

Latvia's Culture Programme's Subprogram " Cultural heritage"

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Latvia's national cultural heritage consists of spiritual and material values that are very important to Latvian nation, it's cultural identity, independently from the place and time of creation of the values as well as current owner.

Cultural heritage is an evidence of person's intellectual activity in a material or non – material form. Cultural heritage contains works of artists, architects, musicians, writers and scientists, as well as works of anonymous artists, expression of the human intellect and system of values that imparts meaning of life. The cultural heritage branch covers protection of immovable and movable monuments, registration of attestations, investigation, accounting, preservation and use of the cultural heritage, as well as its involvement in the circulation of the modern life.

Cultural heritage consists of architectural heritage, archeological heritage, monumental, sacral, and applied art heritage, industrial heritage, underwater heritage.

Great part of cultural heritage in Latvia is formed from so-called traditional cultural values- folklore, traditions, rituals, nation's art, and craft. The richness of Latvian folklore can not be underestimated. More than million folk songs, large amount of fairy tales and stories are collected. Nations verbal creative work collected from previous generations encompasses all spheres of life and human's life from birth till death. The roots of Latvian cultural traditions such as song and dance festivals that periodically gather enthusiasts from all regions of republic in Rīga can be found in the folklore.

The largest and the most directly perceptible part with the biggest potential of the cultural heritage is cultural monuments: landscapes of the history of civilization and separate territories (historical centers of towns, ancient burial grounds, cemeteries, parks, places of historic events and places of residence of prominent persons), as well as separate graves, groups of buildings, separate buildings, works of art, equipment and articles with historical, scientific, artistic or any other cultural value preservation of which for future generations corresponds to international interests and those of the Latvian state and nation.

State administration over protection and use of cultural monuments is provided by Cabinet of Ministers, and is carried out by the State Inspection for Heritage Protection.

Culture program's subprogram " CULTURAL HERITAGE" has been approved last year in which information about the place of cultural heritage, completed tasks, future problems concerning cultural heritage, state politics regarding social- economical integration has been summarized.

1. Goals of subprogram creation.

- Preservation of cultural heritage for next generations.
- Utilization of cultural heritage as a resource of national economy, including the production of traditional materials and the development of cultural tourism.
- Latvia's image formation with the help of cultural heritage.
- Utilization of cultural heritage for the formation of democratic, civic and educated society and state.

2. Main proceedings for implementation of goals

In order to develop the branch of cultural heritage, the following actions should be emphasized:

- Integration of cultural heritage in the life of people- human and his/her welfare in the focus,
- Informed society and accessibility of cultural heritage,
- Unity and variety of cultural heritage, development of tolerance in society,
- Cultural heritage and identity, foundation of society's awareness,
- Cultural heritage as an economic value, attraction of investments,
- Cultural heritage in a well balanced development process, propagate of traditional materials especially wood and ecological values,
- Authenticity of cultural heritage, education of restoration specialists,
- Cooperation of state, public and private sector meant for carrying out the documentation and preservation of cultural heritage,
- Cultural heritage and acknowledgement of society's traditional values,
- Cultural heritage as a means of solving employment problems,
- Cultural heritage as a resource and product of tourism.

3. Future of the branch

The branch of cultural heritage is connected with history, art, craft, technics, construction, production of construction materials, regional development, planning of territory, environment protection, geography, tourism and other branches.

Taking into account the dynamics of the importance of the cultural heritage in European countries and in the whole world, the branch of cultural heritage in Latvia will widen and will become more significant.

Culture that has been founded in Latvia, by not taking into account its origins, age and national belonging as well as external influences, is our joint heritage. The basin of the Baltic Sea was and is significant factor in the process of cultural exchange as a creator of the identities of this region's nations. The present conditions of Latvia's cultural heritage should be looked from view of the basin of the Baltic Sea.

After sixty years of interruption, Latvia again is an independent state, traditional values in society are renewing as well as cultural relationships with Europe. Cultural heritage plays significant role in the determination of the identity of the image of Latvia, therefore there is a consequent requirement- make it available to everybody in Latvia. Cultural heritage is the best way how to understand oneself, history and present situation of homeland and other countries.

It is forecasted that in the next five years 60-70 % of total construction volume will be investments in reconstruction and restoration of already existing buildings.

Cultural heritage is not only important constituent of education and cultural system but also of regional development, construction, tourism, investigation of history and technics, solving social problems including unemployment.

4. Fundamentals of readjusting the branch

- Destroying of any cultural heritage would make us poorer. Latvia should thoughtfully utilize it's resources. Cultural heritage is not a luxury or forced obligation, but an economical value. Preservation of cultural heritage fosters economical development.
- Cultural heritage should be defined, objects should correspond with defined selection criteria.
- Preservation of cultural heritage can be guaranteed by it's utilization. Not only a building should be respected but also a human, not only an art object, but also a life style, not only construction, but also it's contents.
- Actions in respect to preservation of cultural heritage should be open, information should be easily and widely accessible. Discussions about most significant questions should be public.
- Idea of cultural monument includes not only independent objects or places but also space- cultural historical environment. Cultural monument cannot be separated from history and from environment.
- Cultural heritage should be transferred to new generations in authentic condition. Modification or transfer of the cultural monument can be allowed only in the case of rescuing the monument or if the modification does not decrease the cultural-historical value of the monument. Every period has its features and its stratifications as well as its historical witnesses and they also have cultural-historical meaning. If new modifications of the monuments are needed without which the existence of the object is exposed to danger or new volumes and components are needed, then they should correspond with the standards of historical composition and the features of that period. Creation of false impressions cannot be allowed in the restoration. Creation of imitations is not an activity of the preservation of cultural monuments unless it serves as an experiment- clarification of historical and scientific assumptions.
- The most important part of the preservation of cultural heritage is research and documentation. The preservation of cultural heritage and utilization of economical potential in national economy including cultural tourism is not possible without knowledge.
- One of the most powerful tools of preserving cultural monuments is reasonable territory planning and balanced development. The basis for planning of cities and rural areas is the knowledge about cultural heritage.
- The basis for preservation of cultural monuments- in cooperation between official institutions, the owner, holder and user of the monument- is the DIALOG! Legal activities (penalties) would be the last step.
- Indications from official institutions regarding the preservation of cultural heritage should be real, implementable, appropriate to the economic situation and that time period. The fundamentals cannot be lost by solving the details. Demands can be different in various economical conditions, but they should be legitimate.
- Professional preparedness of specialist plays a great role in the process of preservation of cultural heritage.

Wood, chalk-stone and this product's matrices are the main traditional construction materials in Latvia that are long-lasting, environmentally friendly and easy to groom. Uncritical usage of new and ready construction materials for historical buildings can lead to their degradation.

5. Main tasks for readjusting the branch

- Awareness of the most important part of NATIONAL heritage, execution of activities that would preserve it from destroying.
- Systemization of the ownership rights- every cultural monument has it's manager.
- Supporting of private owners with the help of financial, legal, heritage protection, mechanism of the branch management and regulatory policies. Participating citizens and associations should be supported because this is the society that protects it's heritage. The branches of specialized international public organizations in Latvia related to the preservation of cultural heritage should also be supported.
- State organizations should be guided by the conclusions of professional experts by also taking into account society's view.
- The main attention should be towards the immovable heritage, mostly buildings and constructions as well as underwater heritage.
- Coercive methods should be determined for preservation of unique endangered cultural-historical objects.
- Achieve greater incorporation and responsibility of municipalities.
- Accomplishment of coordination and creation of wide information base, state authority and control in the state level.
- Involvement of cultural heritage preservation process in territorial planning; before the start of large construction and environment modification projects, it is necessary to carry out a research about the cultural heritage in the planned territories.
- Resolving of important decisions should be multistage and collegial.
- Provide scientific investigation of cultural heritage.

6. Necessary juridical changes in Latvia:

1. The list of cultural monuments is divided in two levels:

First level encompasses the objects of NATIONAL value to which strong rules, tax mitigation and support from state are made. The list of this level is created by special cultural heritage institution. Decisions are made in this institution or in the liable ministry. Determine that there will be a guarantee from the state as regards the funding of 50% for the conservation of objects of national importance and there will be 50% financing from state budget for the maintenance of economically unusable cultural-historical objects of national importance.

Second level includes significant cultural-historical values that are researched and used for territory planning. The list of this level is created and decisions are made by special cultural heritage institution. This group does not have any tax mitigation.

2. Nominate the preservation of cultural heritage as one of the most important goals in the planning of cities and rural areas by including them in the appropriate legal acts.
3. Envisage clear, simple procedure in the legal acts that would expropriate defendable objects in case their existence is endangered.
4. Ensure financial support and tax mitigation for the preservation of cultural heritage in the legal acts.
5. Foster private initiative in the process of preservation of cultural heritage.

6. In the legal acts related to construction, put stress on the importance of preservation of cultural heritage in the construction process.
7. Mutually harmonize those legal acts that regulate the issues related to cultural heritage and environment protection as well as construction. Create a conception for the development of architecture as a branch of art.
8. Designate that cultural-historical objects with national importance are open to public sightseeing, state is concluding a special agreement with the owner of the object for its protection and utilization.
9. Join international conventions in the sphere of cultural heritage.

7. Maintenance and availability of information

The extent of activities with regard to the preservation, restoration, conservation and renovation of cultural heritage is inadequately small if we compare the amount of cultural heritage at its technical condition. In the level of society and government administrative system there is not an established awareness about cultural heritage that forms traditional environment, its significant role in shaping and stabilizing national mentality. The more disordered specific living environment, the more unfavourable society is formed from the social perspective.

There is not enough support for the rescuing of objects in the state of breakdown, support is catastrophically small for the realization of smallest stabilization works. Many castles, manors, farms, taphouses, mills etc. are ruined. Local municipalities don't have enough funds to take care of cultural heritage in their territories.

In countries with old cultural heritage traditions the emphasis is put on continuous and proficient upkeep and maintenance of the objects, not on large and expensive restoration works.

The main goal in the present situation is to create such infrastructure of cultural heritage that could assure:

- Availability of information about the cultural heritage and its preservation possibilities that would be easy, understandable and would match with economical possibilities;
- Information about applying local resources and traditional materials, simple and non-expensive technologies;
- Information availability about local and foreign renovation and improvement materials and technologies for cultural heritage;
- Cultural heritage maintenance craft and professional education multi-step system for professional and amateurs;
- Organized and officially supported regaining of historical construction and construction parts, storage and reiterative usage in the case when unprotected historical buildings are demolished;
- Creation of cooperation system between the owners of cultural heritage, craftsman and other professionals in the state, region, municipal as well as international level;
- Safe and easy to understand juridical basis for managing cultural heritage that would guarantee:
 - a) professional approach to preservation of cultural heritage;
 - b) maximal interest of owners to observe the law;

- c) restrictive documents that would be in accordance with newest scientific and internationally accepted opinion.
- Constantly inform society about latest news on the subject of cultural heritage as well as about cultural heritage's losses.

8. Cultural tourism

Cultural tourism is the type of tourism that is mainly aimed at getting acquainted with own or other country's cultural activities, cultural heritage and famous places. Latvia's favorable geographical position, prosperous cultural heritage and cultural-historical landscape are good prerequisites for attracting local and overseas tourists.

Problems in Latvia:

- Weak development of tourism infrastructure in countryside;
- Low economical level;
- Untidiness of cultural-historical objects;
- Lack of qualitative information;
- Weak coordination of existing activities;
- Lack of objective statistics.

Main tasks:

- Be aware of resources that are appropriate for cultural tourism (cultural-historical heritage, cultural events, craft);
- Tax mitigation should be provided to objects that are open to public and improved for cultural tourism;
- Creation of internet data base where information about cultural values as well as cultural tourism organizations would be included;
- Designing of informative material and training of guides;
- Creation of most necessary infrastructure in cultural-historical objects;
- Setting up of indication pointers;
- Coordination of cultural tourism between three Baltic States.

9. Image of Latvia Uniqueness of Latvia

- Wealthy country building by a principle of an individual farm creating an esthetically attractive country landscape of the history of the civilization.
- Esthetically attractive rural cultural-historical landscape and cultural-historical landscape of the sea coast;
- Foundation of cultural landscape in rural areas is the net of manors and related churches;
- Latvia's sacral architecture encompasses wide range of confessions;
- Latvian cultural monuments present multicultural society;
- Archeological heritage including underwater;
- Medieval sacral buildings of Hanza cities;

- Great density of military buildings also from XX century.
- Large dominance of original building substance in historic buildings;
- Large dominance of wooden buildings in the town and on the country:
- Large dominance of architecture of National Romanticism and Art Nouveau.

10. Education, children and youth

- Organizations and institutions that are connected with education in the field of cultural heritage:

Latvian Restoration Association; Chamber of craft; Art Academy of Latvia; Craft high schools and colleges; Riga Technical university; University of Latvia; Cultural Academy of Latvia

There are no long- term education programs for specializing in cultural heritage.

- Certified architects in restoration in Latvia 111
- Certified construction engineers in restoration in Latvia 3
- Certified restorers in Latvia 108

There is a lack of specialists, all necessary actions should be done to increase their number. Cultural historical environment is the link with past. The heritage of national identity is rooted there. Without the existence of cultural witnesses the education process is not imaginable.

Ability to understand and value historical heritage taught in the childhood will give a country citizens with developed national confidence.

Collective public work related to tidying up the historical monuments in the childhood creates the feeling of civil responsibility.

Lessons about region and native place are building the knowledge about:

- "big" historical interconnections in "small" places;
 - omnipresence of historical evidences;
 - interrelationship between nature, human and work;
 - patriotism as a spiritual value;
 - national belonging.
- Development of forming regional studies in schools (as it was in the time when Latvia firstly was a free country);
 - Preparing the literature for children as a historical heritage;
 - Advance adult interest with the help of education of children;
 - Increase of the funding of cultural education programs from the state budget, because at the moment the history of culture and similar subjects are taught in several schools only as an optional subject.

11. Integration of society

Cultural heritage is one of the facilitating factors for the integration and consolidation of different society's social, political and national groups. International concern about the preservation of cultural heritage testifies it. The state should understand that preservation of

cultural heritage not only of central nation but also of different national minorities is a way of society's integration.

Respect to other nationalities' self-awareness objects in country's territory is not only a feature of civilized country but also is a facilitator of political stability.

Evidence of different cultures in country's cultural heritage presents real historical development and cultivates the sense of belonging to the country independently from citizen's national belonging.

12. Preservation of cultural values and tasks related to their creation

- Ensure clearly pointed independent branch of "Cultural heritage" in the total budget for cultural activities;
- Carry out the preservation, conservation and restoration works for cultural monuments of state value and that are open to public but economically unusable by means of state budget funds each year.
- Prepare yearly conservation program for cultural monuments nine month before the start of the year:

In 50 objects- temporary preservation activities;

In 100 objects- urgent conservation works;

In 10 objects- full conservation;

In 5 objects- restoration;

- Establish special fund for preservation of unique objects without owners;
- Create storage of cultural historical evidence;
- Setting up of indication pointers for cultural monuments;
- Develop Latvia and European Council joint project " Valley of Daugava";
- Develop maintenance and preservation project for Riga historical center – the object from the World Heritage List.
- Together with Architectural Society of Latvia and Academy of Regional development, organize scientific methodical conferences with the focus on the integration of cultural heritage and new constructions.

13. Incorporation of society

- Organize European cultural heritage days in Latvia each year in September;
- Popularize ideas of cultural monuments and their preservation;
- Compose and issue catalog with the collection of cultural monuments of the state meaning;

14. Acknowledgment of cultural heritage

- Continue inventory of World Heritage List object- Riga historical center;
- Continue to keep track of Latvia's cultural heritage in the time of expeditions;
- Develop Latvia's section in the international project " Wooden cities";
- Develop cultural historical project "The way of European Art Nouveau.

15. Systematization of state administration and control system

- Computerize the system of recording and preserving cultural monuments, mark cultural monuments in digital maps;
- Systematize regulations and normative acts regarding cultural heritage (main-project in cooperation with European Council);
- Create computerized catalog of art and antiquary values that are stolen and lost.

16. Latvia's image creation

- Organize the official opening ceremony of European cultural heritage days in Latvia in year 2001, ministers' conference and other activities;
- Prepare documentation for the inclusion of Latvia's objects in the World Heritage List
- Organize campaign " Europe- joint heritage" in Latvia;
- Organize the issuing of guide books, videos, compact discs and other materials about Riga historical center.

17. Statistics.

State protected cultural monuments in figures:

Investigated objects with cultural value	21500
State protected cultural monuments	8428
of them: immovable cultural monuments	7057
movable cultural monuments	1371
Monuments of archaeology	2495
of them: state significance	1482
local significance	1014
Monuments of architecture	3364
of them: state significance	1248
local significance	2116
Monuments of art	2414
of them: state significance	2242
local significance	171
Historic town centres and sites	44
of them: state significance	39
local significance	5
Monuments of history	111
of them: state significance	109
local significance	2

The most important cultural monument in Latvia is HISTORIC CENTRE OF RIGA.

The Historic Centre of Riga, while retaining its medieval and later fabric relatively intact, is of outstanding universal value by virtue of the quality and the quantity of its Art Nouveau architecture, which is unparalleled anywhere in the world, and its 19th century architecture in wood. The inscription upon the World Heritage List confirms the exceptional universal value of this cultural site which deserves protection for the benefit of all humanity.