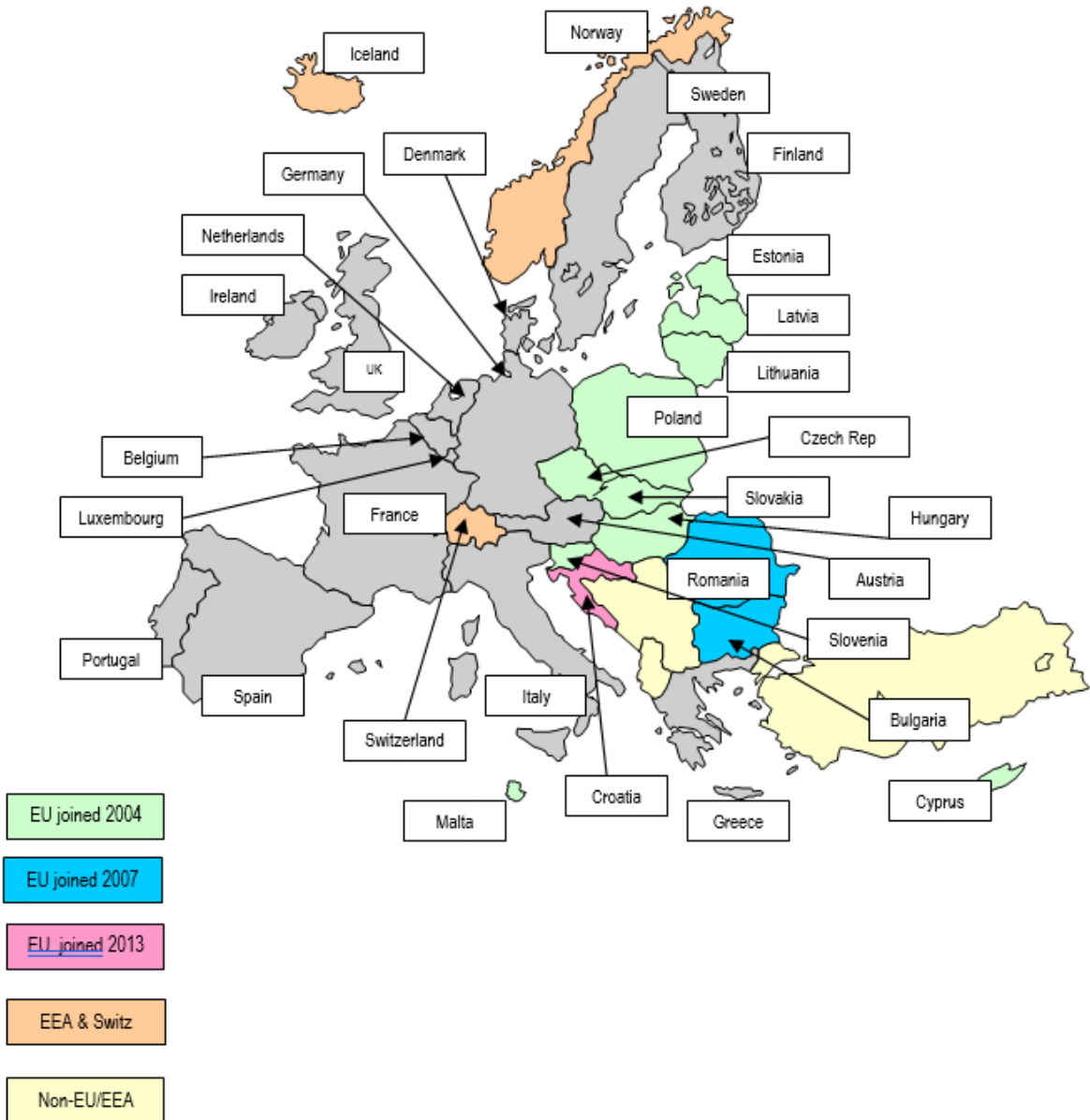


Council of European Dentists

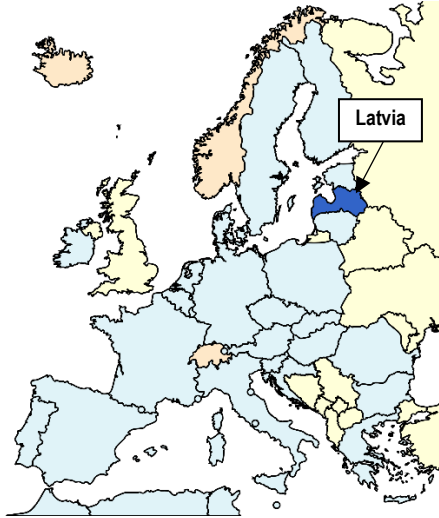
MANUAL OF DENTAL PRACTICE 2026

Latvia





Latvia



Date of last revision: 16 April 2026

In the EU since	2004
Population (2025)	1 856 932
GDP PPP per capita (2023)	28 031€
Currency	Euro € (EUR)
Official language	Latvian
<p>Latvia follows a relatively centralised health system, based on a National Health Service (<i>Nacionālais veselības dienests, NVD</i>), with 100% of permanent residents entitled to basic healthcare through family doctors. The system is funded through a mix of social contributions and general taxation.</p> <p>Long waiting lists, important patient fees as well as a limited scope of included services characterises the system. Oral care is excluded from the benefits package, except for target groups, such as children, persons with physical or mental disabilities, persons affected by chronic conditions or by the Chernobyl nuclear power plant accident. Children under 18 are entitled to free dental care. 62% of dental practitioners are contracted to some extent under the NVD.</p>	
Number of dentists (active)	1 450
(Active) dentist to population ratio (per 100 000 inhab)	78
Members of Dental Association	1 645

There is a well-developed use of dental specialists in Latvia, as well as of dental auxiliaries. CPD is mandatory for all dentists.

Government and healthcare in Latvia

Latvia is a parliamentary republic with a President, who serves as the head of state and is elected by the Saeima, the Latvian Parliament, for a four-year term. The Saeima is a unicameral legislature with 100 members, elected by proportional representation to serve a four-year term.

Latvia's political structure is decentralized with local municipalities responsible for various administrative functions. Latvia has four administrative regions – Kurzeme, Zemgale, Vidzeme and Latgale. Since a reform in 2020, Latvia is now composed of 42 municipalities, instead of the former 119 municipalities. About one third of the total population resides in the capital of Latvia, Riga.

The healthcare system is, however, centralised, with the Ministry of Health responsible for adopting and delivering national health policy and coordinating the system on a national level.

The Parliament (*Saeima*) is also responsible for national health policy, by adopting the national budget and annual budget of the National Health Service (*Nacionālais veselības dienests, or NVD*). *Saeima* decides annually the amount of public funds to be allocated to healthcare.

The Latvian social health insurance is funded through a mixed system, including compulsory contributions from employees and employers, as well as general taxation through the national budget.

The Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (*Slimību profilakses un kontroles centrs*) is responsible for the development and implementation of public health programmes. This includes the delivery of national oral preventive campaigns such as for children under 18.

The healthcare system is based on a National Health Service (*Nacionālais veselības dienests, or NVD*), who plans and

	Year	Source
% GDP spent on all healthcare	7.2% 2023	OECD
% of this spent by government	59% 2023	OECD
% of dental care costs covered by Government and public insurance	6% 2023	OECD

oversees the delivery of healthcare services, as well as is the single purchaser of healthcare services.

The national health service (NVD) delivers near universal health coverage with 100% of legal residents entitled basic services under the benefits package. The use of family doctors is widespread in Latvia.

However, the benefits package remains limited, with observed long waiting times for some health services, including dental care for children and important remaining patient fees.

The benefits package under the public system remains limited and is accompanied by user fees as well as long waiting lists. A growing share of the population therefore resorts to privately funded care or private voluntary health insurance.

Oral healthcare remains excluded from the public healthcare benefits package for adults, which is paid out-of-pocket or through voluntary health insurance. Dental services under the NHS are however available to targeted groups, including:

- Children under 18 years old, with free dental care.
- Children under 18 years old, with first-time orthodontic consultation covered.

- Persons under 25 with severe congenital clefts of the face and jaws entitled to financed orthodontic treatments.
- Asylum seekers with emergency dental care
- Patients with Group I disability due to mental and behavioural disorders, with tooth extractions in acute cases under general anaesthesia
- Patients receiving long-term psychiatric treatment in an inpatient medical institution, including those treated based on a court decision, are entitled to dental services.
- For persons affected by the Chernobyl nuclear power plant accident, dental services are covered at 50%, while expenses for removable plastic dental prostheses are covered in full.

Dental care is available through public and private providers.

The National Health Service is also responsible, since 1 July 2024 of the development of the national mobile dentistry project for the delivery of oral care in remote rural areas and towards vulnerable populations through the use of mobile dental buses.

Education, Training and Registration

Undergraduate Education and Training

To enter dental school applicants must:

1. Be a secondary school graduate,
2. Provide grades from the competitive national examination, entitled the "Centralised Examination" (CE) (*Centralizētie eksāmeni*). This mandatory exam is taken by all students at the end of upper secondary school. The rating of CE scores is considered for the Mathematics, Latvian, foreign language or the test score of an international testing body, biology and chemistry.

Please consult all admission criteria on the corresponding website of [Riga Stradins University](#) and of the [University of Latvia](#).

Year of data	2025
Number of schools	2
Annual student intake	100
Number of graduates a year	80
Gender balance (% of female students)	85%
Duration of studies	5

Both dental schools are public and are located in the capital of Latvia, Riga. There are no private schools in Latvia.

The Riga Stradins University offers undergraduate dental courses in English. Students obtain the title of Doctor of Dental Surgery at the completion of studies. International students must pay a tuition fee of €15 500 per year, and students following the course in Latvian have a fee of €14 500.

The undergraduate dental course of the University of Latvia includes an annual tuition fee of €11 500 for Latvian students and €17 310 for international students following the English programme (2026-2027).

Admission requirements for international students include the need to provide proof of completion of secondary education, as well as sufficient grades in English, biology or chemistry, maths and physics, a proof of eligibility of the student for university in the home country, as well as an international test score of minimum B2 level in the English language.

Dental studies take place through a one-path five-year programme considered as an undergraduate programme. Upon completion of the undergraduate dental degree, graduates obtain the title of Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS)

Registration

All dentists must register with [the Health Inspectorate \(Veselības inspekcija\)](#) under the Register of Medical Practitioners and Medical Support Staff.

The dentist then receives a certificate authorising practice. Re-registration is necessary every 5 years.

Cost of registration	0€
Yearly membership fee to the Latvia Dental Association	40€

To register, a dentist must have a recognised degree or diploma.

Vocational Training (VT)

Dentists do not have to undergo mandatory vocational training before registering under the national Register of Medical Practitioners and Medical Support Staff. All registering dentists must however pass after graduation a certificate exam with the Latvian Medical Association, which issues a licence to practice. This certificate must be renewed every 5 years.

Language requirements

There is a formal requirement to have knowledge of Latvian at a minimum B1 level, in order to register. Non-Latvian dentists with an EU Diploma are recognised, but knowledge of the Latvian state language is also required. This is tested according to an opinion of the Municipal Language Commission.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Since 2001 it has been a mandatory requirement for all registered dentists to complete a minimum of 250 hours of CPD every 5 years of professional practice. This is mandatory for the renewal of the professional licence. Auxiliary personnel have the same requirements.

The Latvian Dental Association, working in collaboration with the Faculty and Institute of Stomatology at Riga Stradins University, the Dental Centre, the Latvian Physicians' Society and the Latvian Dental Hygienists' Association, and representatives from industry organise professional education for all dental team members. This cooperation promotes exchange of information in dental professional development, to improve technologies, dental care and dental education.

Specialist Training Requirements

Latvia recognises 5 different dental post-graduate specialties, as well as the dual medical-dental specialty in oral and maxillofacial surgery.

Specialist programmes, carried out as "residencies", are offered by the Riga Stradins University in all five programmes.

These "residency training" is accessed by competition for a vacancy and is completed by a successful defence of one's doctoral dissertation. Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery is carried out in the University's hospital, and all other specialties are carried out in the University's clinics.

- Orthodontics – 3 years
- Endodontics – 3 years
- Paediatric dentistry – 3 years
- Periodontology – 3 years
- Prosthodontics – 3 years
- Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (OMFS) – 10 years study as a medical specialist and 4 years study as a dental specialist

Trainee specialists are paid during training. After graduation, specialists must register with the Latvian Dental Association. The professional certificate is granted for a period of 5 years.

Workforce

Dentists

According to the Latvian Dental Association, the number of practising dentists and specialists and the number of members of the association has been relatively stable in recent years.

However, Latvia is experiencing an ageing dental workforce, with a significant share of dentists expected to retire in the coming years. 38% of Latvian dentists are aged 55 to 70 years and over. Latvia is concerned by the renewal of its workforce.

Year of data	2022
Total Registered (Certificates delivered by the Latvia Dental Association)	1 650
In active practice	1 450
Dentist to population ratio (per 100 000 inhab) *	78
Percentage female	85%
Foreign-trained dentists	NA
*Active dentists only	

A wide share of dental practitioners is contracted to some extent under the national health service (NVD). 62% of dental practitioners having contracts with the NVD. Dentists therefore practice both in public and private settings.

Movement of dentists across borders

Latvia attracts an important number of international students, through its dental programmes offered in English. However, 99% of international students return to their home country to practise after completing undergraduate studies, in part due to Latvian language requirements.

In December 2024, a special regulation was adopted regarding the practice of Ukrainian dentists in Latvia.

This law facilitates the practice of Ukrainian dentists with the recognition of Ukrainian dental diplomas.

To work in Latvia, dentists from Ukraine must learn Latvian at the conversational level (B1) within 5 years. Practising Ukrainian dentists must then pass a state language exam.

If the professional certificate of Ukrainian dentists expires, it must be extended in Latvia, conditional to the completion of 30 CPD credits every year.

A report must be submitted annually to the Latvian Medical Association.

Specialists

6 categories of dental specialists practice in Latvia, including Oral-Maxillofacial Surgery (OMFS).

Year of data	2026
Orthodontists	46
Endodontists	20
Paediatric Dentistry	18
Periodontists	15
Prosthodontists	15
OMFS (Medical Specialty)	27

Auxiliaries

The system of use of dental auxiliaries is relatively well developed in Latvia and much oral health care is carried out by

them. These include dental technicians, chairside assistants and dental hygienists.

Salaries are paid on the basis of contracts concluded with the employers. It is against the law to receive remuneration without a valid contract. In 2026, dental auxiliaries received a minimum wage of between 7 and 10€ an hour.

Year of data	2022
Technicians	NA
Chairside assistants	NA
Hygienists	NA

Dental Technicians

Dental technicians study in a vocational training programme at the Riga First Medical College of the University of Latvia. Studies last 2 years and 6 months.

There is a competitive examination to gain entrance. Technicians register under the Register of Medical Practitioners and Medical Support Staff under the Health Inspectorate.

Dental technicians are responsible for developing dental prosthetics and designing devices such as orthodontics and complex prosthetics. Dental technicians work in laboratories upon prescriptions from dentists.

Dental Chairside Assistants (Nurses)

Training as a dental assistant also takes place at Riga First Medical College of the University of Latvia, as well as at the Red Cross Medical College of Riga Stradiņš University, under the supervision of Ministry of Education and Science.

The specialised vocational training programme lasts 2 years and is carried out full-time.

After the completion of the degree, dental assistants may choose to pursue studies in dental hygiene.

Dental Hygienists

Training as a dental hygienist takes place through a 2-year study programme in dental hygiene at the Riga Stradiņš University.

The programme is only provided in Latvian language. Students acquire 120 credits when completing their studies, with 52% of the programme dedicated to clinical contact time.

Applicants must provide proof of prior completion of secondary special education as a dental assistant, dental technician medical nurse or physician assistant before applying to the programme. They must provide certificates of completion of the national exam (CE) and are assessed based on their grades in Latvian, a foreign language, mathematics as well as an examination of professional attitude (OSPPP).

Dental Hygienists are an integral part of the oral health care team and are responsible for the prevention of oral diseases and the preparation, execution and evaluation of clinical periodontal treatment plans.

Dental hygienists work in all services only under the prescribed instructions of a dentist.

Hygienists register with the Register of Medical Practitioners and Medical Support Staff under the Health Inspectorate.

Other Useful Information

Main national associations

National dental associations and information centres	
Latvian Dental Association Latvijas Zobārstu Asociācija (LZA) 20 Dzirciema Str LV-1007 Riga Latvia Tel: +371 67455058 Email: info@lza-zobi.lv Website: www.lza-zobi.lv	Latvian Dental Hygienists' Association Latvijas Zobu higiēnistu asociācija (LZHA) Dzirciema Street 20 Riga LV-1007 Latvia Phone: +371 27844253 Email: sekretare@zobuhigienisti.lv Website : http://www.lzha.lv/

Competent authorities

Latvian Medical Association (Latvijas Ārstu biedrība) Skolas 3 LV 1010 Rīga Phone : +371-7220661 Fax : +371-7220657 Email : lab@arstubiedriba.lv Website: www.arstubiedriba.lv/	Health Inspectorate of the Republic of Latvia Registration of Medical Practitioners and Medical Support Staff Talejas street 1, Rīga, LV-1026 Latvia Phone (Register of Medical Practitioners and Medical Support Staff): +371 67602101 Email : registri@vi.gov.lv Website (for registration of dentists): https://www.vi.gov.lv/en/registration-medical-practitioners
Academic Information Centre (Latvijas Akadēmiskās informācijas centrs) Smilšu iela 2 1050 Rīga Phone : +371 6722 51 55 Fax : +371 6722 10 06 Email : aic@aic.lv URL : www.aic.lv	Ministry of Health of Latvia Talejas street 1 Rīga, LV-1026 Latvia Phone: +371 67081600 Email: pasts@vi.gov.lv

Dental Schools:

Public Universities	
<p>Riga Stradiņš University – Faculty of Dentistry - RSU Institute of Stomatology</p>	<p>University of Latvia - Latvijas Universitāte (LU)</p>
<p>RSU Institute of Stomatology Rīga, 20 Dzirciema iela – 1007 Latvia</p> <p>Tel: +371 67409096 E-mail: sf@rsu.lv Website: www.rsu.lv www.st-inst.lv Faculty of Dentistry: https://www.rsu.lv/en/faculty-dentistry</p> <p>Language of instruction: Latvian, English</p> <p>Number of admission places, Latvian programme (2026/2027): 14 publicly funded places supported by national scholarships and 32 full-fee places. Number of admission places, English programme (2026-2027): 32</p> <p>Student fees (Latvian programme): €14 500 EU student fees (English programme): €15 500</p>	<p>19 Raina boulevard, Rīga, Latvia, LV-1586</p> <p>Email: mdzf@lu.lv Email (undergraduate programmes): arnolds.jezupovs@lu.lv Phone: +371 67034777 Website: https://www.lu.lv/en/</p> <p>Language of instruction: Latvian, English</p> <p>Number of admission places, Latvian programme (2026/2027): 30 Number of admission places, English programme (2026/2027): 15</p> <p>Student fees (Latvian programme): €11 500 EU student fees (English programme): €17 300</p>
Schools for dental auxiliaries	
<p>Riga Stradiņš University – Faculty of Dentistry - RSU Institute of Stomatology For dental hygienists</p>	<p>Riga First Medical College of the University of Latvia For dental technicians and dental chairside assistants</p>
<p>RSU Institute of Stomatology Rīga, 20 Dzirciema iela Latvia</p> <p>Tel: +371 67409096 E-mail: sf@rsu.lv Website: https://www.rsu.lv/en/study-programme/dental-hygiene</p> <p>Language of instruction: Latvian</p> <p>Number of places: 16 full-fee places Study fee: 7 500€/year</p>	<p>Tomsona street 37 Rīga, LV-1013 Latvia</p> <p>Tel: +371 67 371 147 E-mail: medskola@medskola.lv Website: https://www.rmk1.lv/en/</p> <p>Webpage for dental technician studies: https://www.rmk1.lv/en/studiju-iespejas/ieraksts/zobu-tehnikis/ Webpage for dental assistant studies: https://www.rmk1.lv/en/studiju-iespejas/ieraksts/zobarstniecibas-masa/</p> <p>Number of places: 15 full-fee places</p>
<p>Red Cross Medical College of Riga Stradiņš University For dental chairside assistants</p>	

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Latvia

Phone: +371 80205805
Email: studinfo@rcmc.lv
Website: <https://rcmc.lv/en/>

Number of admission places (2026/2027): 18 publicly funded places supported by national scholarships and 18 full-fee places.