



VA
GOVERNMENT

POLICY OUTLOOK

JULY • 2020

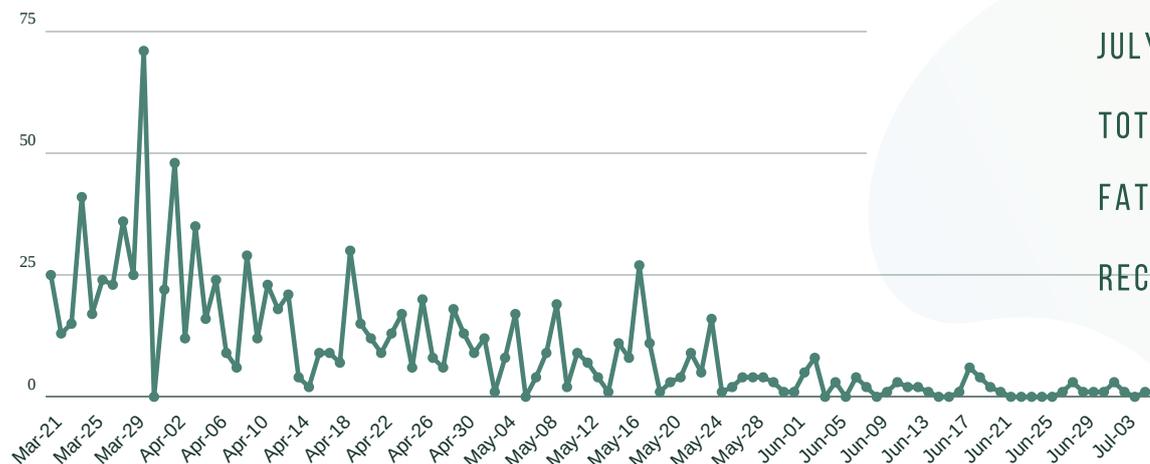
COVID-19 IN LATVIA

On June 10, 2020, the state of the emergency ended in Latvia guaranteeing that certain restrictions will be lifted. In order to keep the legal order after the end of the state of emergency, new main regulatory enactments were adopted in connection with the spread of Covid-19. The Parliament adopted a new Covid-19 Infection Control Law prepared by the Ministry of Justice, entering into force on June 10 and guaranteeing that certain rights and obligations correspond with the public safety and health, the Law on the Suppression of the Consequences of the Spread of Covid-19 infection, restoring the general legal order after the end of the emergency situation and providing support and recovery mechanisms for the Latvian economy. Also, on June 10, 2020 the Cabinet of Ministers' Regulations No. 360 Epidemiological precautions to control the spread of Covid-19 infection" (issued under the Covid-19 Infection Control Law) entered .

into force, establishing epidemiological precautions and restrictions to prevent the spread of Covid-19 infection.

As of July 1, the numbers of persons that are allowed to gather in one place are 100 persons in indoor spaces, 500 persons indoors where space is over 1000m² and 1000 outdoors. However, the basic principles stay the same- wherever possible, keeping a 2 metre distance from others. As regards to travel, the international carriage of passengers cannot be performed to the countries that are published on the website of the Centre for Disease Prevention and Control as the countries where infection spread can cause threat to public health. Travellers who have arrived in Latvia from an affected country with cumulative indicator above 15 per 100 000, have to self-isolate.

NUMBER OF NEW CASES REPORTED IN LATVIA:



Source: Graph created using data from Latvian Centre for Disease Prevention and Control

JULY 14

TOTAL CASES: **1174**

FATALITIES: **31**

RECOVERED: **1022**



Source: Visual materials for application "Apturi Covid"

CONTACT TRACING APPLICATION – STOP COVID

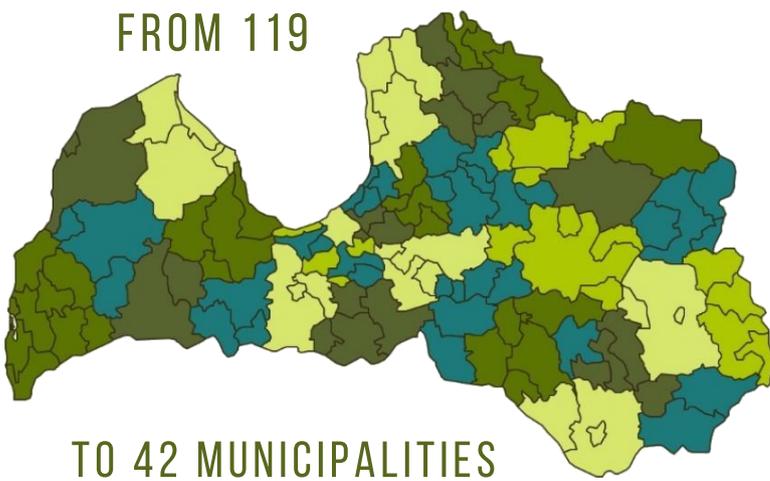
Latvia was the first user of Apple and Google coronavirus contact application software and on May 29, Apturi Covid (Stop Covid) app was launched where several ICT and science sector representatives teamed up to develop a mobile app for identifying Covid-19 contact persons in accordance with the requirements of epidemiologists. For the app to work, it is necessary to leave the Bluetooth signal on. All participating parties have signed a memorandum on cooperation towards limiting transmission of Covid-19 on a voluntary, unpaid basis, in accordance with data protection and security requirements. Participants include LMT, MakIT, Mobilly, TestDevLab, Zippy Vision, University of Latvia experts, TechHub Riga Co-founder Andris Bērziņš, and government representatives such as the President of Latvia, Chancery of the President of Latvia, The Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, NATO StratCom COE, as well as medical professionals and epidemiologists. The Data State Inspectorate was providing support in the development process of the "Apturi Covid" (Stop Covid) app and is monitoring that the right to privacy is respected, while enabling the responsible authorities to protect public health in general. Every person has a right to decide whether to use the app or not.

POLITICAL INITIATIVES

The Cabinet of Ministers have decided to redistribute additional 600 million EUR for various ministerial initiatives. At the same time, the government has previously decided to reallocate EU funds worth 496 million EUR for various ministerial initiatives. From the 600 million EUR, 233 million EUR is allocated for the modernization projects – 75 million EUR for the ALTUM Investment Fund, 90 million EUR distributed as a financial instrument to support large economic operators and 58 million EUR for the modernization of the agricultural sector.

152.2 million EUR for different infrastructure projects, including 103.2 million EUR for health care infrastructure projects. Also, 63.5 million EUR is allocated for education and science projects, 20 million EUR for the tourism sector, 21 million EUR for the culture development plan and 11 million EUR for the cultural infrastructure, 66 million EUR for the Latvian Railway and other transportation companies and 15 million EUR for demography.

ADMINISTRATIVE-TERRITORIAL REFORM



On June 10, the Parliament in the final reading adopted amendments to the Law on Administrative Territories and Populated Areas, creating 42 municipalities instead of the current 119 after the 2021 municipal elections. Despite the vast opposition and lengthy criticism of the way the legislative package had been moved through the parliament, the president announced the municipal reform law on June 22, new amendments entering into force on June 23. With a new law, the status of a city (valstspilsēta) have received Daugavpils, Jēkabpils, Jelgava, Jūrmala, Liepāja, Ogre, Rēzekne, Rīga, Valmiera and Ventspils.

The 2021 municipal elections will be announced by the Central Election Commission in the new administrative territories, and with the first meeting of each newly elected municipal council, scheduled for 1 July 2021, the powers of all former municipal councils will end.

Source: The visual map created by news media LETA, using data from the Ministry of Environment Protection and Regional Development

FARM TO FORK STRATEGY

In December 2019, the Ursula von der Leyen Commission presented the European Green Deal that sets a roadmap towards a climate-neutrality by 2050, setting ambitious goals to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by transforming food systems, forest, land, water and sea use, as well as energy, urban and industrial systems. The Farm to Fork Strategy adopted on May 20, 2020 is a new comprehensive approach to the EU sustainable food system that aims to reduce the environmental and climate footprint of the EU food system, thus is an integral part of achieving the objectives of the Green Deal and the SDGs. The strategy sets out both regulatory and non-regulatory initiatives, with the common agricultural and fisheries policies as key tools to support transition.



Make sure Europeans get healthy, affordable and sustainable food



Tackle climate change



Protect the environment and preserve biodiversity



Fair economic return in the food chain



Increase organic farming

FARM TO FORK STRATEGY

As the food systems remain one of the key drivers of climate change and environmental degradation, the strategy sets concrete targets and measures for the systems transformation.



SUSTAINABLE FOOD PRODUCTION: TO ACHIEVE THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE FOOD CHAIN

The use of pesticides in agriculture:

- Reducing by 50% the use and risk of chemical pesticides by 2030
- Reducing by 50% the use of more hazardous pesticides by 2030

The excess of nutrients:

- Reducing nutrient losses by at least 50%, while ensuring no deterioration on soil fertility
- Reducing fertilizer use by at least 20% by 2030

Antimicrobial resistance:

- Reducing by 50% the sales of antimicrobials used for farmed animals and aquaculture by 2030

Organic farming:

- Promote the development of the EU organic farming area, reaching 25% of agricultural land under organic farming by 2030.

SUSTAINABLE FOOD CONSUMPTION:

- Moving to a more plant-based diet
- Harmonised mandatory front-of-pack nutrition labelling;
- Requirement for origin indication for certain products
- Setting minimum mandatory criteria for sustainable food procurement.

SUSTAINABLE FOOD PROCESSING:

- Increase the availability and affordability of healthy, sustainable food options. EU Code of conduct for responsible business and marketing practice-
- Reformulating food products in line with guidelines for healthy, sustainable diets;
- Adapting common marketing and advertising strategies;
- Reduce packaging in line with the new Circular Economy Action Plan
- Nutrient profiles set to restrict the promotion of food high in salt, sugars and/or fat
- Support the use of innovative and sustainable packaging solutions using environmentally-friendly, reusable and recyclable materials, and contribute to food waste reduction.

REDUCING FOOD LOSS AND WASTE:

- In 2022 set a baseline and propose legally binding targets to reduce food waste across the EU.

FARM TO FORK STRATEGY IN LATVIA

In Latvia the F2F strategy most likely will have a direct impact on multiple sectors of the food industry. Farmers will be directly affected by new requirements for the use of crop protection products, as a debate about their use has been active already for a while in the context of local beekeeping. Already the President of Latvia Egils Levits has noted that even though Latvia successfully bears the image of a green country, it must adopt policies that encourage the Latvian agriculture sector to gradually re-orient to organic farming.

Moreover, the local food processing industry will face challenges in a form of reformulation and consumer education efforts will be emphasized by the Commission

to reduce the amount of salt, sugars and saturated fats in product portfolios. When it comes to reformulation and labelling, the food and beverage industry is already working on solutions to apply the best EU practices of voluntary reformulation. Currently, the industry association in collaboration with the Ministry of Health are working on a voluntary pledge to improve the composition of food products sold on the Latvian market. Key government stakeholders of the F2F debate in Latvia will be the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Health who will have to come to a common denominator in order to create a balanced, business oriented, but consumer friendly Latvian national position.



VLADLENS KOVALEVS
MANAGING PARTNER

vladlens.kovalevs@vagovernment.lv

+371 26339109

Brīvības iela 40-39, Rīga, LV-1050

vagovernment.lv

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