

Latvia

The Republic of Latvia ratified the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (hereinafter referred to as the “Convention”) on 6 July 2007.

The Quadrennial Periodic Report prepared by the Ministry of Culture of Latvia in cooperation with the Latvian National Commission for UNESCO and civil society organizations contains the information on policies and measures taken at national level to promote the diversity of cultural expressions (Section 2.1) which include the National Culture Policy Guidelines 2006-2015, Guidelines on National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy (2012-2018), Architecture Policy Guidelines 2009-2015, Protocol of Intent between the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Environment Protection and Regional Development in cooperation on the establishment of Creative Latvia platform, State Cultural Capital Foundation, A reduced VAT rate and Riga Film Fund. Regarding international cooperation, the Report provides information on intergovernmental and interministerial cooperation agreements and programmes (Section 2.2.). The information on measures aimed at integrating culture in sustainable development policies (Section 2.3.) refers to Latvia 2030 – Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia, The National Development Plan 2007-2013, The Strategic Development Plan of Latvia from 2010 until 2013, Latgale Strategy 2030 and The National Reform Program of Latvia for the implementation of EU 2020 Strategy. In the area of the protection of cultural expressions under threat (Section 2.4), the Report describes the situation of Liv Minority which are indigenous people of Latvia. This Report also includes information on awareness-raising and participation of civil society (Section 3.) and main achievements and challenges to the implementation of the Convention (Section 4.). The Annex with statistical data also constitutes an integral part of this Report.

It is crucial for the success of the Convention to strengthen its role within the civil society and to promote the Convention among NGOs both for having better visibility, but also obtaining fruitful critical views on the Convention and the ways of its implementation. It is essential to pursue the promotion of cooperation among governmental institutions and their dialogue with civil society. The implementation of the Convention could be strengthened also within the EU and UNESCO cooperation, enhancing the role of the diversity of cultural expressions within the EU policies and programs.

As to outlook for future, it is planned to establish a special group of experts under the Latvian National Commission for UNESCO to consult the implementation of the Convention, meanwhile references to the Convention are regularly included in various policy and strategy documents as well as Convention is used for informing various decisions regarding the development of creative industries. We would like to underline the importance of an active position of the National Commissions for UNESCO within the advancement of the visibility of the Convention and the process of its implementation. Thus, this network of UNESCO community is a significant tool for involving a wide range of partners at national and international level in order to enhance the awareness of the aims of the Convention.