;
- information on the cargo of the aircraft, confirmation of hazardous cargo (for example, chemical, biological, toxic, radioactive cargo) on board the foreign aircraft, confirmation of goods of strategic nature on the foreign aircraft and their documentation (export licence issued by authorised institutions of the exporting country or export permit, or an equivalent document to these, and import licence or import certificate of the importing country, or end use confirmation), confirmation of reconnaissance equipment on the foreign aircraft (in the event there is such equipment on the foreign aircraft, confirmation that it will not be used while in Latvian airspace).

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, after receiving the conclusions of the competent Latvian institutions, shall take a decision to issue a flight permit or to refuse it, and shall forward it to the subject of international public law by diplomatic means.

The Ministry should be notified by a Verbal Note or a message as soon as possible, if a flight for any reasons is cancelled

Legislation:

- Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 667 of September 6, 2005 “Procedure for Granting Permission to Subjects of international public law to use Latvian airspace for the performance of public functions by flights of foreign aircraft as understood by Article 3 of the December 7, 1944 Convention on International Civil Aviation”;
- Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 104 of February 18, 2008 “*Grozījumi Ministru kabineta 2005.gada 6.septembra noteikumos Nr.667 "Kārtība, kādā starptautisko publisko tiesību subjektiem piešķir atļauju izmantot Latvijas gaisa telpu publisko funkciju veikšanai paredzēto ārvalstu gaisa kuģu lidojumiem 1944.gada 7.decembra Konvencijas par starptautisko civilo aviāciju 3.panta izpratnē*”.

12.3. Diplomatic Clearance of Foreign Naval Vessels

In accordance with the Regulation No. 352 and the amendments No. 78 of the Cabinet of Ministers, all foreign naval vessels and any other ship demanding immunity as a naval vessel are subject to diplomatic clearance before visiting Latvian territorial waters. The request for diplomatic clearance should be forwarded via diplomatic channels not later than 30 days prior to the visit, unless other order is stipulated by special regulation or an international agreement.

Request for diplomatic clearance must specify the following information:

- Nationality and type of vessel
- Name of vessel and Pennant No.
- International call sign
- Displacement (tons)
- Length, breadth (extreme), draught (max)
- Commanding officer's or master's
 - rank
 - name
- Number of crew (a list of passengers has to be included as well)
- Last port of call
- Port of destination (UTC)
- Purpose of visit
- Estimated date of departure
- Next port of call
- Radio frequencies, transmission art and power
- Additional permits and information

If a head of state or a government official is staying on the naval vessel, the request for diplomatic clearance should be forwarded via diplomatic channels not later than 7 days prior the visit.

Foreign naval vessels staying in the internal waters and harbours of the Republic of Latvia are not levied harbour dues.

Payments are collected for the following :

- pilot services
- tugboats
- ice-breaker
- services needed (supplies, water, garbage)
- electricity
- telecommunications etc.

The request for a permit to enter the territorial waters of Latvia will be processed by the relevant Institutions of Latvia (Naval Forces, Ministry of Defence; Maritime Department, Ministry of Transport and Communications; the Latvian Environmental, Geological and Meteorological Agency, Ministry of Environment; Marine and Inland Waters Administration, State Environmental Service; Institute of Hydro-Ecology of the University of Latvia) and in due course the answer will be relayed to the State Protocol.

If a situation arises which requires short notice diplomatic clearance, contact

Officer on duty of the Naval Forces of the Republic of Latvia
Telephone: 371 6243 3553 (24 hours)

The Marine Environmental Board of the Ministry of the Environment Protection and Regional Development reminds to take into account International Convention on Environmental Defence of the Baltic Sea, the HELCOM recommendation and legislation of the Republic of Latvia.

Further information:

Naval Forces, Ministry of Defence

Ezermalas iela 6/8, LV 1014 Riga
Tel. +371 6755 3100
Fax. + 371 6755 3092
Link to homepage: <http://www.mod.gov.lv>

Maritime Department, Ministry of Transport and Communications

Gogoļa iela 3, LV 1743, Riga
Tel. + 371 6702 8280
Fax. +371 6733 1406
Link to homepage: <http://www.sam.gov.lv/about/contacts/index.php#jurnieciba>

Latvian Environmental, Geological and Meteorological Agency

Maskavas iela 165, LV 1019, Riga
Tel. +371 6703 2600
Fax. + 371 6714 5154
Link to homepage: <http://www.lvgma.gov.lv>
E-mail: lvgma@lvgma.gov.lv

Marine and Inland Waters Administration,

Voleru iela 2, LV1007, Riga
Tel. +371 6746 9664
Fax. +371 6746 5888
Link to homepage: <http://www.jvp.gov.lv>
E-mail: jiup@jiup.gov.lv

LU Institute of Hydro-Ecology

Tel. +371 6761 0851
Fax. +371 6760 1995
Link to homepage: <http://www.lu.lv/instituti/hidroekologijas.html>
E-mail: hydro@latnet.lv

12.4. Diplomatic Clearance of Foreign Scientific Research Ships

In order to receive a diplomatic clearance for work in Latvian territorial waters, the state institution or international scientific organisation co-ordinating the research must submit the following notification of the proposed research cruise to the State Protocol, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at least 3 months prior to entry into Latvian territorial waters:

The request for a permit to enter territorial waters of Latvia will be processed by the relevant Institutions of Latvia (Naval Forces, Ministry of Defence; Maritime Department, Ministry of Transport and Communications; Latvian Environmental, Geological and Meteorological Agency, Ministry of Environment; Marine and Inland Waters Administration, State Environmental Service; Institute of Hydro-Ecology of the University of Latvia) and in due course the answer will be relayed to the State Protocol.

GENERAL Part A.

1. Name of research ship
2. Dates of cruise
3. Operating authority

4. Particulars of the ship:
 - Name
 - Nationality
 - Overall length
 - Maximum draught
 - Gross tonnage
 - Propulsion
 - Call sign

5. Crew Name of master
 Number of crew
6. Scientific personnel
7. Geographical area in which ship will operate
8. Brief description of purpose of cruise
9. Dates and names of intended ports of call
10. Any special logistical requirements at ports of call

DETAIL Part B

1. Name of the research ship
2. Dates of cruise
3. Purpose of research and general operational methods
4. Attach chart showing (on an appropriate scale) the geographical area of intended work, positions of intended stations, tracks of survey lines, positions of moored/seabed equipment
5. Types of samples required, e.g.: geological / water / plankton / fish / radioactivity / isotope / .. and methods by which samples will be obtained
6. Details of moored equipment
7. Explosives
8. Details and references of:
 - a) Any relevant previous or future cruises
 - b) Any previous published research data relating to the proposed cruise
9. Names and addresses of scientists of the coastal state in whose waters the proposed cruise takes place, with whom previous contact has been made
10. State:

- a) Whether visits to the ship in port by scientists of the coastal state concerned will be acceptable (Yes/No)
- b) Whether it will be acceptable to carry on board an observer from the coastal state for any part of the cruise, and dates and ports of embarkation/disembarkation (Yes/No)
- c) When research data from intended cruise is likely to be made available to the coastal state, and if so, by what means.

B. The activities of scientific research vessels in Latvian territorial waters can be terminated, if the latter do not observe the regulations of the Republic of Latvia.

C. Cruise reports of scientific research operations must be submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their further forwarding to the State Geology Service, the Institute of Biology and the Marine Environmental Board.

Further information:

Naval Forces, Ministry of Defence

Ezermalas iela 6/8, LV 1014 Riga

Tel. +371 6755 3100

Fax. + 371 6755 3092

Link to homepage: <http://www.mod.gov.lv>

Maritime Department, Ministry of Transport and Communications

Gogoļa iela 3, LV 1743, Riga

Tel. + 371 6702 8280

Fax. +371 6733 1406

Link to homepage: <http://www.sam.gov.lv/about/contacts/index.php#jurnieciba>

Latvian Environmental, Geological and Meteorological Agency

Maskavas iela 165, LV 1019, Riga

Tel. +371 6703 2600

Fax. + 371 6714 5154

Link to homepage: <http://www.lvgma.gov.lv>

E-mail: lvgma@lvgma.gov.lv

Marine and Inland Waters Administration,

Voleru iela 2, LV1007, Riga

Tel. +371 6746 9664

Fax. +371 6746 5888

Link to homepage: <http://www.jvp.gov.lv>

E-mail: jiup@jiup.gov.lv

Institute of Hydro-Ecology, University of Latvia

Tel. +371 6761 0851

Fax. +371 6760 1995

Link to homepage: <http://www.lu.lv/instituti/hidroekologijas.html>

E-mail: hydro@latnet.lv

12.5. Riga International Airport

12.5.1. Aviation security requirements and restrictions

As regards the airport in general, passengers and baggage at Riga International Airport are subject to security checks before departing. Security activities can cause misunderstandings and inconvenience, however, it should be remembered that everybody is the same in the plane, therefore passengers should understand the importance of security activities. It should be reminded that flight operators may carry out luggage and body checks for justifiable reasons. As long as such precautions are considered necessary, members of Diplomatic Missions and their families will also be affected. Special rules apply to diplomatic bags (see section 12.4).

Heads of Missions and Consular posts presenting a Diplomatic Passport and an Identification Card issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia enjoy the right to meet a guest and to escort him or her in the Arrival and Departure areas.

12.5.2. Parking and Driving in Airport Territory

CD cars may be parked short term at the CD parking lots near the Passenger Terminal. Driving of CD cars on the apron area is only permitted whilst attending official delegations, when VIP facilities are in use. Airport authorities do not issue vehicle passes for entering and driving in the airport's restricted areas.

Additional information concerning driving in airport territory may be provided by the Riga Airport Aviation Security and Rescue Department, tel: +371 6720 7371.

12.5.3. VIP service centre

Customs and Immigration Clearances

VIP's are subject to examination by Customs and Immigration. All passengers may be required to undergo such examinations, and must comply with arrangements as advised by VIP staff.

Departure/Arrival Assistance.

- **Departure:**
 - meeting the VIP and seeing off persons at the Riga Airport VIP Centre;
 - accommodation at the VIP lounge;
 - registration of flight tickets and luggage;
 - escort of the VIP to the aircraft using the VIP's car or airport transport;
 - escort of the seeing-off persons to the aircraft and back to the VIP lounge.

- **Arrival**
 - accommodation of the the VIP greeting party at the VIP lounge;
 - escort of persons meeting the VIP to the aircraft;
 - meeting the VIP at the aircraft;
 - customs clearances, immigration and other formalities;
 - delivery of luggage to the VIP lounge.

Application for VIP facilities

Applications for VIP service should be made a minimum of 24 hours before the arrival/departure of the VIP at Riga Airport.

Booking of VIP services

The following information is required when booking VIP services:

- the VIP's name, last name, nationality and status, number of escorts;
- name of the organisation, address, telephone, fax, name of the contact person;
- dates of arrival and departure, flight number;
- point of origin/destination;
- form of payment.

Information concerning VIP service can be obtained from the Riga International Airport VIP Lounge, tel.: +371 6720 7132

Access to VIP lounge

VIP's who have booked the VIP lounge for their departure are requested to arrive at the airport not later than one hour prior to the scheduled time of departure because of the time required for customs and security clearances, passport control, registration of flight tickets and luggage. Special attention shall be paid to transit flights. VIP's arriving after this time run a risk of missing their flight.

Meeting and seeing off

The persons meeting or seeing off a VIP should arrive at the VIP lounge twenty minutes before the expected time of arrival and one hour before the expected time of departure. Should there be any changes concerning the expected time of the arrival of the aircraft, the VIP service agent will present all the necessary information to the customer.

Tel.: +371 6720 7132;

Fax.: +371 6720 7257

VIP service fee includes the following extra services:

- facilities of the conference hall;
- newspapers;
- TV;
- telephone and fax;
- refreshments: coffee, tea, juice, soft drinks and confectionery.

The VIP service is available for Heads of Mission at discount rate.

12.5.4. Charter flights

For carrying out the technical servicing of aircraft, the following additional information should be presented to the airport Ground Handling Service:

- company carrying out the flight, its name, telephone, fax,;
- type of aircraft;
- aircraft registration number/letter;
- maximum take-off weight;
- the anticipated load of the cargo;
- any particular technical servicing necessary;
- form of payment.

Information concerning technical attendance for charter flights can be obtained from the Ground Handling Service, tel. +371 6720 7588, +371 2924 0368.

12.5.5. Diplomatic Consignments

Diplomatic courier consignments (the diplomatic bag) must be sealed and the diplomatic status of the consignment must be clearly visible. Diplomatic courier consignments may contain only documents and articles that are intended for official use of the mission. These consignments are not subject to safety control and customs clearance.

If the mission wishes to take a diplomatic bag straight to the aircraft or to collect one from the aircraft, it must apply for a temporary permit from the Riga Airport Aviation Security and Rescue Department. The application for the permit must be submitted to the Riga Airport Aviation Security Department, which will issue a permit to the applicant who must present himself in person, showing the ID card issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. An airport security officer shall accompany the vehicle to the aircraft.

Consignments other than the diplomatic bag are dealt with at the cargo terminal. The mission's authorised person shall pay the handling fee at the cargo terminal and then, whilst escorted by a member of the cargo area staff, proceed with their own vehicle to the aircraft in order to receive the shipment.

Diplomatic pouches shall not be opened or retained without the presence of a representative of the Mission. If there are serious grounds for presuming that the bag may contain articles other than those permitted, the customs authority has the right to request the foreign mission or an authorised representative to open the bag. The written consent of the Director of Latvian Customs is required before any diplomatic mail may be opened. Diplomatic Missions may authorise a third person to bring into Latvia a sealed bag or cargo belonging to the Diplomatic Mission or its staff members.

Special rules apply to the importation of firearms and ammunition (see chapter 5). Dispatch of weapons in a diplomatic bag is strongly forbidden in Latvia.

In order to facilitate identification and thus ensure correct treatment of courier mail, the Latvian authorities concerned have suggested that the airline company should always specify in its documentation that such mail is on board.

Couriers must respect all regulations concerning access to airport restricted areas. Failure to do so will result in a cancelled pass and an administrative report to the State Protocol, as well as to the appropriate mission.

Further information: Riga Airport Security, tel.: + 371 6720 7084.

12.6. HEALTH CARE

12.6.1. State Compulsory Health Insurance

State Agency for Compulsory Health Insurance is a supervisory state authority of the Ministry of Health, the main task of which is to implement state policy for the

availability of health care services and to administrate/manage state compulsory health insurance resources.

State compulsory health insurance is the basic level of medical assistance provided by the state, as laid out in Regulations No. 1046 "Health Care Organisation and Financing Procedure" issued by the Cabinet of Ministers on 19 December, 2006. It means that the state compulsorily insures its inhabitants to be entitled to basic health care services.

The level of medical assistance guaranteed by the State in accordance with the procedures prescribed by the Cabinet are to be provided to both citizens and non-citizens of Latvia, to EU persons who are employed or self-employed in Latvia and their family members, to refugees as well as to persons detained, arrested and sentenced with deprivation of liberty.

State compulsory health insurance resources, in accordance with the Regulations, are financed by resources from a state budget subsidy as outlined in the annual law "On the State Budget" for health care. The above stated resources guarantee the provision of health care services within fixed parameters.

12.6.2. Primary health care and hospitalisation

Under state compulsory health insurance system, all persons in Latvia should have a family practitioner. A person not residing in Latvia may also visit a family practitioner.

If a person would like to visit a medical specialist, a referral from the family practitioner is needed.

To obtain information about an available family practitioner you are advised to call the information line **8001234** free of charge.

No referrals are needed for the direct approach to the following specialists: psychiatrist, pulmonologist for tuberculosis treatment, venereologist, narcologist, endocrinologist for diabetes, or private specialists.

For hospitalisation, with the exception of emergency health care, referral from a general practitioner or a medical specialist is required.

12.6.3. European Health Insurance Card

Anyone carrying a European Health Insurance Card is entitled to receive any required medical care whilst in a EU Member State, or in Iceland, Liechtenstein or Norway. Treatment is provided subject to the legislation and regulations of the country where it is given. A non-resident person shall receive the same medical care to which a resident of that country would be entitled. The procedure for obtaining treatment and any additional payment charged is the same as that which applies to local residents. According to EC regulation 1408/71 citizens in other EU or EEA countries sent to Latvia as privileged persons may be entitled to full public health care, provided they are entitled to public health care in their home country.

12.6.4. Emergency health care

All foreigners have the right to urgent health care, which is defined as care for medical conditions arising unexpectedly in the country of stay and demanding immediate medical assistance. In the case of emergency treatment, a person can always go to emergency reception of a hospital or call an ambulance. The attending physician will decide if the patient needs in-patient treatment. Transportation by ambulance, in case of emergency, is free of charge.

For emergencies call tel no. **112** or **03**

Further information about medical benefits in Latvia can be obtained from:

State Agency for Compulsory Health Insurance (SACHI)

Veselības obligātās apdrošināšanas valsts aģentūra

Cēsu iela 31 (6.entrance), Rīga LV – 1012

Tel.: +371 67043700

Fax +371 67043701

Information line: 80001234 (Monday - Thursday from 8:30 until 17:00, Friday 8:30-16:00) Link to homepage: <http://www.voava.lv>

12.6.5. Diplomatic Service Medical Centre

Address: Elizabetes 57, 4th floor, Riga LV-1050

Director's Office: +371 6728 9255

Reception: +371 6722 9942

Fax: +371 6728 9413

E-mail: dsmc@navigators.lv

Office hours: Monday – Friday, 8:00 – 20:00

The Centre offers consultations and medical services in following fields:

- Family medical care
- Gynaecology
- Paediatrics
- Expert consultations
- Cardiology
- Psychology and psychotherapy for children and adults
- Psychoanalyses
- Sexology
- Dentists and dental hygiene
- Aesthetic medicine
- Massage
- Cosmetology
- Dietetics
- Vaccinations
- Osteo-reflexotherapy

- Compulsory health examination
- Health examination for drivers

12.7. SCHOOLS

The following schools are recommended for children of members of diplomatic missions:

International School of Latvia.

Address: Viestura iela 6A, Jūrmala LV-2010

Director Dr Michael Mack

Telephone: +371 6775 5146, +371 6775 5018

Fax: +371 6775 5009

E-mail: isloffice@isl.edu.lv

ISL Curriculum

The International School of Latvia is an independent coeducational day school which offers an educational program for children of all nationalities aged from 18 months to 18 years. ISL was founded in 1994. The school year begins in August and finishes in June. The International School of Latvia is an International Baccalaureate World School. It is authorized to offer the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (IBPYP) in grades Preschool to grade 5 and IB Middle Years Programme (IBMYP) for grades 6 – 10. The school has been authorised to offer the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) since August 2004.

Instruction is in English. French and German are offered as foreign languages to students from grades 1 - 12 if they meet the English fluency requirement. English as a Second Language classes are offered to students whose native tongue is not English, and need additional English support.

International School of Riga

Address: Zvejnieku iela 12, Riga, LV-1048

Director: Dr. Frederick Thompson

e-mail: isr@isriga.lv

Tel: +371 6762 4622;

Fax: +371 6762 4796

Link to homepage: <http://www.isriga.lv>

ISR offers the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program. It is an international curriculum program for students aged 3-12, which has combined the best research and practices from a range of national systems around the world to provide a comprehensive approach to teaching and learning.

Lycée Français de Riga*

Address: Mēness iela 8, Riga, LV 1013

Director: Mrs. Biruta Vīksna, Mag.paed

Tel: + 371 6737 2949, +371 6737 2954

Fax. +371 6782 1115

E-mail: franlic@latnet.lv; rfl@rsdc.lv

Link to homepage: <http://www.franlic.lv>

**Instruction is in Latvian, at the same time, the teachers have excellent command of French.*

Āgenskalna Grammar School*

Address: Āgenskalna iela 21A, Rīga, LV 1048

Director: Mrs. Sandra Sīle

Tel/fax: + 371 6761 1146

E-mail: ag@ag.edu.lv

Link to homepage: <http://www.ag.edu.lv>

**Instruction is in Latvian, at the same time, the teachers have excellent command of German.*

Rīga 40th Secondary School*

Address: Tērbatas iela 15/17, Rīga, LV 1050

Director: Mrs. G. Yefremova

Tel: + 371 6728 3439

E-mail: r40vs@rsdc.lv

**Instruction is in Russian, at the same time, the teachers have excellent command of English.*

Further information can be obtained from the Ministry of Education,

Address: Vaļņu iela 2, Rīga, LV 1050

Tel: + 371 6722 2415

Fax: + 371 6721 3992

Link to homepage: <http://www.izm.gov.lv>

E-mail: izm@izm.gov.lv

12.8. PETS

New requirements regarding the import and export of dogs, cats and ???, if the number of animals does not exceed five, to Latvia have been introduced as of October 1, 2004.

For further information please contact:

Food and Veterinary Service,

Pārtikas un veterinārais dienests

Address: Republikas laukums 2, Rīga, LV-1010

Tel.: +371 6709 5230,

Fax: +371 6732 2727

E-mail: pvd@pvd.gov.lv

Link to homepage: <http://www.pvd.gov.lv>

Sanitary Border Inspection of Latvia.

Tel: + 371 6702 7282,

E-mail office@sr.gov.lv

12.9. The Latvian Institute (under supervision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Address: Kaļķu iela 7,
(4th floor, 6th floor), Rīga, LV 1050
Director's office +371 6750 3663
Fax +371 6750 3669
E-mail info@li.lv
<http://www.li.lv>

The Latvian Institute (LI) offers background information, publications, e-presentations and videos about Latvia. It also offers in-depth information on all aspects of Latvian society, economy, culture and history.

12.10. International Women's Club of Riga (IWCR)

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General information:

The idea of a club originated in 1992 when some expatriate women decided to start organising activities for international women in Riga. From this, in April 1995, the unregistered REIGAL (Riga Expatriate Interest Groups and Luncheons) was founded by a group of six dedicated women.

Finally in June 1995, the International Women's Club of Riga (IWCR) was born, by becoming an official NGO (Non Government Organisation) in Latvia. Its membership at the time was about 20 ladies. They united in an effort to make their life in Riga more rewarding and interesting. They voted in a Constitution and the very first Executive Board.

Today, the Club boasts a membership of 183 women from 38 countries! The Board consists of 12 elected officers: President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Newsletter Editor, Charity Chairperson, Hostess, Web Woman, Activities Chairperson, Tour and Social Director and a Membership Director. The Board meets once per month to discuss IWCR issues and events. Minutes are recorded and members kept informed at monthly luncheons and via the monthly newsletter.

The Club hosts monthly luncheons at carefully pre-selected restaurants and invites members to attend and bring a guest if they wish. The lunches are nice affairs with deliciously prepared and presented meals. They are well attended and members use the opportunity to interact, socialize and network with each other.

Once a month, the Club holds a Meet & Greet coffee which is yet another method of introducing new and existing members to each other, as well as to the Club's functions and activities in particular and Riga in general. It is also an excellent opportunity to meet in smaller groups and engage in more convivial discussions.

Open to all Club members is the opportunity to participate in a varied range of activities sponsored by the club such as: architecture, ballroom dancing, cooking classes, bridge, a book group, Bible discussion, English conversation, golf, Spanish conversation, tennis, etc.

Membership fees are currently LVL 25 per year from May to April. Club membership entitles members to reduced lunch fees, a subscription to the newsletter, participation in club activity groups and discounts at some stores, companies, organisations and restaurants.

The working language of the Club is English, however with 38 countries represented, the languages likely to be heard at any given gathering are many and varied.

12.11. LATVIA'S NATIONAL HOLIDAYS AND REMEMBRANCE DAYS

National Holidays

January 1 New Year's Day.

Ring in the New Year, with the festivities usually starting on the evening of December 31 (see also New Year's Eve - December 31), it is one of the most thrilling annual events in Latvia. Usually people stay up until past midnight, and exactly at midnight they toast each other with champagne, wishing everyone a happy New Year.

March-April (in accordance with the Western Church calendar) Easter.

In Latvia, Easter holidays usually last three days: Good Friday, Easter Sunday and Easter Monday. Latvians go to church but also observe Latvian festive traditions, which differ from the rituals introduced by the Christian Church. Easter is usually celebrated in the family or among close friends.

May 1

Convocation of the Constituent Assembly of the Republic of Latvia; Labour Day.

In contrast to most European countries, where this date is Labour Day only, in Latvia May 1 is of special national significance, too. On this date in 1920 the Constitutional Assembly, the first Parliament of the Republic of Latvia democratically elected by the whole nation, convened for its first session. Its task was to draft and pass the State Constitution.

May 4

Restoration of Independence of the Republic of Latvia.

On May 4, 1990 the Supreme Soviet of the Latvian SSR (the highest legislative institution in occupied Latvia) passed a Declaration on the Restoration of Independence of the Republic of Latvia envisaging a transitional period until full independence was regained.

The 2nd Sunday in May

Mothers' Day.

Mothers' Day is a comparatively new holiday in Latvia, officially recognised only from 1992, although it was marked as a family celebration already in the 1920s and 30s. The essence of this family occasion lies in the view that the mother represents the main pillar of a strong family.

A Sunday in May or June (in accordance with the Western Church calendar) Whitsunday.

Whitsunday in Latvia is mainly connected with Christian religious observances, but also includes earlier traditions from before Christianity.

June 23-24 Līgo Day and Jāņi (John's Day).

This is the biggest traditional Latvian festival, having a deep symbolic meaning for Latvians and known in other countries, too. The Līgo-Festival (Līgo-Eve) is on 23rd of June, with Jāņi on the following day – 24th of June. It coincides with the summer solstice, and the festivities include many ancient traditions: gathering wild flowers and cutting boughs, making wreaths of oak-leaves and flowers, decorating houses and animals, burning a ceremonial bonfire and singing songs with the 'līgo' refrain. Ritual food includes Jāņi cheese with caraway seed and barley beer.

November 18 Proclamation of the Republic of Latvia.

On this day in 1918, in what is nowadays the National Theatre in Riga, the Republic of Latvia was proclaimed as an independent state. In a favourable situation in the wake of World War I, Latvian political groups realised their dream of establishing an independent state. The first period of existence of the Republic of Latvia lasted up to June 17, 1940, when Soviet forces occupied the country. More than 51 years passed before the independent Republic of Latvia was restored on August 21, 1991.

December 24, 25, 26 Christmas.

Christmas is traditionally one of Latvia's most important festivities. Among the Latvians this is a family celebration, when people attend church services. Essential Christmas traditions include decorating the Christmas tree and gift-giving on Christmas Eve - December 24. The celebrations continue on Christmas Day and the day after.

December 31 New Year's Eve.**Remembrance Days****January 20****Commemoration Day of Defenders of the Barricades in 1991.**

In autumn 1990, reactionary forces became increasingly more established in the government of the Soviet Union. It was in their interests to stop the Baltic peoples' move towards restoring independence, and in January 1991 the leaders of the USSR in Moscow took a decision to restore the old order in the Baltics. Latvians from all over the country rushed to Riga to build barricades and defend independent power structures. The 20th of January marked the culmination of violence by Soviet forces hostile to Latvian independence. Soviet special forces seized the Latvian Ministry of the Interior, a gun-battle ensued and several people were killed.

January 26**International (de iure) Recognition of the Republic of Latvia.**

On this date in 1921 the Entente countries, the victors in World War I, recognised the independent Republic of Latvia. Thus the leading world powers of the time recognised independent Latvia as an equal subject under international law.

March 25**Commemoration Day of Victims of Communist Terror.**

On this day in 1949, a total of 43 000 people were deported from Latvia to Siberia, mainly prosperous peasants who were regarded by the Soviet occupation regime as alien to communist ideology and the principles of collectivism.

May 8**The Crushing of Nazism and Commemoration Day of Victims of World War II.**

For Latvia and the Latvians, World War II was a time of great suffering. Both Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union violated international law by mobilizing the population of Latvia into their armed forces. About 200 000 Latvian soldiers served in the forces of both occupying states, and about half of them (100 000) were killed in battle.

May 9 Europe Day.

Since the restoration of the independent Republic of Latvia, one of the main foreign policy tasks has been accession to the European Union. Accordingly, Latvia has adopted this day of remembrance, observed in the European Union in honour of Robert Schuman, who made an immense contribution to unifying the countries of Europe after World War II.

June 14 Commemoration Day of Victims of Communist Terror.

On June 14, 1941 the Soviet occupation regime deported to Siberia around 15 000 people from Latvia, regarding them as ideologically opposed to the Soviet communist system.

June 17 Occupation of the Republic of Latvia.

In accordance with a secret protocol of the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact of August 23, 1939, which apportioned Latvia to Moscow's sphere of influence, the country was occupied by Soviet forces on June 17, 1940. Latvia was under occupation by the Soviet Union (Russia) from 1940 up to 1941, when the country was occupied by Germany. In 1945 the Soviet occupation regime returned, and the Russian forces of occupation left their last military base in 1998.

June 22 Heroes' Commemoration Day (Anniversary of the Battle of Cēsis).

In June 1919 near the town of Cēsis there was a battle between Latvian and German forces (including local Germans). On June 22, the Latvians, together with Estonian forces, won a decisive victory against the Germans. This victory is traditionally regarded as the triumph of the idea of an independent Latvian state over the principles of power embodied by the Germans in the Baltic.

July 4 Commemoration Day of Genocide against the Jews.

On July 4, 1941, shortly after the occupation by the USSR ended and the occupation by Nazi Germany began, Riga's main Jewish synagogue was destroyed, burning alive those who were trapped inside.

August 11 Commemoration Day of Latvian Freedom Fighters.

The day of remembrance for Latvian freedom fighters is connected with the signing of a peace treaty between Latvia and Soviet Russia on August 11, 1920. The treaty ended the Latvian War of Liberation, which had begun in late 1918. In the war, one of the militarily strongest opponents of the idea of a free Latvian state was the Soviet regime, which had become established in Russia and planned to take over power in Latvia as well.

August 21

Passing of the Constitutional Law on the Status of the Republic of Latvia as a State and Actual Restoration of the Republic of Latvia.

On August 21 the Supreme Council (Parliament) of the Republic of Latvia declared that the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia, as passed on February 15, 1922, was restored in full. This ended the transitional period to a fully independent republic, a process formally instituted on May 4, 1990.

September 1 Knowledge Day (First Day of School).

The new school year usually starts on this date, when classes begin in all teaching institutions in Latvia. Younger students, often accompanied by their parents, traditionally bring flowers to their teachers on this day.

September 22 Baltic Unity Day.

On this date in 1236, Baltic peoples - the ancient Latvians together with the ancient Lithuanians - defeated the German crusading order, the Order of Swordbearers. The order had been created to gain military and political control of the Baltic region and to convert the indigenous peoples to Christianity.

November 11

Latvian Freedom Fighters' Remembrance Day - Lāčplēsis Day.

On this date in 1919, the Latvian Army won a decisive breakthrough in the fighting against the Russian and German forces led by Pavel Bermont-Avalov, which had taken up arms against the Republic of Latvia. The victory over the forces of Bermont-Avalov marked the conclusion of the Latvian War of Liberation (1918-1920) and allowed to begin the creation of the new state.

The Last Sunday of November (usually), All Souls' Day (an unofficial day of remembrance).

On this day and on the previous eve - "Candles Eve" - people visit cemeteries to remember the deceased loved-ones, lighting candles at the graves. A widespread tradition on this day is a visit to the Riga Fraternal Cemetery. Everyone brings a candle, lit to honour the soldiers who fell in the cause of Latvia's freedom.

The 1st Sunday in December

Commemoration Day of Victims of Genocide Against the Latvian People by the Totalitarian Communist Regime.

After World War II about 200 000 Latvians lived in Soviet Russia (later the USSR), having arrived both in the course of peasant emigration in the late 19th century, and as refugees from the fighting in World War I, since from 1915 the front passed through the present territory of Latvia. In 1937-1938 the communist regime in Moscow began genocide against non-Russians living in the USSR, including Latvians. About 70 000 Latvians living in the Soviet Union were killed. The Latvian Parliament has declared the first Sunday of December as a day of remembrance for the Latvians killed in the USSR in the course of repression by Stalin's regime.

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