

UN Economic Commission for Europe

Environmental Performance Reviews

EPR of Latvia:
Report on Follow-up



UNITED NATIONS
Geneva, August 2000

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

The recommendations approved by the ECE Committee on Environmental Policy in Peer Review on 1 October, 1998, and the EPR report were used in Latvia as a reference document in various broad contexts. First of all, the report became the main official tool for the environmental screening exercise with the European Commission. Secondly, it helped in the development of systematic approaches to environmental management in several areas, after the strong project orientation of the environmental ministry in earlier years. Finally, its comprehensiveness, as well as the fact that it includes both factual information and assessments of management practices made the report a reference in a large number of discussions, both inside Latvia - as a tool in relevant inter-ministerial consultations - and with neighbouring countries. This use of the report still continues, although to a lesser extent.

Many EPR recommendations coincide with recommendations made from other sources, notably from the European Union. Nevertheless, the Latvian authorities feel that the authority of the ECE Committee on Environmental Policy, of the UNECE and of the United Nations at large have added to the recognition of the EPR project and its recommendations in the country. However, the extent of future cooperation of Latvia in the UN framework is not yet totally clear, as the EU accession process places very high demands on staff and other national resources, and cooperation in the UN framework is not among the general top priorities of the country.

In substance, the development of environmental legislation, policy and management since the conclusion of the EPR report were obviously dominated by the EU accession requirements. The process has succeeded in helping systematic modernization of environmental legal instruments in the areas of priority to the European Union. The process is now entering a phase, where actual management practices will have to be adapted - a phase that will naturally be longer. For not only a new style of legal instruments will have to be assimilated within the management authorities, but also those areas of national environmental management must not be forgotten, which are not or not fully covered by the EU priorities. Furthermore, environmental improvements that put additional burdens on the private sector must be introduced taking into account the fragile economic situation. The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development (MEPRD) clearly respects the various constraints in its careful overall approach. It could be expected that substantial time is required for the shaping of a fully adequate waste management, while progress could perhaps be faster in water management and, notably, air management.

Some basic pre-requisites for improved environmental management could, in principle, be established fairly easily, without extensive costs. In the first place, the general territorial and organizational structure of the country as a whole is not yet formalized. This implies uncertainties as to the distribution of functions inside the MEPRD and its territorial branches. There also seems to be sometimes hesitation with regard to the formulation of overdue strategic policy directions - the final role of national spatial planning and its relationship with economic development being perhaps the clearest case in point. Finally, from a procedural point of view, it seems that even major changes can occur during the adoption of environmental legal instruments prepared by the MEPRD, without involvement of representatives of the Ministry. Obviously, to the extent that this happens, it may have a disruptive effect on the preparation of law enforcement.

On the whole, it can be concluded that almost all recommendations made by the CEP EPR process have been implemented, or are in the process of implementation. This result was strongly supported by the EU accession process and the funds being made available for changes in legislation and management practices in the country.

PART I: THE CONDITIONS OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

Chapter 1: Legislative and institutional framework

GENERAL TENDENCY

The modernization and streamlining of the environmental legal system has been tackled systematically and with determination. It seems that in some cases – like in questions of an organizational nature –, progress may have been somewhat hampered by the lack of agreed policy frameworks. Finally, deficiencies still exist in cooperation between different parts of the administration in drafting and implementing strategies for environmental management.

RECOMMENDATION 1.1:

THE LEGISLATION SHOULD BE REVIEWED AND HARMONIZED TO AVOID UNNECESSARY CONFLICTS AND OVERLAPS. THIS IS ESPECIALLY URGENT IN VIEW OF THE APPROXIMATION PROCESS, WHICH WILL LEAD TO MORE NEW RULES AND REGULATIONS. THE AIM OF EXPLICITLY CONFIRMING OR REVOKING LAWS FROM THE SOVIET PERIOD SHOULD BE PURSUED AS A MATTER OF PRIORITY FOR THE SAKE OF LEGAL CLARITY AND CERTAINTY.

RECOMMENDATION 1.2:

THE WORK ON THE STRATEGIC DIMENSIONS OF THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY PLAN AND THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PROGRAMME (NEAP), AS WELL AS THEIR FULL ELABORATION AND MAINTENANCE IN ACCORDANCE WITH INITIAL PLANS, SHOULD BE SEEN AS A MAJOR AND CONTINUOUS TASK. WHEN UPDATING THE PLANS, OTHER MINISTRIES SHOULD BE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DISCUSSIONS AT AN EARLY STAGE. THE PARTICIPATION OF INTERESTED PARTIES, INDUSTRY, NGOS, ETC. SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED AND FORMALIZED. THE NEAP SHOULD BE APPROVED AS A GOVERNMENTAL PROGRAMME, AND NOT MERELY AS A MINISTERIAL ONE.

The “harmonization project” of the environmental legal system in Latvia was carried out with support of the Swedish EPA and completed in 1998. It included an inventory first, and proposals for improvement second. It provided the basis for the revision of the Law on Environmental Protection (currently in Parliament) and the preparation of the new Law on Pollution (currently in the Cabinet). At the same time, the process of transposition of EU legislation into the Latvian legal system is ongoing rapidly, but mainly focused on sector laws like on air, waste etc. The deadline set for transposition of the main part of EU environmental legislation is the end of 2002.

All laws from the Soviet period were discontinued on 1 January 1999, and regulations on 1 January 2000.

The realization of the National Environmental Action Programme (NEAP) was assessed in 1998. The NEPP and the NEAP were discussed with the European Commission during bilateral screening in June 1999. At present, the MEPRD focuses on the development of a concept for updating the environmental policy plan, including both NEPP and NEAP. Current proposals foresee first of all a revision of the NEPP, for adoption by Government in 2001. Updating of NEAP is not a priority at present, as priority actions currently follow the EU integration programmes and the sectoral strategies for the implementation of EU legislation. In the revision of the NEPP, the association of sectoral interest groups is foreseen, initially for the purpose of assessing the sectoral environmental problems.

As part of sectoral action programmes, the National Program to Protect Biodiversity was discussed with other ministries and adopted by Government in early 2000.

RECOMMENDATION 1.3:

THERE SHOULD BE AN INTENSIVE EXCHANGE OF - POSSIBLY CONFLICTING - VIEWS BETWEEN THE COMPETENT MINISTRIES, CLOSE COOPERATION FROM THE BEGINNING OF A PROJECT, AND CONSENSUAL SOLUTIONS IN THE FORMULATION OF WHICH THE PRINCIPLE OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COULD PLAY ITS ROLE.

Legal instruments as well as drafts of strategic documents are coordinated in accordance with a formal procedure, as prescribed by the Cabinet of Ministers. Discussions occur on strategic and conceptual documents. To this end, permanent working groups have been established between the MEPRD and the Ministry of Welfare, the Ministry of Transport and the Ministry of Agriculture, respectively. Permanent cooperation between the MEPRD and other public administrations also occurs in different fora, like Helcom, the WTO and Baltic Agenda 21 working groups. A national body on sustainable development does not exist. The satisfactory coordination and cooperation between ministries at the levels of divisions or departments is not necessarily continued at decision-making levels.

RECOMMENDATION 1.4:

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE SUBORDINATED AND SUPERVISED INSTITUTIONS OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT (MEPRD) SHOULD BE CHANGED. ALL - OR AT LEAST MOST - SHOULD BE MERGED INTO AN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY UNDER THE CONTROL OF MEPRD.

The reorganisation of environmental protection institutions depends on final decisions on the "Institutional structure of State management" and relevant legal instruments, including the Law "On Agencies". These decisions are expected to be taken in the course of this year. MEPRD actively participates in the decision process, and a decision on the creation of the Agency would be possible soon after the above process is finished.

RECOMMENDATION 1.5:

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES SHOULD OCCUPY A CENTRAL PLACE DURING THE EU ACCESSION PROCESS. SPECIAL ATTENTION IS REQUIRED FOR ISSUES SUCH AS (A) THE ELABORATION OF PROPOSALS FOR PROJECTS TO BE FUNDED BY EU PROGRAMMES, (B) THE ACCELERATED IMPLEMENTATION OF EU DIRECTIVES IF POSSIBLE, AND (C) THE INTEGRATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS INTO SECTORAL POLICIES LIKE AGRICULTURE, ENERGY AND TRANSPORT TO ACHIEVE HARMONIZATION WITH RELEVANT EU PRACTICES.

The recommendation is being implemented in the process of EU accession, which was accelerated after the EPR report was issued.

RECOMMENDATION 1.6:

THE RESPONSIBILITIES BETWEEN THE CENTRAL AND REGIONAL INSPECTORATES SHOULD BE CLARIFIED WITH A VIEW TO AVOIDING BOTH DIVERGING PRACTICES BETWEEN REGIONS AND A DUPLICATION OF TASKS. THE CENTRAL STATE INSPECTORATE SHOULD SUPERVISE THE REGIONAL INSPECTORS INSTEAD OF THE REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS. THE STATE INSPECTORATE SHOULD REGULARLY RECEIVE INFORMATION ON THE WORK OF THE REGIONAL INSPECTORS SO THAT IT CAN HARMONIZE THEIR WORK AND GIVE APPROPRIATE GUIDANCE.

RECOMMENDATION 1.7:

THERE SHOULD BE A MORE HOMOGENEOUS SYSTEM OF FEWER STANDARDS OF COMMON POLLUTANTS, WHICH SHOULD BE SYSTEMATICALLY ENFORCED.

RECOMMENDATION 1.8:

THE DURATION OF A PERMIT SHOULD BE TAILORED TO THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ENTERPRISE. PERMITS VALID FOR MORE THAN A YEAR COULD BE GRANTED TO ENTERPRISES WHOSE EMISSIONS ARE INHERENTLY LOW OR WHOSE EMISSIONS HAVE REMAINED BELOW THE LIMITS AND ARE LIKELY TO CONTINUE TO DO SO.

The administrative and territorial reform of the country following its own rhythm, regions are not delineated yet, and it is still unclear when the reform will enter into force. The decision of how to divide functions between the central and the regional inspectorates being prepared in the MEPRD, the corresponding decisions may be taken shortly after the administrative and territorial reform is concluded.

In the meantime, training programmes for inspectors are being organized, particularly with regard to inspection tasks in relation to EU Directives.

The system of environmental norms and standards is being revised in accordance with the requirements of EU Directives. The major part of the revision is completed, and its revision will be finalized by 2002. Problems arise in enforcement, as the EU Directives do not require standards in all the respects that are felt necessary for national circumstances.

The draft "Law on Pollution" was prepared in 1999 and will soon be submitted for approval to the Cabinet of Ministers. This (controversial) law would transpose the IPPC Directive and will also regulate environmental permitting. The draft distinguishes 3 categories of enterprises according to their different demands on environmental permits. The first category covers enterprises, which, according to the requirements of the IPPC Directive will need integrated pollution permits. The second category includes smaller enterprises, which need pollution permits, but the IPPC Directive does not apply. The third category of enterprises does not need permits. Future permits will be regularly granted for longer periods, but duration of permits is practically already being extended. For example, WWTP permits are given for a period of up to five years and specify detailed yearly plans for improvements of existing systems.

RECOMMENDATION 1.9:

AN INTEGRATED PERMITTING SYSTEM SHOULD BE INTRODUCED STEP BY STEP AS SOON AS PRACTICABLE. THE INTEGRATED PERMITTING SYSTEM SHOULD BE MODELLED ON THE IPPC DIRECTIVE, GRADUALLY INTRODUCING ITS REQUIREMENTS.

RECOMMENDATION 1.10:

THE EFFICIENCY OF THE PRESENT LIABILITY PROVISIONS SHOULD BE REVIEWED. STRICT LIABILITY SHOULD BE INTRODUCED, IN PARTICULAR FOR ACTIVITIES THAT CARRY HIGH RISKS AND FOR THE CONSEQUENCES OF PAST ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE.

See comment on Recommendation 1.8. It is foreseen that the law enters into force in 2000, and that the first integrated permits for new objects can be issued in 2001. The full coverage of industries by integrated permits is planned till 2008.

Liability questions will be handled in an implementing regulation to the future "Law on Pollution" (see above). The respective regulation can be expected to be ready about ten months after the adoption of the law. The substantive question related to liability for past environmental damage continues to be politically controversial.

Chapter 2: Territorial planning

GENERAL TENDENCY

Developments in this field have been slow because of lack of an agreed national land policy and for severe resource constraints. The available resources are used for ensuring broadly harmonized planning procedures across the country.

RECOMMENDATION 2.1:

THE APPARENT DISHARMONIES WITHIN THE HIERARCHY OF TERRITORIAL PLANNING - NATIONAL, REGIONAL, DISTRICT AND MUNICIPAL - AND BETWEEN TERRITORIAL PLANNING, ON THE ONE HAND, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES, ON THE OTHER, SHOULD BE REMOVED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY. THIS REQUIRES, IN PARTICULAR, THE CLARIFICATION OF THE TERRITORIAL PLANNING OBJECTIVES, THE SPECIFICATION OF NATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS, AS WELL AS OF THE INSTRUMENTS AND RESOURCES NEEDED FOR COORDINATING THE TWO.

RECOMMENDATION 2.2:

THE APPROVAL OF THE LAW ON DEVELOPMENT PLANNING SHOULD BE SEEN AS A PRIORITY. IF DURING THE ADOPTION OF THE LAW, IT IS FELT THAT THERE IS A NEED TO REVISE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS ON THE ELABORATION OF PHYSICAL PLANS, THE REGULATIONS SHOULD BE CHANGED FORTHWITH.

The National Spatial Plan consists of several parts. Its first part, the Report on Use of the State Territory of the State is being finalised (presently scheduled to appear at the end of July 2000). The Perspective of the Development of the Territory of the State, the physical plans of national significance and National Planning Guidelines will follow.

Responsibility for an overall land policy is not assigned, and its principles are in discussion. It is expected that the National Spatial Plan will provide a territorial framework for spatial and sectoral development plans and programmes. This would be a basis for regionalisation of sectoral interests and promotion of regional development.

"The Law on Spatial Development Planning" was adopted by Parliament in October 1998. The law has given rise to a revision of the "Regulations on Physical Plans". For the time being, experience on the implementation of the provisions of the law is as yet missing.

RECOMMENDATION 2.3:

THE FORMULATION OF OPERATIONAL TERRITORIAL PLANNING OBJECTIVES SHOULD COMPLEMENT THE EXISTING GENERAL GOALS. ALL LEGAL PROVISIONS AFFECTING LAND USE SHOULD BE INTEGRATED, ON THE BASIS OF A SINGLE LAND-USE CLASSIFICATION. STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT SHOULD BE INCORPORATED INTO TERRITORIAL AND LAND-USE PLANNING.

The previous land use legislation has been adapted to the emergence of private ownership. The single land use classification has not yet been developed. Operational territorial planning objectives have not yet been developed for all levels of planning. The next task scheduled for the current year is the elaboration of first guidelines for planning processes.

RECOMMENDATION 2.4:

THE STRUCTURE OF PLANNING AUTHORITIES SHOULD BE REVIEWED, TOGETHER WITH THAT OF ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITIES, FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF OPTIMAL DECENTRALIZATION. THE PURPOSES AND MANDATES OF DISTRICT PLANNING SHOULD BE DELINEATED CLEARLY, IN PARTICULAR IN THE SEVEN "REPUBLICAN CITIES". THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD FOCUS PRIORITY ATTENTION ON THE PREPARATION OF METHODOLOGICAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR PLANNING AT ALL ADMINISTRATIVE LEVELS AND FOR THE RECOGNIZED PURPOSES.

There are no new developments to report.

RECOMMENDATION 2.5:

SCHEMES SHOULD BE DEVELOPED TO BACK URBAN PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT, WHEREBY NATIONAL B AND, POSSIBLY, INTERNATIONAL B SUPPORT IS PROVIDED TO RESTORE HOUSING QUALITY, PRESERVE CITY CENTRES AND PROMOTE A MORE BALANCED URBAN DEVELOPMENT ACROSS THE COUNTRY. MORE ACTIVE PUBLIC LAND POLICY MEASURES ARE NEEDED.

The "Urban Planning Strategy" is under development. After its adoption, it is hoped that the development of an action programme will provide help and advice to municipal planners. Efforts are undertaken to restore housing quality, but are limited by severe financial constraints.

RECOMMENDATION 2.6:

ATTEMPTS SHOULD BE MADE TO INTEGRATE TERRITORIAL PLANNING NEEDS MORE DELIBERATELY AND MORE EXTENSIVELY INTO LATVIA'S EU APPROXIMATION STRATEGY. IF POSSIBLE, LATVIA SHOULD USE MORE EU ASSISTANCE FOR ITS SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS.

The Compendium of Spatial planning system in the Baltic Sea Region is being prepared by the MEPRD and should be finished in the year 2000. National funding for spatial development plans and projects is decreasing and sometimes second to international funding.

Chapter 3: Economic instruments for integration and funding of environmental expenditures

GENERAL TENDENCY

The necessary economic instruments are in place. Current efforts aim at the refinement of measures and their better adaptation to changing circumstances. In addition, some initiatives are taken to develop supplementary measures influencing the market conditions for environmentally friendly production, like voluntary agreements with industry, environmental labelling and promotion of environmental management systems. However, these initiatives have not, so far, received sufficient funding or attention.

RECOMMENDATION 3.1:

THE REQUIRED STRATEGY FOR FUTURE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SHOULD SPECIFY IN DETAIL THE ECONOMIC INSTRUMENTS ENVISAGED FOR THE INTEGRATION OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL DECISIONS BY BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS. SEE ALSO RECOMMENDATION 1.2.

RECOMMENDATION 3.2:

THE REVENUES FROM POLLUTION CHARGES SHOULD BE RAISED TO SUCH LEVELS THAT THEY INCREASINGLY INDUCE POLLUTERS TO ADOPT LESS POLLUTING TECHNIQUES. THE POLLUTER-PAYS PRINCIPLE SHOULD BE APPLIED MORE SYSTEMATICALLY AND THE PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE PROMOTED.

The economic instruments for environmental protection are specified in the National Environmental Policy Plan. The Natural Resource Tax (including possible allowances), excise taxes and subsidies are the main instruments.

The Environmental Fund of Latvia has started research to evaluate the effectiveness of the Nature Resource Tax. It is envisaged to change the rate of the tax for air emissions and packaging materials and also either the natural resource tax or the excise tax for selected product groups. The corresponding proposal is before Parliament for adoption.

The increased use of reuse and recycling is attributed to the past use of economic instruments, despite the fact that not all increases of tax rates recommended by the MEPRD have been eventually adopted by Parliament.

The instrument of voluntary agreements is also used, e.g. in the management of used packaging materials.

RECOMMENDATION 3.3:

THE EFFICIENCY OF EXISTING ECONOMIC INSTRUMENTS SHOULD BE ANALYSED. THE ANALYSIS SHOULD BE USED TO DESIGN FEEDBACK MECHANISMS, SO THAT THE ECONOMIC INSTRUMENT CAN BE SET AT THE LEVEL THAT WILL PROMPT THE INTENDED REACTION BY THE TARGET ENTERPRISES, WITHOUT ENDANGERING ECONOMIC RECOVERY. AN ANALYSIS IS ALSO REQUIRED BEFORE THE ENVIRONMENTAL CHARGES AND TAXES ARE RAISED.

Attempts to study the efficiency of existing economic instruments have often been difficult for unavailability of relevant data. See also comment to Recommendation 3.2.

RECOMMENDATION 3.4:

IN THE SHORT RUN, INCENTIVES SHOULD BE MAINTAINED FOR BUSINESSES TO INTRODUCE LOW-COST MEASURES AND TO MAKE THEIR PRODUCTION FACILITIES MORE ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY. THE MEASURES PROVIDING SUCH INCENTIVES SHOULD BE DEVELOPED AND PUBLISHED BY THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AS A MATTER OF URGENCY. SEE ALSO RECOMMENDATION 1.2.

Initiatives in this area depend on cooperation projects, often funded from abroad. Currently, the MEPRD is preparing the withdrawal of ODS from the market, and of asbestos containing building materials from production and trade. While no plans exist to introduce environmental labelling formally, the MEPRD and the Ministry of Agriculture cooperate in awarding designations such as "Environmentally friendly business", "Environmentally friendly farming" etc. Also NGOs have taken such initiatives.

RECOMMENDATION 3.5:

THE STATISTICS ON ENVIRONMENTAL EXPENDITURE SHOULD BE IMPROVED AS A MATTER OF PRIORITY. THE CENTRAL BUREAU OF STATISTICS, THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE, THE MINISTRY OF THE ECONOMY AND THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN SOLVING THIS PROBLEM.

Attempts to improve statistics on environmental expenditures have not yet had tangible results. A concerted effort is not taken.

Chapter 4: Environmental awareness, education and information, and public participation in environmental decision-making

GENERAL TENDENCY

There is still a great need for better communication between environmental administrations and the public. A national strategy for environmental communication and education is needed to improve environmental information and public participation.

RECOMMENDATION 4.1:

PUBLIC OPINION REGARDING ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND MANAGEMENT SHOULD BE MONITORED BY A REGULAR POLL, WHICH DOCUMENTS POSSIBLE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN POPULATION GROUPS, INCLUDING AGE CLASSES.

At present, a regular poll regarding environmental policy and management is not undertaken. Research institutions undertake general polls that include also environmental issues. The MEPRD occasionally commissions polls, as do other institutions. In general, poll results are available for different population groups, including age classes.

RECOMMENDATION 4.2:

AN IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF THE POSSIBILITIES FOR ACTIVATING THE PARTICIPATION OF ALL MAJOR POPULATION GROUPS IN ENVIRONMENTAL DECISION-MAKING SHOULD BE COMMISSIONED.

A National Environmental Communication and Education Strategy is being prepared with wide public discussion. At present, the third draft is being circulated and considered. The strategy should be finished by fall 2000, after which a corresponding Action Programme will be concluded. The strategy will include tasks and objectives of environmental communication and education as well as separate communication strategies for eight different major target groups (sometimes subdivided).

RECOMMENDATION 4.3:

NGOs SHOULD SET UP A JOINT LIAISON OFFICE TO PARTICIPATE IN DECISION-MAKING AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL AND IN DECISION-MAKING IN THE APPROXIMATION TO THE EU.

The office suggested was not established. At present, coordination of NGOs is done primarily through the NGO Centre in Riga (for all NGOs, not only environmental), the REC, as well as the "Coalition Clean Baltic", a network of environmental NGOs around the Baltic Sea.

RECOMMENDATION 4.4:

THE GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION RESPONSIBLE FOR DISSEMINATING ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION SHOULD BE CLEARLY IDENTIFIED (EITHER AS A SPECIAL UNIT IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT OR THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, IF FOUNDED). ALL THE PRACTICAL PROCEDURES FOR REQUESTING SUCH INFORMATION SHOULD BE SPECIFIED. COOPERATION WITH NGOs SHOULD BE SOUGHT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ACTIVE DISSEMINATION PROGRAMME FOR ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION. INFORMATION SHOULD BE DISSEMINATED IN PLAIN LANGUAGE. LOCAL AUTHORITIES SHOULD CONSIDER TAKING ANALOGOUS INITIATIVES.

The National Environmental Communication and Education Strategy foresees the creation of a national environmental information centre, as well as such centres at regional level. Two regions have established such centres already. The procedures for requesting information will be fully specified.

RECOMMENDATION 4.5:

LATVIA SHOULD URGENTLY SET UP PROGRAMMES TO CHECK EMISSION DATA SYSTEMATICALLY AGAINST AMBIENT MEASUREMENTS, APPLICABLE INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS OR INTERNATIONAL EMISSION ESTIMATES, THROUGH MODELLING. THE PROGRAMMES SHOULD APPLY TO LOCAL AIR POLLUTION, LONG-RANGE TRANSBOUNDARY AIR POLLUTION, FRESH AND MARINE WATER POLLUTION AND THE RELEASE OF GREENHOUSE GASES.

In general, Latvian environmental managers are satisfied with the quality of emission data. Any necessary improvements in detail are entrusted to the EU accession process.

RECOMMENDATION 4.6:

THE PRESENT, PROMISING WORK TO COORDINATE MONITORING COULD PERHAPS BE FURTHER IMPROVED, IF CARRIED OUT WITHIN AN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY. THE SUBSTANTIAL RESOURCES REQUIRED FOR MONITORING SHOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE, PARTICULARLY FOR HIGH-PRIORITY HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS.

The funding situation of monitoring has not been stabilized. See also comment on Recommendation 1.4.

RECOMMENDATION 4.7:

DIRECT FINANCING OF THE ENVIRONMENT STATE MONITORING PROGRAMMES AND DATA SYSTEM FROM THE REGULAR BUDGET SHOULD BE INCREASED. IN PARTICULAR, LATVIA SHOULD CONSIDER FINANCING THE SEA MONITORING PROGRAMME FROM THE REGULAR STATE BUDGET.

The MEPRD, in the proposals for the 3-year budget, have suggested increased financing from budgetary sources, but the final decision is not yet taken.

RECOMMENDATION 4.8:

A SIMPLIFICATION OF THE PROCEDURES FOR INDIVIDUAL EIA CASES, WHICH WOULD AVOID TURNING THEM INTO CABINET DECISIONS, SHOULD BE CONSIDERED FOR INCLUSION IN THE LAW ON ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT.

The adoption of the EIA law, together with the procedural regulations, have given rise to the constitution of a Supreme EIA Board for individual EIA cases. The Board is operational since the beginning of 1999.

RECOMMENDATION 4.9:

A SEPARATE PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSION FOR THE ENVIRONMENT SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED. IT SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO GIVE NGOS AN ADEQUATE HEARING IN ITS WORK.

RECOMMENDATION 4.10:

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION SHOULD BE INTRODUCED IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL CURRICULA, IN A MAXIMUM NUMBER OF SUBJECTS.

The non-implementation of this recommendation for several reasons is not felt to impede the legal work for environmental protection. However, difficulties appear as the results of the deliberations of environmental issues in the commission are not always retained in the final decisions on legal instruments. Also, there appears to be a need for partners in the development of environmental protection strategies.

For primary school, environmental education has been defined by the Ministry of Education in 1998 as an interdisciplinary theme, which has been integrated into different subjects. The "Guide" of environmental education in primary school has been elaborated since. At present, an analogous "Guide" is under discussion for secondary schools. A network of co-ordinators of environmental education with a responsible co-ordinator exists in each district. The Phare project "Support to projects of environmental education" is running. At vocational schools, environmental education takes place under the heading "Environmental Science", with an approved curriculum for 120 lessons. Each year, the "Olympiad of Environmental Projects" takes place for primary and secondary schools. Latvian schools are involved in different regional, national and international projects of environmental education.

Chapter 5: International cooperation

GENERAL TENDENCY

The acceleration in the EU accession process that occurred since the publication of the EPR report brought about a re-orientation also in the field of international cooperation. A new priority in international cooperation are multilateral cooperation in the Baltic area and closer bilateral cooperation with Estonia and Lithuania, which has been quite successful.

RECOMMENDATION 5.1:

LATVIA SHOULD ACCELERATE THE RATIFICATION PROCEDURE FOR THE BONN CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY SPECIES OF WILD ANIMALS AND THE 1988 PROTOCOL CONCERNING THE CONTROL OF EMISSIONS OF NITROGEN OXIDES TO THE CONVENTION ON LONG-RANGE TRANSBOUNDARY AIR POLLUTION. SEE ALSO RECOMMENDATION 6.6.

RECOMMENDATION 5.2:

LATVIA SHOULD WORK AT ESTABLISHING TRANSBOUNDARY PROTECTED AREAS WITH ITS NEIGHBOURS, PAYING PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO AREAS THAT ARE IMPORTANT NESTING ZONES FOR MIGRATORY BIRDS.

The Bonn Convention on the Conservation of migratory Species of Wild Animals was ratified in 1998. Latvia has signed the Protocol to the 1979 Convention On Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground level Ozone on 1 December, 1999.

The Agreement between the MEPRD and the Estonian Ministry of Environmental Protection on transboundary protection was signed in January 2000. The agreement is general, but satisfies in particular the management needs of the Northern Vidzeme Peatlands protected areas in the two countries. A similar general agreement is under preparation with the Lithuanian Ministry of Environmental Protection. It was motivated by management needs for the transboundary karstic region as well as transboundary river valleys. It is expected to be signed this year.

Management plans exist for selected birds, but the problem of nesting zones for migratory birds is not felt to be important, because of the size of the country.

RECOMMENDATION 5.3:

AS THE ACCESSION PROCESS TO THE EU EVOLVES, ASSISTANCE NEEDS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION OUGHT TO BE MORE FULLY RECOGNIZED IN THE OVERALL ASSISTANCE PROCESS. IMPROVED COORDINATION OF INTERNATIONAL FUNDING FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PURPOSES IN EITHER THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT OR THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, IF CREATED, WOULD BE AN ASSET IN THE PROCESS LEADING TO STEPPING UP SUCH AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL FUNDING.

RECOMMENDATION 5.4:

THE CAPACITY OF LOCAL CONSULTANTS AND BUILDING COMPANIES SHOULD BE INCREASED TO HELP THEM TO PARTICIPATE IN ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS AND COMPETE SUCCESSFULLY WITH FOREIGN COMPANIES AND CONSULTANTS. THE PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES OF SOME INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS COULD PERHAPS BE REVISED WITH THIS OBJECTIVE IN MIND.

The Investment Department of the MEPRD replaced the earlier project department. Different coordination units were organized inside the new department as of 1999.

The share of local consultants and building companies in project implementation is increasing together with the national share of funding of such projects. Also, national consultants and companies enter more into direct cooperation agreements with foreign partners.

Revisions of procurement procedures of IFIs have not occurred.

PART II: MANAGEMENT OF POLLUTION AND OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Chapter 6: Air management

GENERAL TENDENCY

The EU accession process has prompted the preparation of a substantial number of new legal instruments. The changes in management practices coincide with the thrust of the EPR recommendations. Resource limitations in the MEPRD explain the lesser attention paid to institutional streamlining and the introduction of air policy targets and management routines into sectoral management, but improvements are also noticeable in cooperation with the energy sector.

RECOMMENDATION 6.1:

THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD USE ALL REGULATORY OR CONTROL INSTRUMENTS THAT ARE CURRENTLY DIRECTLY AVAILABLE FOR COMBATING AIR POLLUTION (SPOT CHECKS OF VEHICLES, CHECKS OF FUEL QUALITY, CERTIFICATION OF MONITORING EQUIPMENT, REVIEW OF CRITERIA FOR USE OF FUNDS FOR FINANCING PROTECTION MEASURES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL) TO THE MAXIMUM POSSIBLE EXTENT. IN ADDITION, THE CABINET OF MINISTERS SHOULD ISSUE A NORMATIVE ACT RELATED TO AMBIENT AIR QUALITY STANDARDS, AS SOVIET STANDARDS WILL BE REVOKED BEFORE THOSE ADAPTED TO THE EU WILL ENTER INTO FORCE.

RECOMMENDATION 6.2:

A MEDIUM-TERM ACTION PLAN SHOULD BE DEVELOPED. IT SHOULD SPECIFY TARGETS FOR AIR PROTECTION AND SHOULD INCLUDE ENERGY- AND TRANSPORT-RELATED ISSUES. ITS DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE LED BY THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT, BUT SHOULD INCLUDE ALL LINE MINISTRIES CONCERNED, INDUSTRY, NGOS, AS WELL AS LOCAL ADMINISTRATIONS. THE PROMOTION OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT SHOULD AIM AT REDUCING URBAN AIR POLLUTION.

Enforcement of the regulatory and control instruments for combatting air pollution is felt to have considerably increased since the time of the EPR report. For example, the EU air quality standards are enforced. This development is partly due to increased experience with the instruments, which were partly new at the time of the EPR report.

The following new instruments have been created:

- Regulation (1998) on the quality of fuel used for vehicles, setting quality standards for benzene and lead (petrol) and sulphur (diesel)
- Regulation (1999) on air quality, defining air quality standards, reference methods for measurement of air quality, obligation of local governments to prepare and implement air quality improvement plans where necessary
- Environmental Investment Fund, supplying local governments with soft loans for the improvement of energy efficiency
- emission ceilings for SO₂, NO_x, VOC and methane
- Regulation (2000) on emission limits for stationary sources
- Regulation (2000) on the vehicle type approval system.

The new regulations are in line with the requirements of the relevant EU directives.

A Strategy for Energy development was adopted in 1999, after preparation by the Ministry of Economy and with cooperation of MEPRD. The Regulation (2000) on emission limit values for stationary sources is in accordance with the new sulphur protocol. The extension of the Regulation to VOCs (from current CO, sulphur, nitrogen and particulates) is planned to involve industry at larger scale in its preparation.

Regarding transport, the new vehicle type approval system is the only relevant development at the national level, but more may have happened locally (e.g. in Riga).

RECOMMENDATION 6.3:

THE USE OF LEADED PETROL SHOULD BE FURTHER DISCOURAGED, PRIMARILY WITH ECONOMIC INSTRUMENTS. ITS USE SHOULD BE DISCONTINUED AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE TIME, BUT NOT LATER THAN 2005.

Leaded petrol is no longer used, because of the application of an unfavourable excise tax. Legal prohibition of leaded petrol will be part of the new Regulation on fuel quality, necessary because of the respective new EU Directive.

RECOMMENDATION 6.4:

THE PARTICIPATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMMES IN FUNDING PROJECTS IN THE ENERGY AND TRANSPORT SECTORS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED (I.E. PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND ENERGY SOURCES, IMPROVING THERMAL INSULATING, INSTALLING HEAT METERS, MODERNIZING PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN THE MAIN CITIES, ETC.).

The recommendation is implemented in the field of energy, primarily seeking cleaner production and increased use of renewable energy sources. It is not implemented with regard to the transport sector.

RECOMMENDATION 6.5:

THE SHARING OF AIR MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES BETWEEN DIFFERENT ADMINISTRATIONS SHOULD BE RECONSIDERED FROM THE POINTS OF VIEW OF OPTIMAL COORDINATION (E.G. OF ENVIRONMENTAL INSPECTIONS) AND OF PUBLIC ACCESS TO ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION.

The recommendation is partly fulfilled. The sharing of responsibilities between different levels of administration is stable in the field of air inspections. In air quality management, local administrations have obtained new responsibilities (see comment on Recommendation 6.1). The reconsideration process continues.

RECOMMENDATION 6.6:

COMPLIANCE WITH ENVIRONMENTALLY RELEVANT ECE CONVENTIONS AND PROTOCOLS SHOULD BE ATTEMPTED, PARTICULARLY IN THOSE CASES WHERE THEY ARE INSTRUMENTAL TO THE EU APPROXIMATION PROCESS. LATVIA SHOULD ALSO ADHERE TO THE 1958 AGREEMENT CONCERNING THE ADAPTATION OF UNIFORM CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL AND RECIPROCAL RECOGNITION OF APPROVAL FOR MOTOR VEHICLE EQUIPMENT AND PARTS AND TO OTHER RELATED UN/ECE REGULATIONS AS WELL AS TO THE CORRESPONDING INSTRUMENTS AT THE GLOBAL LEVEL.

Latvia acceded in 1999 to the 1958 Agreement concerning the Adoption of Uniform Conditions of Approval and Reciprocal Recognition of Approval for Motor Vehicle Equipment and Parts. Latvia signed the new protocol to the 1979 Convention On Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution to Abate Acidification of Waters, Eutrophication and Ground level Ozone.

The newly adopted regulations for air management are in line with the requirements of the relevant EU Directives.

Chapter 7: Water management

GENERAL TENDENCY

Water management has recently tackled successfully problems that had been identified in the EPR report. The EU accession process helped to focus on the issues, as it was also supported by various cooperation projects.

RECOMMENDATION 7.1:

THE REGULATION INCLUDED IN THE WATER PERMIT THAT REQUIRES EFFLUENT MONITORING BY POLLUTERS SHOULD BE ENFORCED MORE STRICTLY.

RECOMMENDATION 7.2:

THE ALLOCATION OF AVAILABLE FUNDS TO THE UPGRADING OF EXISTING AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW WASTE-WATER TREATMENT FACILITIES WHICH CLEARLY IMPROVE TREATMENT EFFICIENCY SHOULD BE MAINTAINED AND PURSUED AS A TOP PRIORITY. BALANCING THE NEED FOR SUBSTANTIAL FUNDS FOR THESE PURPOSES ON THE ONE HAND AND THEIR SCARCITY ON THE OTHER WILL MAKE IT NECESSARY TO RELY ON A PHASED APPROACH TO THE FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF RELEVANT EU LEGISLATION IN ALL CASES.

The regulation by now works satisfactorily. The sampling period and the parameters to be analysed are set up in the water use permit by Regional Environmental Board, which is regularly performing control analysis of samples of the effluent. Samples have to be analysed in a certified laboratory. Exceeding pollution over the permitted limits is fined. The creation of a common methodology for sampling would improve the system.

The main task is to meet the demands prescribed in EU Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive. It is estimated that investments of 580 million lats will be required till 2015 in order to meet its requirements.

About 51 million lats were invested from the State Investments Programme in the environmental sector. This sum includes 31.5 million in the water management sector in the cities of Liepāja, Daugavpils and Riga. Water management improvement projects in small and medium sized towns received 11 million lats were till the end of 1998. The project in Liepāja was successfully finished in 2000.

A strategy for water supply and waste-water treatment in Latvia's small and medium size towns (800+) deals with challenges in water supply and waste-water treatment. 54 municipal projects are presently in different implementation phases, and 3 other municipalities will the programme this year. Investments of a total of 42 million lats are planned in the programme for the years 2000-2003, realized with ISPA funds, and investments of 5 million lats from the State Investment Programme.

RECOMMENDATION 7.3:

TO ASSESS THE FULL COSTS OF WATER ABSTRACTION AND SUPPLY, WASTE-WATER COLLECTION AND DISCHARGE, IT IS IMPORTANT TO FORMULATE A NATIONAL WATER TARIFF POLICY.

RECOMMENDATION 7.4:

THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE DECISION REGARDING WATER INVESTMENT PROGRAMMES. THE CREATION OF A REGIONAL LEVEL OF MANAGEMENT ADMINISTRATION - WATER CATCHMENT BASINS AND AGENCIES - TO IMPROVE WATER MANAGEMENT AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL SHOULD BE SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED.

RECOMMENDATION 7.5:

AN INTERMINISTERIAL WORKING COMMITTEE FOR WATER MANAGEMENT SHOULD BE CREATED TO BETTER COORDINATE ACTIONS AND BALANCE DIFFERENT INTERESTS IN WATER MANAGEMENT. THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTRIES OF HEALTH, OF AGRICULTURE, OF TRANSPORT, OF THE ECONOMY AND OF THE INTERIOR SHOULD BE INVOLVED.

The national principles for water pricing are to cover all costs with revenues, including development costs. Water prices are fixed locally, on the basis of adequate local regulations. The national principles cannot yet be met. As an interim solution, it is attempted to cover maintenance costs from prices. Cost assessments are gradually being improved in the process of the "800+" programme (see comment on Recommendation 7.2), and an adequate tariff policy is specified and supervised during its implementation in the municipalities concerned. Water bills are estimated to be paid at rates not more than 70 to 90 percent, with strong regional differences.

The MEPRD and its subordinated institutions play an active role in the decisions regarding water investment programmes (see comments to preceding Recommendations), involving in this process also the wider public (NGOs, municipalities, local and foreign experts).

The transposition of the forthcoming EU Water Framework Directive is of overriding importance. A joint Latvian-Swedish project supports the implementation of the Directive, and EU Phare financed the Latvian-Lithuanian project on the Venta and Lielupe river basins. In 2000, the joint Latvian-Swedish training project began in the Daugava river basin, aiming to develop the Daugava river basin management plan and establish a temporary management institution.

Latvia being a water-rich country, it is felt that the local and seasonal water management problems can be left to the existing permanent cooperation bodies, particularly the one established with the Ministry of Agriculture. The coordination of water quality issues is taken care of by the European Integration Steering Group in the MEPRD.

Chapter 8: Nature and forest management

GENERAL TENDENCY

Latvia continues its comprehensive approach to the preservation of a very rich and diverse natural environment. The threats from the needs of economic development, from a very limited budget and sometimes shaky public support for nature protection appear to have been largely off-set. Management seems to be able in particular to use the opportunities from the EU accession process in the interest of the natural environment. It is not yet clear whether the modernization of forestry practices - both private and public - will occur in full harmony with needs of nature conservation. It is possible that a more pronounced emphasis on sustainable development principles would be needed to avoid harmful practices.

RECOMMENDATION 8.1:

AN OVERALL MONITORING PROGRAMME FOR BIODIVERSITY SHOULD BE DEVELOPED WITH A PARTICULAR VIEW TO BRIDGING THE CURRENT GAPS.

A monitoring programme for biodiversity has been developed and adopted as a part of the Latvian National Monitoring Programme. It presently includes 3 monitoring sites. Expansion of the network is sought in the framework of the action programme to protect biodiversity.

RECOMMENDATION 8.2:

THE EXISTING NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY SHOULD BE BROUGHT FULLY INTO LINE WITH THE PAN-EUROPEAN STRATEGY ON BIODIVERSITY AND LANDSCAPE PROTECTION, AND INCORPORATE THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE EU DIRECTIVE ON SPECIES AND HABITAT PROTECTION.

National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan was approved by Government in May, 2000 as the National Biodiversity Programme. All requirements of the relevant EU Directives and the pan-European Strategy on Biodiversity and Landscape Protection are incorporated in the programme.

RECOMMENDATION 8.3:

THE REGIONAL STRUCTURES OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD INCORPORATE EXPERTISE IN BIODIVERSITY EVALUATION, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT.

Staff of the regional structures has received some training, but more efforts are required. The budgets of the administrations for protected areas have been increased substantially, giving room for enhancement of expertise in biodiversity evaluation, conservation and management.

RECOMMENDATION 8.4:

IN ADDITION TO TIMBER PRODUCTION, OTHER PURPOSES OF FORESTS SHOULD ALSO BE SAFEGUARDED, INCLUDING ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND THE CONSERVATION OF SPECIES AND HABITATS. THE OBJECTIVES OF CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF FORESTS SHOULD BE INTEGRATED INTO LAND-USE PLANNING AND AGRICULTURAL SECTOR DEVELOPMENT.

The new law on forest was adopted in May, 2000, requiring the elaboration of about 20 regulations (scheduled for within one year). The MEPRD will obtain forest management authority for protected areas, but environmental inspectorates will not have access to other forest areas.

Objectives of conservation and sustainable use of forest have not been integrated into land-use planning and agricultural sector development.

RECOMMENDATION 8.5:

THE LEGISLATION REGULATING, FOR INSTANCE, THE ACTIVITIES OF PRIVATE AND PUBLIC FOREST OR LAND OWNERS SHOULD OBLIGE THEM TO PROTECT AND KEEP VALUABLE BIODIVERSITY FEATURES (FOR EXAMPLE, OLD TREES). THE USE OF TAX INSTRUMENTS FOR THESE PURPOSES SHOULD BE SPELLED OUT IN THE LEGISLATION.

All laws and regulations concerning forest are the same for all owners, whether public or private. Tax allowances can be practiced (i.e. cadastral value of the land can be reduced for the presence of e.g. noble trees, which are protected), but is decided at the local level.

RECOMMENDATION 8.6:

THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE SHOULD ARRANGE SPECIAL TRAINING PROGRAMMES ON THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF APPLIED ECOLOGY, INCLUDING THOSE MODIFYING TRADITIONAL FORESTRY PRINCIPLES. FURTHERMORE, THE BIOLOGICAL AND ECONOMIC VALUE OF BIODIVERSITY, AND THE ORGANIZATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF ECO-TOURISM, SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE PROGRAMME, WHICH SHOULD ADDRESS LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE BODIES AND THEIR STAFF.

RECOMMENDATION 8.7:

RESOURCES SHOULD BE ALLOCATED TO DEVELOP MANAGEMENT PLANS AND TO THEIR IMPLEMENTATION.

RECOMMENDATION 8.8:

IN PROTECTED AREAS, THEIR BUFFER ZONES AND IN COASTAL ZONES, ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS SHOULD BECOME OBLIGATORY PRIOR TO ANY INVESTMENT, REGARDLESS OF THE SIZE OR TYPE OF THE PLANNED ACTIVITY.

Programmes for the modification of forestry principles do not exist. Likewise, there is no state programme regarding forestry practices of private owners. The "Code of Good Agricultural Practices" does not cover forestry practices. It remains to be seen, how the application of the new law on forest will affect forestry practices.

In 1999 five management plans have been elaborated and financed by state budget and one - by a donor country. The gradual increase of management plans is supported by a budget (of 10,000 lats per year) that allows for the creation of 5 to 9 such plans annually. A total of about 200 is needed.

While the Recommendation is not in force, it is received favourably and considered urgent for the coastal zone. However, it may be easier to achieve the objective in this case by giving the coastal zone the status of "special territory" in the Law on Spatial Planning.

RECOMMENDATION 8.9:

INFORMATION CAMPAIGNS SHOULD BE INITIATED TO HIGHLIGHT THE LATVIA'S HERITAGE IN TERMS OF (A) THE SIGNIFICANCE OF NATURAL ASSETS FOR BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION, E.G. WETLANDS AND COASTAL AREAS OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE, AND (B) SPECIES POPULATIONS - EVEN POPULATIONS OF THREATENED SPECIES THAT ARE SIGNIFICANT AT THE GLOBAL OR EUROPEAN SCALE.

It is felt that the issues addressed by this Recommendation are broadly met. A wide range of TV programmes are being prepared by "Vides Filmu Studija" (Environmental Film Studio), which is organised by the MEPRD. TV programmes like "Cope un Jakts" (angling and hunting), "Vides fakti" (Environmental facts), "Vides v zijas" (Environmental visions) and TV advertisements receive very high rating. The Latvian Environmental Protection Fund plans support a radio programme as well. The booklet "Nature protection in Latvia" has been produced in Latvian and English at the end of 1999. See also comment on Recommendation 4.2.

RECOMMENDATION 8.10:

THE SPECIES PROTECTION POLICY SHOULD BE MAINTAINED AT ITS SUCCESSFUL LEVEL, PAYING PERHAPS INCREASING ATTENTION TO THE RISKS STEMMING FROM THE INTRODUCTION OF ALIEN SPECIES, ESPECIALLY IN THE MOST VULNERABLE COASTAL LANDSCAPES. COASTAL VEGETATION NEEDS TO BE MONITORED EFFICIENTLY WITHIN A REGIONAL (BAL TIC) SCIENTIFIC FRAMEWORK.

This Recommendation is incorporated in the National Biodiversity Strategy. The Law "On Species and Biotopes" was adopted by Parliament in May, 2000.

RECOMMENDATION 8.11:

THE REGULATIONS NEEDED FOR THE ADEQUATE PROTECTION OF LAKES SHOULD BE URGENTLY ADAPTED TO THE EMERGING SYSTEM OF LAND USE, PARTICULARLY NEW OWNERSHIP LAWS. APPROPRIATELY TRAINED PERMANENT STAFF IS REQUIRED FOR MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTING THE REGULATIONS, AS WELL AS COORDINATING ACTIVITIES BETWEEN ALL USERS OF KEMERI NATIONAL PARK AND LAKE ENGURE.

The NGO "Engure Lake Fund" manages the nature reserve. This year, the staff of Kemer National Park is increasing from 3 to 18 persons. In addition, "consultancy boards" have started to work. The Latvian authorities do not see any problem emanating from privatisation on lake protection.

Chapter 9: Waste management and introduction of cleaner technologies

GENERAL TENDENCY

Waste management is progressing closely in accordance with EU requirements. However, it encounters difficult management problems. The expected conclusion of the modernization of legislation – including the swift introduction of the IPPC Directive – will support focusing on priority problems in practical waste management.

RECOMMENDATION 9.1:

THE LEGISLATION ON WASTE THAT IS CURRENTLY BEING DRAFTED SHOULD BE BROUGHT FULLY IN LINE WITH EU LEGISLATION, TO PREVENT TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE HAVING TO ADD OR AMEND LAWS LATER. THE UMBRELLA LAWS SHOULD COVER ALL CATEGORIES OF WASTE, INCLUDING COMMON NON-MUNICIPAL WASTE. FURTHERMORE, A WASTE STRATEGY INCLUDING COMMON NON-MUNICIPAL WASTE SHOULD BE DEVELOPED. RULES FOR THE DISPOSAL OF THIS WASTE SHOULD ALSO BE CONSIDERED. THERE SHOULD BE MORE EMPHASIS ON PREVENTION, RECYCLING AND MINIMIZATION OF WASTE.

RECOMMENDATION 9.2:

A PARTICULAR EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE TO IMPROVE THE FLOW OF INFORMATION ON WASTE. THE WHOLE DATA GENERATION AND DISSEMINATION PROCESS SHOULD BE RECONSIDERED WITH A VIEW TO DESCRIBING ALL WASTE FLOWS (AND IN PARTICULAR THAT OF HAZARDOUS WASTE) IN AS COMPLETE AND RELIABLE A MANNER AS POSSIBLE.

Waste management is regulated by the law of 1993 "On Hazardous Waste" and the law of 1998 "On Municipal Waste". This last law refers to all non-hazardous wastes, so that the two laws together cover all types of waste. In order to simplify the system and transpose all EU requirements, a Law on Waste is under preparation for adoption this year. While this will satisfy the first part of the Recommendation, the alignment of waste management practices on EU practices will take time.

The Law on Waste will attach first priority to waste prevention, minimization and recycling, before recovery, treatment and disposal.

A Latvian-Danish twinning project attempts to improve the data collection system on waste. The end of the project is planned for August, 2000.

RECOMMENDATION 9.3:

THE PERMITTING SYSTEM SHOULD COVER NOT ONLY HAZARDOUS WASTE BUT ALSO WASTE IN GENERAL. THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK SHOULD BE DESIGNED ACCORDINGLY.

The newly enacted permitting system covers all types of waste. It will be fully enforced from 1 January, 2001.

RECOMMENDATION 9.4:

A STRATEGY FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF CLEANER TECHNOLOGY, SPECIFIC LEGAL PROVISIONS TO ENCOURAGE LESS POLLUTING TECHNOLOGY, AND STRONGER FINANCIAL INCENTIVES TO ENCOURAGE INDUSTRY TO INTRODUCE CLEANER TECHNOLOGY SHOULD BE AMONG THE OBJECTIVES OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT. A POLLUTION PREVENTION INSTITUTION IS ONE IMPORTANT ELEMENT FOR SUCCESSFULLY PROMOTING AND INTRODUCING CLEANER TECHNOLOGY. SUCH AN INSTITUTION SHOULD HELP TRAIN LOCAL CONSULTANTS IN CLEANER PRODUCTION AND WASTE MINIMIZATION, AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS.

The new law "On Pollution Control" will transpose the EU Directive on IPPC, require use of best available technologies and set up an institution for IPPC (see also comment on Recommendation 1.8). The Environmental Protection Fund is supporting recovery of recyclable packaging, 3 tenders for recovery of waste were made, and such tenders are also planned for this year. MEPRD favours the introduction of EMS, but initiatives are left to industry. The European Council Regulation (EEC) No. 1836/93 of 29.06.1993, permitting voluntary participation of companies in the industrial sector in a Community's eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS) was translated into Latvian. ISO 14001 was accepted by the Latvian National Centre of Standardisation and Metrology in 1998. The standard is not widely used. See also comment on Recommendation 3.4.

RECOMMENDATION 9.5:

WASTE MANAGEMENT PLANS SHOULD USE EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURES AND RESOURCES AT ALL LEVELS OF ADMINISTRATION. AS LONG AS THE EXISTING MULTITUDE OF ADMINISTRATIVE LEVELS PREVAILS, PRIORITY FOR MANAGEMENT WILL HAVE TO REMAIN AT THE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS. ONE OBJECTIVE SHOULD BE TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF LANDFILLS, STEPWISE AND AT AN AFFORDABLE PACE FOR THE USERS. THE POSSIBILITY OF USING INCINERATION WITH RECOVERY OF ENERGY AND OTHER ENERGY RECOVERY METHODS FROM WASTE SHOULD BE EVALUATED IN THIS CONTEXT.

The State strategy for the management of municipal wastes (in the years 1998-2010) was approved by the Government in 1998. It covers all non-hazardous wastes. The strategy leads to the reduction of the number of dumpsites, to integrated regional waste management systems and to the construction of new regional landfills, serving at least 100 000 people.

The "Hazardous Waste Strategy for Latvia 2000-2010" on the management of hazardous waste was adopted in 1999, containing plans for the construction of a hazardous waste incineration plant and hazardous waste landfill, as well as for the improvement of hazardous waste collection systems. See also the comment on Recommendation 9.1.

RECOMMENDATION 9.6:

THE NUCLEAR SAFETY REGULATOR SHOULD BE INDEPENDENT FROM THE MANAGEMENT OF NUCLEAR WASTE FACILITIES. AS A MINIMUM, COMPLIANCE WITH THE NUCLEAR SAFETY REGULATIONS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION SHOULD BE ACHIEVED.

The draft of the Law "On Radiation Safety and Nuclear Safety" is in Parliament for approval, possibly before the end of this year. It incorporates the requirements of relevant EU Directives and Regulations. It foresees notably the independence of the nuclear safety regulator from the management of nuclear waste facilities.

PART III: ECONOMIC AND SECTORAL INTEGRATION

Chapter 10: Environmental concerns in agriculture and food processing

GENERAL TENDENCY

The cooperation between the MEPRD and the Ministry of Agriculture effectively advances the consideration of environmental concerns in agriculture. The cooperation benefits from the creation of a standing working group between the two ministries. The preoccupation of the two ministries with meeting their own accession requirements, together with the limited staff resources, appears to limit the scope for, as well as the speed of, substantive progress. A further and important constraint for such progress stems from the difficulties encountered by Latvian farmers in the transition process, as well as in the adaptation process to EU conditions, sometimes limiting the capacity for further improvements of their practices.

RECOMMENDATION 10.1:

- *FARMERS SHOULD NOT BE ELIGIBLE FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT (GRANTS, LOANS) FROM THE STATE FOR PROJECTS WITHOUT PROOF THAT THEIR FARMING PRACTICES RESPECT BASIC ENVIRONMENTAL REQUIREMENTS, I.E. SOUND CROP ROTATION, LIVESTOCK UNITS PER SURFACE UNIT WITHIN THE PRESCRIBED LIMITS, ADEQUATE FACILITIES FOR STORING AND SPREADING MANURE, PLANT TREATMENT UNDER LICENCE (INCLUDING THE PRACTICE OF BURNING EXTENSIVE MEADOWS IN EARLY SPRING) AND RECORDING OF TREATMENT, AND ADEQUATE MAINTENANCE OF EXTENSIVE SURFACES OF HIGH BIODIVERSITY.*
- *THE REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL BOARDS MUST HAVE ACCESS TO THE RECORDED DATA OF PLANT PROTECTION AND FERTILIZER USE ON THE FARMS. THEY SHOULD BE ABLE TO MONITOR THE MAINTENANCE OF SEMI-NATURAL HABITATS BY THE FARMERS, ESPECIALLY WHERE FARMERS APPLY FOR STATE SUPPORT FOR A FARMING PROJECT.*

RECOMMENDATION 10.2:

THE AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY CENTRE SHOULD ALSO BE FINANCIALLY SUPPORTED BY THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR ITS ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES, POSSIBLY REQUIRING SPECIAL INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN THE MINISTRIES INVOLVED.

Starting from the year 2000, special financial support for structural reforms in agriculture and rural development will be available for Latvia in the framework of SAPARD. This programme meets the conditions spelled out in the Recommendation. In practice, implementation is for the time being limited to new farms, of which there have been few so far. It is expected that full implementation can be achieved over the next 8 to 10 years.

Data on the use of pesticides and fertilisers are collected and stored by institutions under the supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture (regional agriculture departments). There is a Register of Plant Protection Substances and a Service of Plant Protection. Exchange of statistical data formally takes place at the level of regional institutions of environmental protection (Regional Environmental Boards) and agricultural departments. In practice, this data exchange seems to work best for the application of sewage sludge.

MEPRD remains limited in its financial possibilities, and support is so far only possible in the context of contracts offered for training, applications like runoff estimations in river catchment areas, elaboration of procedural requirements or of information schemes, etc.

RECOMMENDATION 10.3:

LARGE ANIMAL FARMS WITH INSUFFICIENT LAND FOR SPREADING MANURE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED INDUSTRIAL OPERATIONS, SUBJECT TO THE REGULATION ON THE USE OF SEWAGE SLUDGE IN AGRICULTURE. THEY MUST BE EQUIPPED WITH ADEQUATE STORAGE AND SPREADING FACILITIES AND AN ADMINISTRATIVE SCHEME SHOULD BE DEVELOPED TO ENABLE THEM TO APPLY TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL FUND FOR FINANCIAL HELP. LIKE THE WASTE-WATER TREATMENT PLANTS, THEY MUST SEEK CONTRACTS WITH FARMERS FOR THE USE OF LAND AND OFFER A COMPLETE SERVICE FOR SPREADING THE MANURE ON THEIR CUSTOMERS' LAND.

RECOMMENDATION 10.4:

IN THE PROCESS OF PHYSICAL PLANNING AT THE MUNICIPAL LEVEL, SEMI-NATURAL AREAS OF HIGH BIODIVERSITY VALUE HAVE TO BE IDENTIFIED AND THEIR MANAGEMENT AGREED TOGETHER WITH THE LOCAL POPULATION, THE NATURE PROTECTION ORGANIZATIONS AND THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

RECOMMENDATION 10.5:

A MORE INTENSIVE MONITORING SYSTEM (FINANCED BY THE FISHING LICENCE FEES) IS NECESSARY TO ASSESS THE EFFECT OF FISHING METHODS AND CATCHES, AND OF OTHER ACTIVITIES, ON THE EVOLUTION OF FISH SPECIES AND ON THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT IN GENERAL, AS WELL AS ON THE PROFITABILITY OF THE FISHING INDUSTRY. THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE PRODUCTION OF CANNED FISH SHOULD BE MINIMIZED.

A "Code of Good Agricultural Practice for Latvia" was prepared between the MEPRD and the Ministry of Agriculture, according to EU requirements and HELCOM Recommendations. It covers the demands of environmental protection on agricultural practices. The main part of these demands will be obligatory for farmers operating in sensitive zones after their designation done in 2000, and for farmers using assistance in the frame of SAPARD programmes (see comment on Recommendation 10.1). Regarding big farms, the problem will be solved via the Law on Pollution, as they fall under IPPC requirements.

A system for voluntary agreements with farmers is available for recognition in physical plans. According to present legislation, physical planning is a responsibility of local self-governments, and the general public and all stakeholders shall be involved in the discussion process before the plan is finalised.

The Ministry of Agriculture designated about 11,000 ha of areas as being of interest from an agro-biodiversity point of view. They are pilot territories for the SAPARD programme.

Intensification and further development of the present monitoring system remains necessary to assess the effect of fishing methods and catches in Latvian waters, especially in the economic zone of the Baltic Sea. At present, the monitoring is jointly financed from the state budgets of the Ministry of Agriculture (Fish Fund - fishing licence fees), Ministry of Education and Science (Science Fund) and MEPRD (Environmental Fund of Latvia).

The Law on Pollution is designated as the instrument for managing the environmental consequences of the production of canned fish. See comment on Recommendation 1.8.

RECOMMENDATION 10.6:

THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE SHOULD PROMOTE A DEBATE ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENTAL ROLE AND IMPACT OF LATVIA'S AGRICULTURE AMONG ITS ENTIRE POPULATION. SIMILARLY, THE TWO MINISTRIES SHOULD STRENGTHEN THEIR COOPERATION TO IMPROVE TRAINING SCHEMES FOR THE BENEFIT OF SMALL FARMERS.

RECOMMENDATION 10.7:

IN ITS TASK OF COORDINATING ACTIVITIES RELATING TO ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN AGRICULTURE, AND OF SUMMARIZING THE INFORMATION PROVIDED BY ALL INSTITUTIONS CONCERNED, THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD RELY MORE ON THE LONG AND PRECIOUS EXPERIENCE OF OLD AGRICULTURAL INSTITUTIONS AND GIVE THE NECESSARY WEIGHT TO NEW ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES IN AGRICULTURE AND EASE THEIR ACCEPTANCE BY THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR.

The Ministry of Agriculture and regional centres of agricultural consultation are active and will be responsible for dissemination of information, concentrating on access to the SAPARD programme for self-governments and farmers - individuals and companies. Further initiatives are not planned at present.

It is felt that the established cooperation between MEPRD and old agricultural institutions in the country is both precious and adequate.

Chapter 11: Management of the transport of oil products

GENERAL TENDENCY

The transport of oil products is closely related to economic development and economic interests which complicates the solution of the problems. It is possible that improving cooperation between the MEPRD and the Ministry of Transport in general - perhaps in the framework of the standing working group that was established between the two ministries - could be used for realizing more tangible progress in the management of this specific issue.

RECOMMENDATION 11.1:

COOPERATION SHOULD BE EXTENDED TO COVER THE JOINT DEVELOPMENT OF COMMON PRACTICES REGARDING THE TECHNICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND MAINTENANCE OF THE ENTIRE ROLLING STOCK USED IN LATVIA, PARTICULARLY THE TANK WAGONS USED FOR THE TRANSPORT BY RAIL OF OIL PRODUCTS AND OTHER DANGEROUS SUBSTANCES.

The Law on Railway Transport was recently adopted. Obligatory insurance was not included in the law. Its subordinated by-laws are currently in preparation. The Law and its statements will determine the main principles of transport of dangerous loads and controlling institutions. It is hoped that issues requiring co-operation between the MEPRD and Ministry of Transport will be adequately solved in the drafting process for the by-laws.

RECOMMENDATION 11.2:

THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND THE LATVIAN RAILWAYS SHOULD JOINTLY IMPLEMENT, AS A PROJECT OF HIGH PRIORITY, A PRAGMATIC SCHEME TO REDUCE LEAKAGE FROM TANK WAGONS PRIOR TO THE FORMAL REGULATION OF THE ISSUE.

Negotiations have started on norms for fuel losses. It is not clear, whether they will lead to practical improvements. It is envisaged to introduce a register of railway rolling-stock, with the aim of repairing technical damages as soon as possible.

RECOMMENDATION 11.3:

THE FULL UTILIZATION OF EXISTING PIPELINE CAPACITY FOR THE TRANSPORT OF OIL PRODUCTS SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED, IF NECESSARY WITH ADEQUATE ECONOMIC INSTRUMENTS.

At present, the existing pipelines are used at full capacity.

RECOMMENDATION 11.4:

AN ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE SHOULD BE GIVEN THE TASK OF FINDING PRACTICABLE JOINT APPROACHES TO SOLVING ALL POLLUTION PROBLEMS, BE IT OF SOIL, AIR OR WATER, CREATED BY THE TRANSPORT OF OIL PRODUCTS BY RAIL. THE OPEN-AIR BURNING OF OIL WASTES SHOULD BE DISCONTINUED IMMEDIATELY.

Open air burning of oil wastes is not legal in Latvia. MEPRD and its subordinated structures are responsible for the evaluation and control functions in the environmental sector.

RECOMMENDATION 11.5:

THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD CONSIDER ALL POSSIBLE SCHEMES THAT COULD ACCELERATE THE INTRODUCTION OF PREVENTION AND RECYCLING, AS WELL AS TREATMENT, OF ALL HAZARDOUS WASTES, INCLUDING OIL WASTES AND CONTAMINATED SOILS.

RECOMMENDATION 11.6:

THE DISCUSSION ON THE POSSIBILITY OF CONSTRUCTING A NEW PIPELINE FOR THE TRANSPORT OF CRUDE OIL SHOULD INVOLVE THE RELEVANT ENVIRONMENTAL INSTITUTIONS, INTERESTED NGOS, AS WELL AS THE GENERAL PUBLIC AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE TIME.

The project on the introduction of a hazardous waste management system in Latvia, as well as the adaptation of national legislation to EU requirements (funded by EU Phare) are being implemented. The hazardous waste strategy was adopted, proposals for amendments in national legal documents pertaining to hazardous waste are being elaborated, and new legal acts are prepared. The strategy on dangerous waste management shall be implemented till 2003. Oil waste treatment takes place for instance at the "Vudisona termin ls", where about 3 thousand tonnes of oil were treated in 1998. A dangerous waste landfill was established in Gardene.

The construction of a new pipeline is very controversial, and is currently being evaluated against competing projects. Environmental institutions and the general public will have access to decision making according to the Law "On Environmental Impact Assessment".

Chapter 12: Human health and the environment

GENERAL TENDENCY

The cooperation between the Ministry of Welfare and the MEPRD is considered successful by the two ministries. The preparation of the first NEHAP gave rise to cooperation methods that will remain unchanged for the currently envisaged revision of the programme. A notable development occurred in environmental health management, as one municipality has successfully concluded the preparation of a Local Environmental Health Action Plan this year, and it is hoped that others will follow. In substance, decided improvements in this field may not occur before the adoption of the Strategy of Public Health, in which environmental health is considered separately.

RECOMMENDATION 12.1:

MONITORING OF THE ENVIRONMENT SHOULD BE IMPROVED TO MAKE IT EASIER TO ASSESS ITS IMPACT ON HEALTH, PRIMARILY WITH REGARD TO THE MOST IMPORTANT HEALTH RISKS. INFORMATION SHOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE SO THAT THE SITUATION CAN BE ANALYSED PROPERLY.

RECOMMENDATION 12.2:

THE PROTECTION OF PUBLIC HEALTH SHOULD FIGURE MORE PROMINENTLY IN LEGISLATION RELATED TO BOTH THE ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. THE INTEGRATION SHOULD BE DONE IN COOPERATION WITH ALL CONCERNED ACTORS. IN IMPLEMENTING PROTECTIVE MEASURES RELATED TO ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH, FULL COORDINATION WITH THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ACTION PLAN AND THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PROGRAMME SHOULD BE THE AIM.

Improvements from the point of view of health management are particularly sought for noise, PM10 monitoring, monitoring of leaching from landfills, monitoring of pollution from transport, and indoor air pollution monitoring. The situation has not basically changed since the EPR report was published. It is believed that improvements will now be realized.

A scientific research project on the development of environmental health indicators has started and will be finished at the end of this year. It takes the relevant WHO work into account. After completion of the project, an implementation strategy is to be developed, starting with extensive testing of the indicators retained.

The Strategy of Public Health (SPH) is under development (till October 2000). The strategy will also address the impact of environmental factors on public health and will include recommendations for changes in legal instruments. The revision of the existing National Environmental Health Action Plan (NEHAP) will also be relevant to the follow-up on this Recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION 12.3:

THE EXISTING CAPACITIES OF THE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH CENTRES SHOULD BE UPGRADED AND MODERNIZED. THEY SHOULD INTENSIFY THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ACTION PLAN'S IMPLEMENTATION, IN PARTICULAR, IN

- *THE DESIGN OF MEASURES PREVENTING ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH IMPACTS, INCLUDING IMPACTS FROM REGIONAL OR URBAN PLANNING,*
- *THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELEVANT LEGISLATION,*
- *THE MONITORING OF HUMAN EXPOSURE TO HAZARDOUS ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS, FOCUSED ON THE ASSESSMENT OF PRIORITIES FOR THE REDUCTION OR PREVENTION OF HEALTH IMPACTS AND ON THE EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MEASURES,*
- *THE INFORMATION OF THE PUBLIC AND RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS.*

RECOMMENDATION 12.4:

THE TRAINING OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SPECIALISTS SHOULD BE INTENSIFIED, INCLUDING INTERNATIONAL TRAINING FOR A LIMITED NUMBER OF SPECIALISTS AND PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH PROJECTS.

RECOMMENDATION 12.5:

PROTECTING GROUNDWATER FROM CONTAMINATION SHOULD BE A HIGH PRIORITY IN DEVELOPMENTAL POLICIES AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION. PROTECTIVE MEASURES SHOULD FOCUS ON WASTE STORAGE AND TREATMENT AS WELL AS ON THE PROTECTION OF WATER CATCHMENT AREAS.

The adoption of the Strategy for Public Health (see comment to the preceding Recommendation) may lead to changes in the role of the health centres.

The adoption of the Strategy for Public Health (see comment to Recommendation 12.2) may lead to changes in training programmes. Regular training of environmental health specialists takes place in the Ministry of Welfare. The training funds may increase after approval of the SPF in the Cabinet of Ministers and also after the revision of NEHAP.

In 1999, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the Regulation on Protected Zones of Water Intake Sites. These zones shall be considered in choosing any new water intake site and in reconstructing existing sites.

The joint Danish - Latvian project "On assistance to the MEPRD in the process of approximation of legislation in the water field towards EU requirements" deals presently with items connected to the transposition of the EU Groundwater Directive.

The problems connected to waste storage and treatment shall be solved within the development and implementation of the national strategy of waste management and State programme "500-".

RECOMMENDATION 12.6:

WATER TREATMENT AND DISTRIBUTION SHOULD BE MADE MORE EFFECTIVE TO REDUCE THE (HIGH) RISK OF WATER-BORNE DISEASE.

State programme "800+" aims to improve the treatment of drinking water (iron removal devices, mainly) and water distribution. See also comment to Recommendation 7.2. The actual incidence of water-borne diseases remains low in Latvia.

RECOMMENDATION 12.7:

NEW LEGISLATION SHOULD INCLUDE STANDARDS ON PARTICULATE MATTER (PM10) AND LAY DOWN A METHODOLOGY FOR PM10 MONITORING.

The demands concerning PM10 and PM2.5 are included in the Regulations of Cabinet of Ministers No.219 "On Air Quality" of 15 June 1999. Monitoring and technology procedures will be drafted by State Hydrometeorological Agency.

RECOMMENDATION 12.8:

THE SELECTION OF EQUIPMENT FOR THE MODERNIZED AIR QUALITY MONITORING NETWORK SHOULD BE RECONSIDERED, IN VIEW OF INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AND THE EQUIPMENT'S COST-EFFECTIVENESS.

A reconsideration of the selection of equipment was not undertaken.