

1. Protocol of Visits

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1.1. General information



The outgoing visits of the President of the Republic of Latvia as well as incoming visits by foreign heads of states and their spouses are fully organised by the President's Protocol Division.

The incoming and outgoing visits by heads of governments and Ministers of Foreign Affairs are organised directly by the State Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Incoming visits of heads of international organisations are also organised in cooperation with the State Protocol.

Incoming visits of foreign Speakers of Parliament, as well as the outgoing visits of the Speaker of the Saeima (the Latvian Parliament) are the responsibility of the Protocol Division of the Saeima.

For incoming and outgoing visits of line ministers and EU Commissioners, the respective ministries are responsible.

1.2. Categories of Visits



Visits are divided into following categories: state, official, working and private visit.

Transit visits and visits due to technical reasons are also possible.

[1.2.1. Heads of State](#)

[1.2.2. Heads of Parliament](#)

[1.2.3. Heads of Government](#)

[1.2.4. Ministers of Foreign Affairs](#)

1.3. Delegation



The format of the official delegation is set according to the format and context of the visit at an early stage of planning. It may be subject to alterations due to reciprocity and specific circumstances. To facilitate seating, transportation and other practical arrangements, delegation list should be provided to the State Protocol as early as possible, with the participants of separate meetings and events indicated. The list of the delegation should include full name, surname, title and official designation of each person included. Where possible, the persons should be arranged in the order of precedence. The inclusion of accompanying persons as well as the number is also subject to mutual consent among states.

1.4. Working Language



In Latvia, the working language used in most visits is English, with exceptions suited to specific context. The State Protocol expects to be notified as to what language the guest prefers to speak during the visit and whether interpreting is required. In principle, interpreting is to be arranged by the foreign state concerned, nevertheless, the State Protocol may assist with locating the interpreter to the necessary language if there is such a request.

1.5. Arrival/Departure



VIP lounge

The State Protocol books the VIP lounge at the Airport based on the provided information. This information has to be supplied as soon as possible, but no later than 48 h prior to landing.

Passports and luggage

Passports and luggage tags should be collected prior to landing in Latvia and handed over to a 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. The visiting side is kindly asked to prepare special luggage tags with the national flag and the name of the delegation member on it, to make the organisation of logistics easier.

Special flights

An application for overflight and landing permission for the aircraft must be submitted to the State Protocol by the Embassy of the foreign state concerned at least a week before arrival. The Embassy is responsible for making all the necessary arrangements regarding a special flight, including accommodation and transport arrangements for the crew of the aircraft.

1.6. Local Transportation



The Latvian side provides transport for the head of delegation, his or her spouse and the official delegation according to the table of [paragraph 1.15.](#)

The transportation of accompanying persons is the responsibility of the Embassy of the foreign state concerned. If such necessity arises, the State Protocol may render assistance where possible.

1.7. Accommodation



The State Protocol makes reservations and covers accommodation costs for delegates according to the table of [paragraph 1.15.](#)

1.8. Security



Security provisions during the visit are the responsibility of the Latvian side. Security officers of the visiting state have to abide by the regulations of the Republic of Latvia concerning firearms.

Security officers accompanying the head of delegation must be identified as soon as possible, and the following information shall be submitted to the State Protocol:

- full name, surname;
- date and place of birth;
- ID number;
- passport number.

If the security officer bears arms, full details concerning any firearms to be brought into Latvia must be provided, specifically:

- type and serial number of the firearm;
- calibre and quantity of ammunition.

If the security officer intends to have communication equipment, the frequencies and the capacity of radio equipment must be notified in advance to the State Protocol by providing the following information:

- serial number and type of transmitter;
- required and reserve operating frequency;
- duration for the permit.

1.9. Dietary Restrictions or Preferences



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

1.10. Medical Care



Emergency medical care for the Head of Delegation and spouse is ensured during their stay in Latvia. In order to make all the necessary arrangements, the State Protocol requests the following information to be provided prior to the visit as early as possible:

blood group of the Head of Delegation and his or her spouse;

information regarding any special health precautions to be taken by the Head of Delegation;

any other information that needs to be considered during the State Visit.

1.11. Exchange of Gifts and Decorations during State and Official Visits



The visiting Head of State and the President of the Republic of Latvia may 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 takes place between Heads of State during State and Official Visits.

The Gift exchange ceremony may be attended by spouses, aides-de-camps, heads of the relevant presidential protocol of both states, as well as the official press.

On all other occasions, gifts are exchanged indirectly, i.e. following a prior mutual agreement via a Protocol officer. It is expected that the exchange of gifts is always initiated by the visiting state.

On a State Visit an exchange of State Decorations may take place following a mutual agreement of both parties.

1.12. Spouse Programme



The President's Protocol division may arrange a separate programme for the spouse accompanying the guest during State and Official Visits. Following a prior mutual agreement, a Protocol Officer is designated. His or her special interests should be indicated as early as possible.

1.13. 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.

Expenses Covered by the Latvian Government

The expenses covered by the Latvian side according to the status of the visit can be seen in the table below ([paragraph 1.15.](#)).

There are cases possible when certain parts of the visit are financed following a mutual agreement, based on the principle of reciprocity, prior or during the preparation of the programme of the visit.

Expenses NOT Covered by the Latvian Government

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.

The number of persons for an accompanying delegation is not restricted. All expenses for the needs of an accompanying delegation are covered by visiting state.

The financial aspects of a forthcoming working visit are usually initially coordinated by the Protocol Service of the state concerned and by the relevant Protocol according to the main guest. The principle of reciprocity may be applied.

Advance Team

Occasionally, in preparation for a visit, an Advance delegation may arrive to have a walk-through of the event locations and discuss other finer and last-moment details. All expenses relevant to the Advance delegation are covered by the foreign state concerned. The same applies to the official guests and members of the delegation who arrive before the official programme begins or remain in the country after it has ended.

Head of State

	VIP Lounge	Hotel	Transportation
State visit	1 (2) + 10 or on the principle of reciprocity	1 (2) + 10 or on the principle of reciprocity	All delegation (excluding business delegation and journalists)
Official visit	1 (2) + 10 or on the principle of reciprocity	1 (2) + 10 or on the principle of reciprocity	All delegation (excluding business delegation and journalists)
Working visit	1 (2) + 3 or on the principle of reciprocity	1 (2) + 3 or on the principle of reciprocity	All delegation (excluding business delegation and journalists)

	VIP Lounge	Hotel	Transportation
Private visit	1 (2)	Not covered	Not covered
Transit visit	1 (2)	Not covered	Not covered
Spouse visit	On the principle of reciprocity	On the principle of reciprocity	On the principle of reciprocity

Head of Government

	Embassy	VIP Lounge	Hotel	Transportation
Official visit	Resident	1 (2) + 9 or on the principle of reciprocity	1 (2) + 9 or on the principle of reciprocity	Only for the official delegation during the time of the programme
	Non-resident	1 (2) + 9 or on the principle of reciprocity	1 (2) + 9 or on the principle of reciprocity	All delegation (excluding business delegation and journalists) during the time of the programme
Working visit	Resident	1 + 4 or on the principle of reciprocity	1 + 4 or on the principle of reciprocity	Only for the official delegation during the time of the programme
	Non-resident	1 + 4 or on the principle of reciprocity	1 + 4 or on the principle of reciprocity	All delegation (excluding business delegation and journalists) during the time of the programme
Transit visit	Resident	1 (2)	Not covered	Only VIP car
	Non-resident	1 (2)	Not covered	Only VIP car
Private visit	Resident	1 (2)	Not covered	Not covered
	Non-resident	1 (2)	Not covered	Not covered

Minister of Foreign Affairs

	Embassy	VIP Lounge	Hotel	Transportation
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	Embassy	VIP Lounge	Hotel	Transportation
Official visit	Resident	1 (2) + 4 or on the principle of reciprocity	1 (2) + 4 (the principle of reciprocity)	Only for the official delegation during the time of the official programme
	Non-resident	1 (2) + 4 or on the principle of reciprocity	1 (2) + 4 (the principle of reciprocity)	All delegation (excluding business delegation and journalists) during the time of the official programme
Working visit	Resident	On the principle of reciprocity, but no more than 1 + 2	Not covered	Only VIP car
	Non-resident	On the principle of reciprocity, but no more than 1 + 2	Not covered	Only official delegation (no larger than 1+4) during the time of the official programme
Transit visit	Resident	1 (2)	Not covered	Not covered
	Non-resident	1 (2)	Not covered	Not covered
Private visit	Resident	1 (2)	Not covered	Not covered
	Non-resident	1 (2)	Not covered	Not covered

*Security and the Road Police escort is provided according to the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 591“Procedure for providing protection (security service) by State Security Service to public officials”

**The costs for official meals are covered by the Latvian side at all times

***Depending of the context of the visit additional expenses may be permitted, which are covered by the Latvian side