

Latvia

Self-rule

INSTITUTIONAL DEPTH AND POLICY SCOPE

Latvia has one tier of intermediate governance: deconcentrated *plānošanas reģioni*.

The Latvian constitution is silent on subnational governance except for an article giving citizens the right to elect local government (C 1922, Art. 101). The 1994 Law on Local Governments established district governments as an upper tier, and town, county, and parish governments as a lower tier (Law No. 61/1994, Art. 2). The upper tier consisted of twenty-six *rajoni* (districts), with an average population of 45,000, and seven *lielpilsētas* (cities), with an average population of 70,000 (Council of Europe: Latvia 1999, 2006). Before 1998, *rajoni* councils were directly elected but from 1998–2009 they were composed of the mayors of the local councils (Vanags and Vilka 2000, 2006).

In 2002, parliament passed a regional development law which announced the creation of five *plānošanas reģioni* (planning regions) (Law No. 53/2002). Amendments in 2006 and in 2007 granted legal personality, established councils, and organized financial resources, but implementation was slow (State Regional Development Agency 2006). A government regulation of 2009 set up the *plānošanas reģioni* as a full-fledged tier of regional governance, and at the same time, abolished the *rajoni* (Reg. No. 391/2009). Planning regions are tasked with public transport, regional spatial planning, regional development, and the implementation of EU funds (Council of Europe: Latvia 2011, 2018; Law No. 53/2002, Arts. 16–18; Pūķis 2017). Since 2014, the central government took over most competences in public transport but planning regions gained a role in implementing a national program of cultural activities (Law No. 181/2008; Pūķis 2017). Planning regions can also take up joint activities for the member local authorities (Council of Europe: Latvia 2018; Law No. 53/2002, Art. 17.1).

In 2009, the first local tier units consisting of towns (*pilsētas*), towns' countryside territories (*pilsētu lauku teritorijas*), and parishes (*pagasti*) were merged into 110 municipalities (*novadi*). The nine republican cities (*republikas pilsētas*) including the capital city of Riga were kept. Before 2009, republican cities exercised the competences of both districts and local authorities (Council of Europe: Latvia 2006; Law No. 61/1993, Art. 15). Since 2009, republican cities have similar competences as other municipalities and their average population size is about 118,000 which is below the population threshold for regional government (Council of Europe: Latvia 2011; Law No. 202/2008). Riga does not have its own law but the law on local governments attributes additional functions to Riga relating to supporting central state institutions, foreign diplomatic missions, and international organizations (Council of Europe: Latvia 2018; Law No. 61/1994, Art. 17).

FISCAL AUTONOMY

Plānošanas reģioni are dependent on grants and have no fiscal autonomy (Law No. 53/2002, Art.

17.1).

BORROWING AUTONOMY

Plānošanas reģioni have no borrowing autonomy (Law No. 53/2002, Art. 17.1).

REPRESENTATION

Plānošanas reģioni have a development council (*plānošanas reģioni attīstības padome*) composed of representatives chosen from a general assembly of the local mayors (Law No. 53/2002, Art. 17). The composition of the cooperation committee (*plānošanas reģioni sadarbības komisija*), which is the executive, is mixed: partly representatives from the development council, and partly government appointees (Law No. 53/2002, Art. 18).

Shared rule

There is no power sharing for *plānošanas reģioni*.

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Self-rule in Latvia

			Institutional depth	Policy scope	Fiscal autonomy	Borrowing autonomy	Representation		Self-rule
							Assembly	Executive	
Plānošanas reģioni	I	2009-2018	1	1	0	0	1	1	4

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