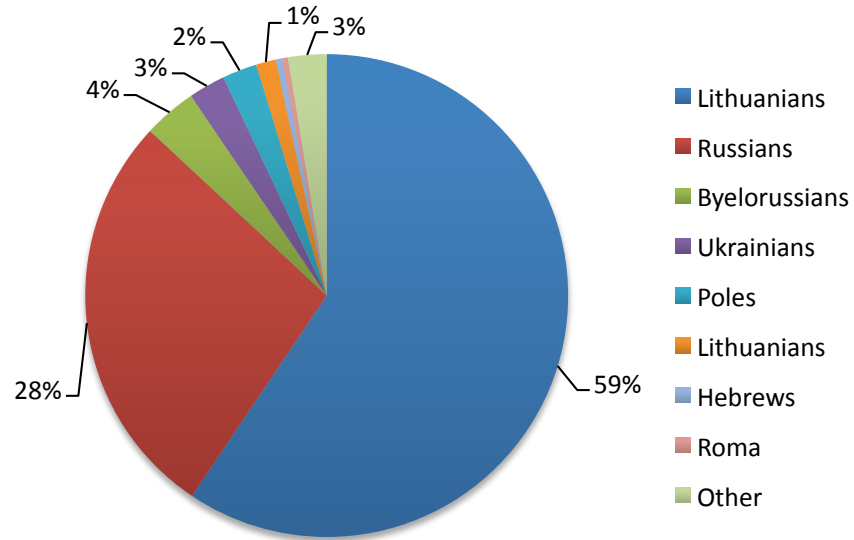


Education in Latvia

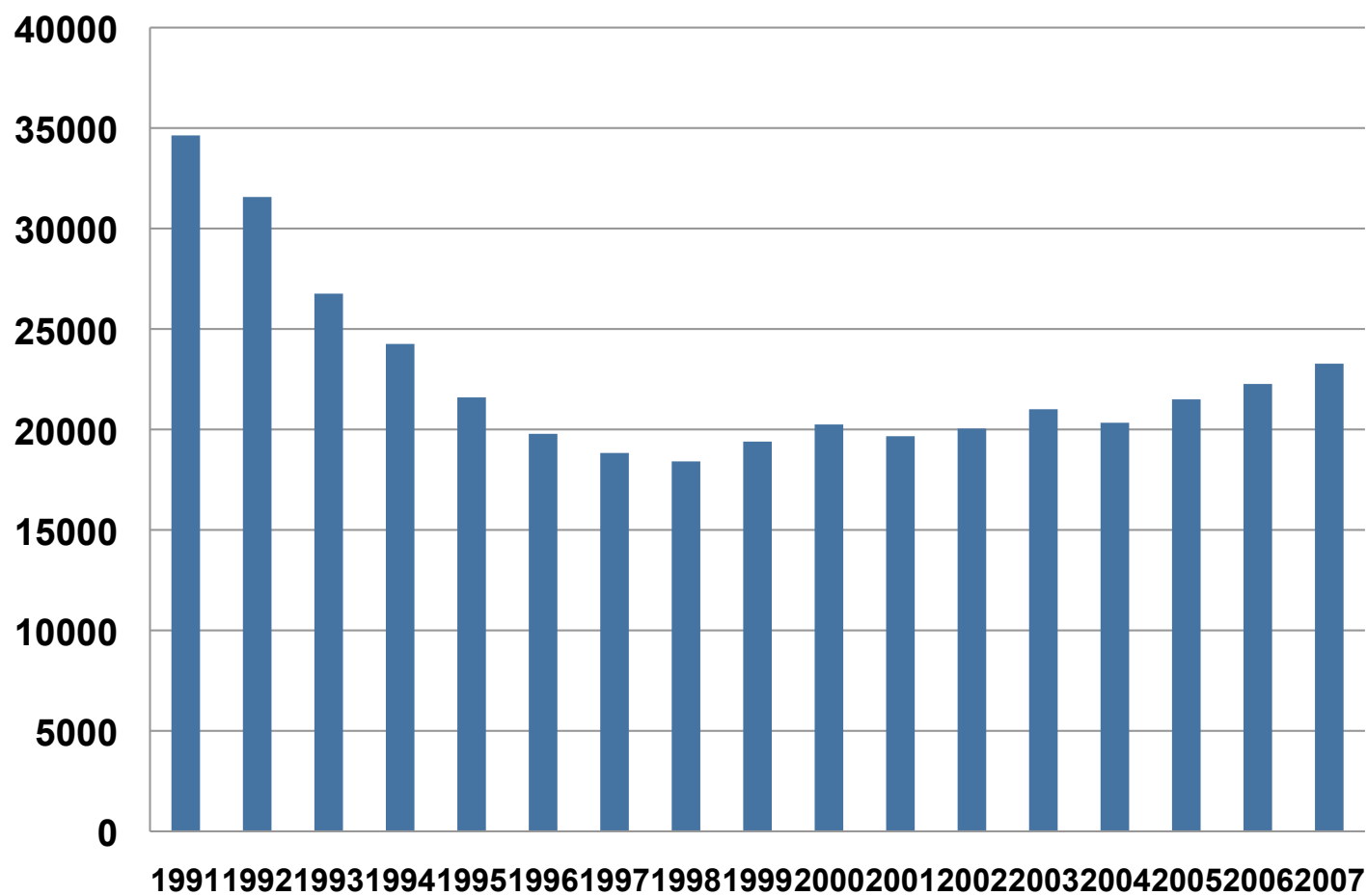
Ministry of Education and Science
Riga, 2011.

LATVIA

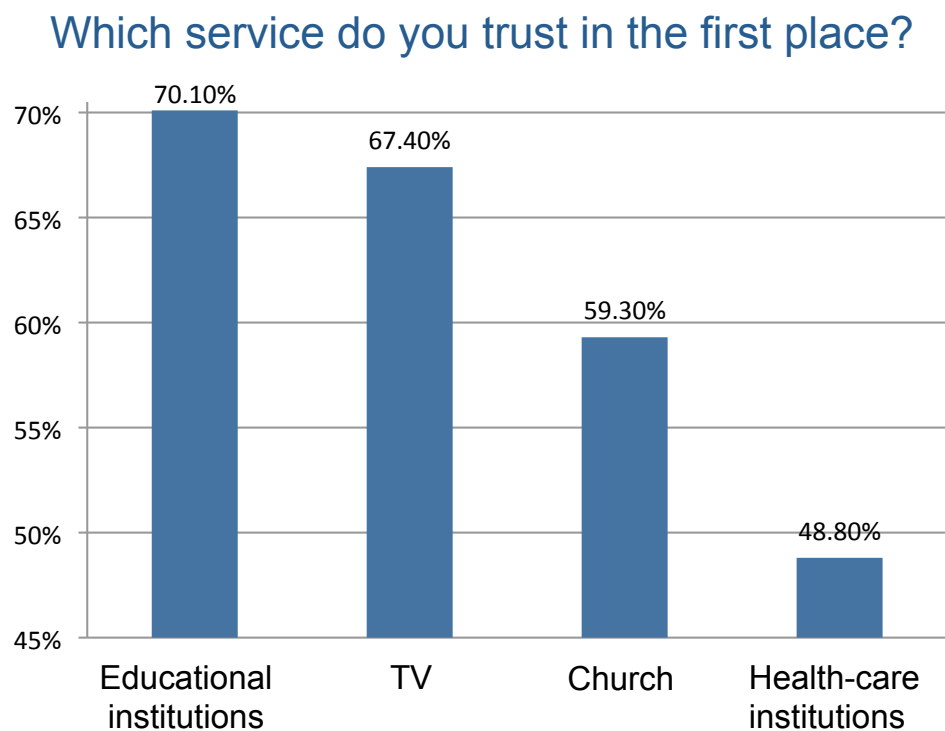
141st by population (2.4 mil.),
123th by land area (64 th km²)



Demographic trends



70% of population trust in education in the first place



Source: SKDS, 2010

Education Policy in Latvia

State guarantees free of charge education:

- Compulsory preparatory education for 5-6 year olds;
- Compulsory general basic education from the age of 7 (grades 1-9);
- Secondary general or vocational education from the age of 16 (on average 3 years).

Education System (I)

- **Pre-school education (ISCED level 0);**
 - 5-7 year old children have to participate in pre-school programmes provided by general education establishments or kindergartens as a part of the compulsory basic education.
- **Basic education (ISCED level 1 and 2);**
 - 9-year single structure basic education (primary and lower secondary education) is compulsory for all children from the age of 7.
- **Secondary Education (ISCED level 3);**
 - There are two types of secondary education programmes: general secondary education and vocational secondary education and training programmes
 - General secondary schools can provide education with the following profiles: (1) general comprehensive, (2) humanitarian / social, (3) mathematics / natural science / technical, (4) vocational / professional (arts, music, business, sports).

Education System (II)

- **Special education**
 - Special schools or special education classes within general education schools provide education for children with special needs that correspond to their individual health condition (mental or physical problems).
- **Vocational Education**
 - 4-year vocational secondary education programmes
 - 2-3 year vocational education and training programmes
 - 3 year vocational basic education and training programmes
 - Post-secondary non-tertiary vocational education (ISCED level 4)

Education System (III)

- **Higher Education (ISCED level 4-5)**
 - Each academically independent higher education institution has its own admissions board and criteria. From the year 2004 the entrance examinations are replaced by the results of the national centralised secondary education examinations.
- **Postgraduate education (ISCED level 6)**
 - Master's degree or the equivalent is required for admission to doctoral studies (Ph.D.). Doctoral studies last 3-4 full-time years.
- **Adult education**
 - Adult education includes all types of formal, non-formal and informal education including further and interest education, professional upgrading and in-service training.

Additional information (I)

- **Tuition fee**
 - No tuition fee at pre-school, basic and secondary education in state or municipality founded education institutions (private educational institutions may set a tuition fee).
 - In higher education the state covers tuition fees for a certain number of students' places. Each higher education institution may set a tuition fee for the rest of students' places.
 - **Academic year 2010/2011** (starts September 1):
Autumn holidays – October 25 till October 29, 2010;
Christmas holidays – December 24, 2010 till January 5, 2011;
Spring holidays – March 21 till March 25, 2011;
Summer holidays – June 1, 2011 till August 31, 2011 for students of Grades 1 – 8 and 10 – 11

Additional information (II)

- **Grading system**
 - Educational achievements are assessed in a ten-point system:
 - 10 with distinction (*izcili*),
 - 9 excellent (*teicami*),
 - 8 very good (*ļoti labi*),
 - 7 good (*labi*),
 - 6 almost good (*gandrīz labi*),
 - 5 satisfactory (*viduvēji*),
 - 4 almost satisfactory (*gandrīz viduvēji*),
 - 3 weak (*vāji*),
 - 2 very weak (*ļoti vāji*),
 - 1 very very weak (*ļoti, ļoti vāji*).
- **Results of state examinations taken after the acquisition of general secondary education programme are used as entrance examinations in higher education institutions.** Examinations are assessed with a grading scale – A, B, C, D, E, F.

General Education

- Number of general education school students – 216 307 (2010/2011 academic year)
- Number of schools: 830
 - Elementary schools – 35
 - Basic education schools (grades 1-9) – 365
 - Secondary education schools (grades 1-12) – 367
 - Special schools - 63
- Number of pedagogues – 27 910

Vocational Education

- Number of vocational education school students – 35 767 (2010/2011 academic year)
- Vocational education can be obtained in:
 - Vocational education institutions – 83,
 - Colleges – 13
 - Higher education institutions - 2
- Most popular thematic fields:
 - Engineering (23,3%)
 - Service (20,9%)
 - Business (14,5%)
 - Construction (11,1%)

Higher Education

- Number of students in higher education institutions – 103 782 (2010/2011 academic year)
- Number of higher education institutions:
 - Universities – 6
 - State institutions of higher education – 12
 - Private higher education institutions – 15
 - State colleges – 17
 - Private colleges – 7
 - Branches of foreign higher education institutions - 2

Governance of the Education System

Education system is administered at three levels:

- National - The Parliament (*Saeima*), the Cabinet of Ministers and the Ministry of Education and Science;
- Municipal - Local governments;
- Institutional - education institutions (administration and governing board).

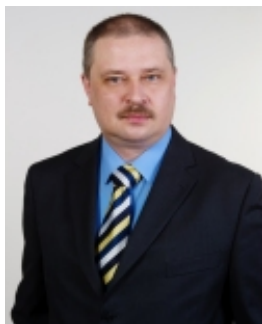
Legislation

- **Education Law**
- **General Education Law**
- **The Vocational Education Law**
- **Law on Institutions of Higher Education**

Several Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers determine the accessibility to education, subject standards, procedures for organizing examinations, remuneration of pedagogues etc.

Ministry of Education and Science

- **The Ministry ensures development and implementation of policy in the fields of:**
 - Education;
 - Science;
 - Sports;
 - Youth;
 - State language.
- **The priorities are:**
 - Quality, resources, infrastructure: improvement of areas of education, science, state language, youth and sport to ensure governmental goals;
 - Improved/well set education infrastructure;
 - Motivated teachers working in a well set working place;
 - Study oriented students.



- Minister of Education and Science –
Mr. **Rolands BROKS**



- Parliamentary Secretary –
Ms. **Daiga REČA**



- State Secretary –
Mr. **Mareks GRUŠKEVICS**



Ministry of Education and Science

- Today ~**200** employees work in the Ministry.
- The ministry has **9 departments** and **6 divisions** that work together to ensure the development and implementation of state education, science, sport, youth and state language policies.
- The ministry has **9 subordinate institutions** that help implement the ministry's policies.

Priorities in Inclusive Education

- **Support for students from social risk groups to minimize social exclusion:**
 - Inclusion of pupils with special needs in education system;
 - Inclusion of drop-out students in education system
 - Inclusion of young people with social behaviour problems and/or low educational achievements in education system.
 - Inclusion of students from socially disadvantaged backgrounds in education system.
- **Ethnic minority education – a component of education system**
 - Successful implementation of minority education reform.

Priorities in Inclusive Education

- **Vocational education offer to increase individual's competitiveness:**
 - Improvement of career education to motivate young people continue their education and career development;
 - Improvement of professionally oriented adult and informal education.
- **Inclusion of young people in informal education system:**
 - Meeting children and young people's diverse needs and interests, development of their skills and talents;
 - Provision of different sports activities to promote the development of a physically fit and intelligent personality.

Support for students from social risk groups to minimize social exclusion

- Special needs education can be obtained both in special education and general education schools (in special or mainstream classes) according to the parent's choice;
- Raising awareness about inclusive society;
- Providing accessible environments for disabled persons;
- Promoting collaboration of health, education and social services;
- Involving local authorities in the implementation of inclusive education.

Providing education for ethnic minority groups

- Education process for ethnic minorities is bilingual (50% or more of the curriculum is taught in Latvian)
- All education programs follow one common education standard; assessments and centralised examinations are the same for all pupils in grades 3, 6, 9 and 12.
- General education programs are offered in Russian, Polish, Ukrainian, Belarusian, Hebrew, Lithuanian, Estonian and the Roma language.

The Challenges of Inclusive Education (I)

- **Implementation of a child focused teaching- learning process:**
 - Timely (pre-school period) identification of child's educational needs;
 - Ensuring appropriate and targeted support for individual pupils;
 - Improving curriculum for pupils with special educational needs;
 - Establishing assessment system promoting adequate assessment of children with learning difficulties;
 - Provision of schools with appropriate, up-to-date teaching-learning materials and technologies;
 - Availability of support staff at school (special education teacher, psychologist, speech therapist, social pedagogue).

The Challenges of Inclusive Education (II)

- **Building up inclusive society:**
 - Public awareness of inclusive education issues, developing tolerance;
 - Support initiatives for strengthening capacity of local authorities.
 - Cooperation of institutions involved in shaping inclusive education (state, local government, NGOs (SUSTENTO, Apeirons, Velku Biedrība, Rūpju bērns, Pro Futuro));



Thank you!