

Ministry of Environmental  
Protection and Regional  
Development  
Republic of Latvia

# **Climate Change and the Increasing Demand for Environmental Information in Latvia**

Eighth meeting of the Task Force on Access to Information under the Aarhus Convention  
Geneva, November 2023



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## Scope of the presentation

The presentation will highlight recent developments in Latvia related to climate change, including examples, the growing demand for environmental information, and the efforts made by Latvian authorities to meet this demand.

This presentation focuses on the experiences of the State LLC "Latvian Environment, Geology, and Meteorology Centre" which plays a leading role in collecting, storing, and disseminating environmental information to the public, state institutions, and municipal bodies in Latvia. It deals with environmental information in geology, meteorology, climatology, hydrology, water and air quality, as well as transboundary air pollution and radioactive and hazardous waste management.



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# Recent Developments

## Increased Impacts of Climate Change on Various Fields:

- Agriculture
- Biodiversity and Ecosystems
- Emergency Assistance
- Construction
- City planning
- Etc.

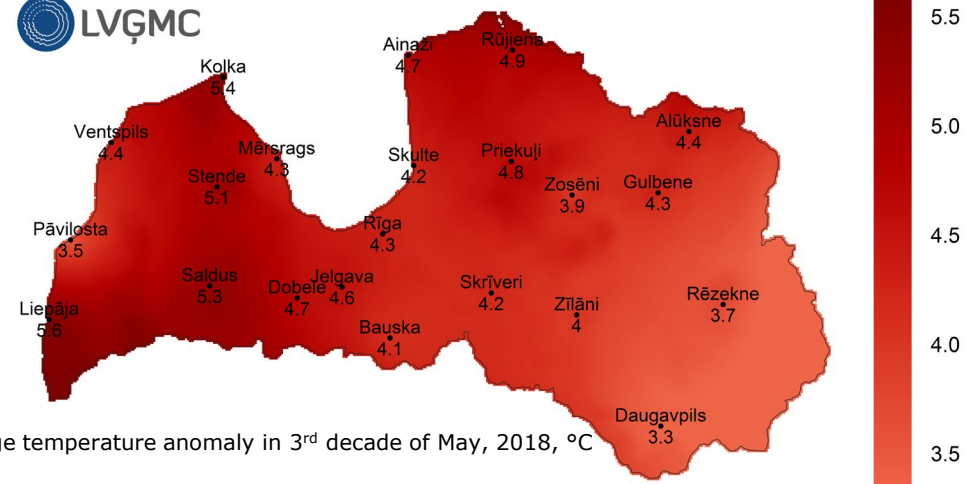
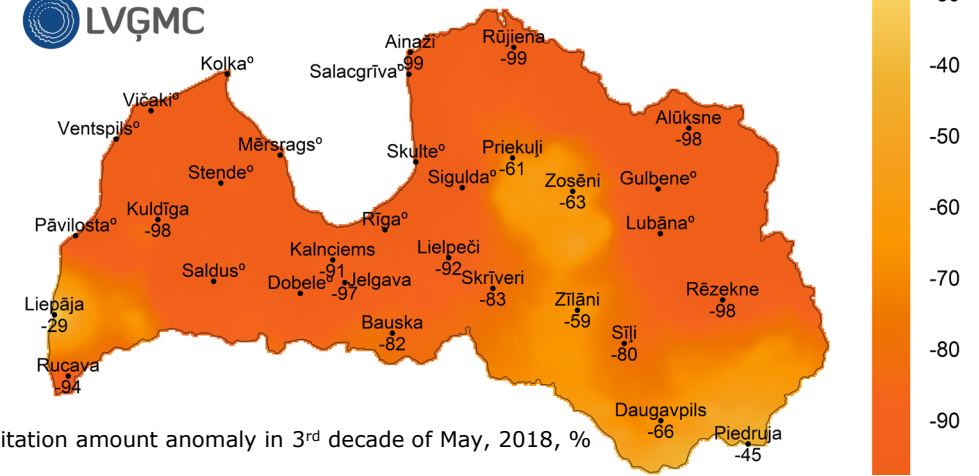
## Escalating Weather Anomalies:

- Record High Air Temperatures
- Increased and decreased precipitation
- Unprecedented storms
- Coastal Erosion
- Etc.



# Effects of the 2018 Spring Drought

- Cause of multiple forest fires, resulting in the burning of a forested area more than ten times larger than the decade's average
- As a result, an emergency situation was declared in 33 out of 119 municipalities
- Determined that the consequences of the prolonged spring drought in agriculture throughout the territory of Latvia qualify as a national natural disaster

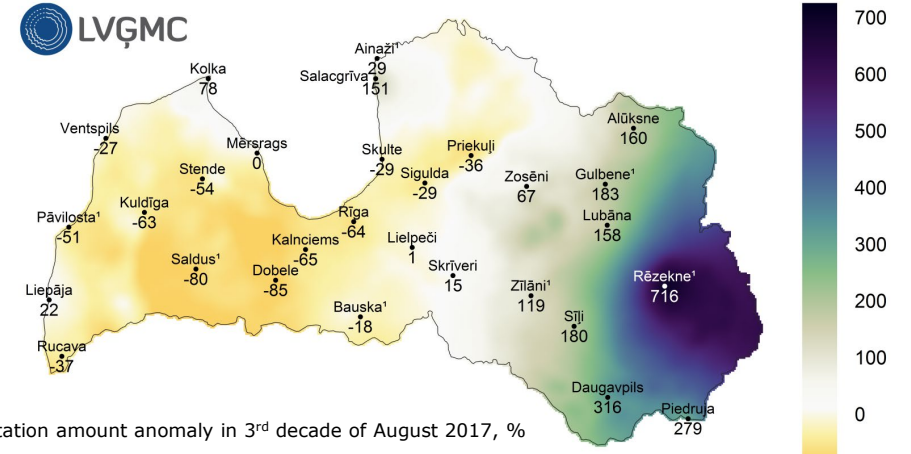




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# Annual Flooding Incidents

Flood in Jēkabpils, January 2023



Flood in Rīga, June 2022



Flood in Alūksne, June 2022





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# Increasing Demand for Environmental Information

Latvian authorities, as outlined in their Guidelines for Environmental Policy 2021-2027 and the Latvian National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030, acknowledge the crucial role of comprehensive environmental information in:

- Informed policy development across affected industries
- Risk assessment for communities, biodiversity, and ecosystems
- Resource management
- Raising public awareness about climate impacts
- Fostering international cooperation



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# Cross-Industry Environmental information I

With the assistance of EEA and Norway Grants, Latvian authorities have conducted multiple studies to identify industries most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, formulating the necessary scientific data and adaptation measures to address climate change within these affected sectors:

- landscape planning and tourism
- biodiversity and ecosystem services
- health and well-being
- agriculture and forestry
- civil defense and emergency assistance
- construction and infrastructure planning

Currently, Latvian authorities are in discussions about expanding the list of industries, with a particular focus on the energy sector.



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## Cross-Industry Environmental information II

Although this information was already publicly available prior to October 2022, with the adoption of Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 675, titled «The Procedure for Establishing and Maintaining the Greenhouse Gas Inventory System, Forecasting System, and Climate Change Adaptation Reporting System» the monitoring and public accessibility of this information became mandated.

It is made available for public viewing and downloading by the State LLC «Latvian Environment, Geology, and Meteorology Centre» on their website ([https://klimats.meteo.lv/klimats/jomu\\_ietekme/](https://klimats.meteo.lv/klimats/jomu_ietekme/)).

While the data quality in some cases can still be improved and supplemented with additional indices, Latvian authorities have found it to be a valuable tool for informing the public and supporting state authorities in their work.





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# Sharing Information Within State Administration

The State LLC «Latvian Environment, Geology, and Meteorology Centre» has begun actively collaborating with third-party data sources, including ones from:

- State Fire and Rescue Service
- State Emergency Medical Service of Latvia
- Road Safety Directorate
- Latvian State Forests
- Electricity grid maintainer and developer in Latvia – JSC “Sadales tīkls”
- Etc.

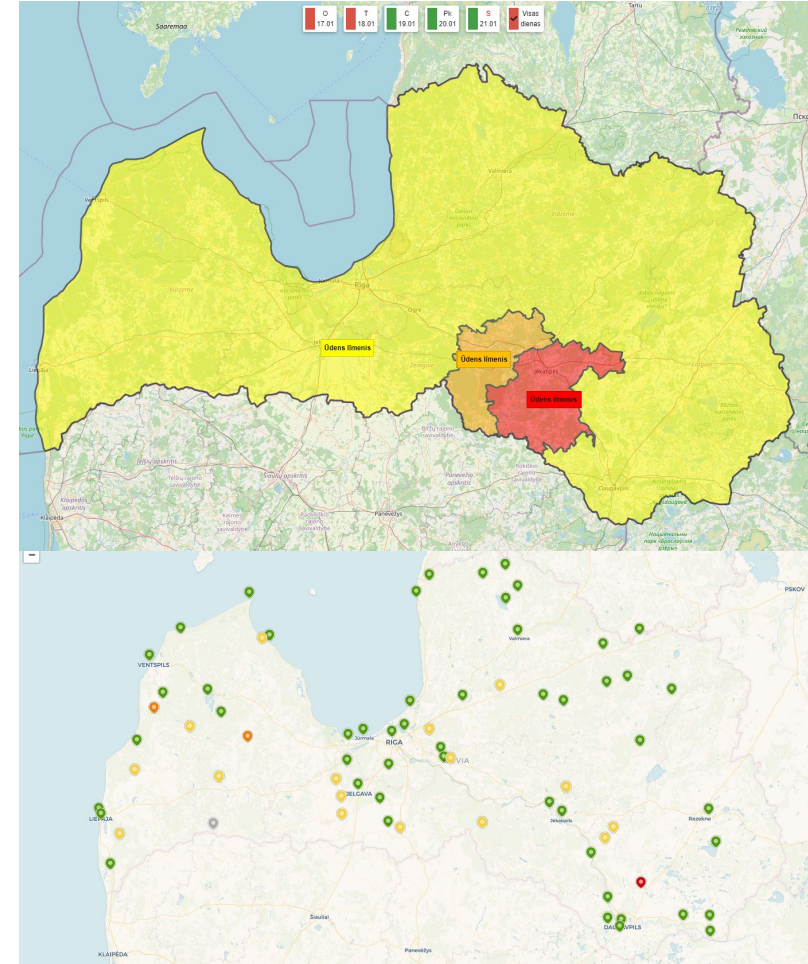
The third-party data is employed by the State LLC 'Latvian Environment, Geology, and Meteorology Centre' for in-depth analysis across various fields within its competence, focusing on identifying potential correlations and relationships between datasets, particularly in the field of meteorology.



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# Improvements to Existing Environmental Information Systems I

- Latvian authorities have improved the hydrometeorological warning system by increasing the utilization of local data and allowing the respective municipalities to define critical values for hydrological parameters themselves
- Established updated warning criteria tailored to current climate change conditions



Hydrometeorological warning system available: <https://bridinajumi.meteo.lv/>

Flood risk information system available: <https://videscentrs.lv/gmc.lv/iebuvcets/pludu-riska-informacijas-sistema>



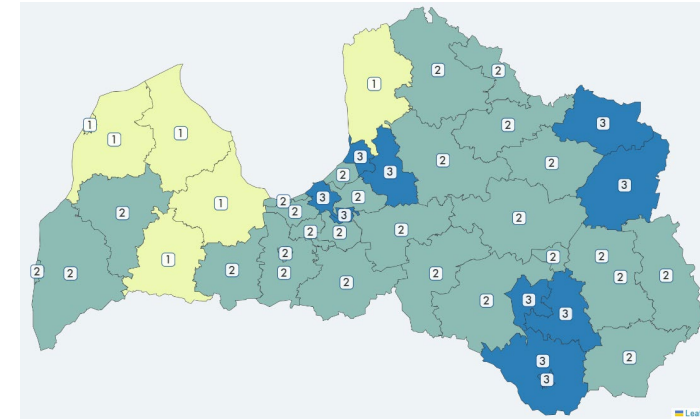
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# Improvements to Existing Environmental Information Systems II

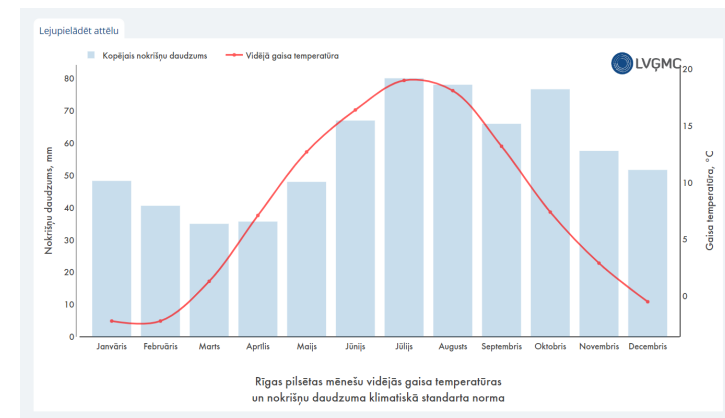
Latvian authorities have introduced new interactive municipal climate profiles, operating under a 3-level risk system, providing historical, current, and predictive information on the following factors:

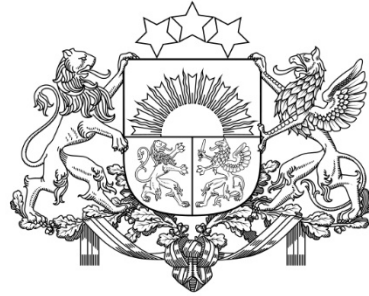
- Air Temperature
- Precipitation
- Heat/Cold Waves

Three risk classes for precipitation in Latvian municipalities



Average temperature and precipitation normal in Riga





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**Thank you for your attention!**

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