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### National ordinary courts

#### Latvia

This section provides you with information on the organisation of courts of general jurisdiction in Latvia.

#### Courts of general jurisdiction: introduction

In Latvia, judicial power is exercised by **city and district courts**, **regional courts**, the **Supreme Court** and the **Constitutional Court** (and, in states of emergency or during war, military courts), of which the courts of general jurisdiction are the city and district courts, the regional courts and the Supreme Court.

**Civil and criminal proceedings** in Latvia can be heard in these courts, which are divided into **three tiers**:

city or district courts (*rajonu (pilsētu) tiesas*);

regional courts (*apgabaltiesas*);

the Department of Civil Cases (*Civillietu departaments*) and the Department of Criminal Cases (*Krimināllietu departaments*) of the Supreme Court (*Augstākās tiesa*).

Their territorial jurisdiction is laid down in the Decision [on courts, their territorial jurisdiction and location](#) (*Lēmums par tiesām, darbības teritorijām un atrašanās vietām*).

#### City and district courts and their territorial jurisdiction

| No | Court   | Administrative territories      |
|----|---|---------------------------------|
| 1. | Daugavpils Court ( <i>Daugavpils tiesa</i> )            | 1.1 Augšdaugava municipality    |
|    |   | 1.2 City of Daugavpils          |
|    |   | 1.3 Krāslava municipality       |
|    |   | 1.4 Līvāni municipality         |
|    |   | 1.5 Preiļi municipality         |
| 2. | Kurzeme District Court ( <i>Kurzemes rajona tiesa</i> ) | 2.1 Dienvidkurzeme municipality |
|    |   | 2.2 Kuldīga municipality        |
|    |   | 2.3 City of Liepāja             |
|    |   | 2.4 Saldus municipality         |
|    |   | 2.5 Talsi municipality          |
|    |   | 2.6 City of Ventspils           |
|    |   | 2.7 Ventspils municipality      |
| 3. | Rēzekne Court ( <i>Rēzeknes tiesa</i> )                 | 3.1 Balvi municipality          |
|    |   | 3.2 Ludza municipality          |
|    |   | 3.3 Rēzekne municipality        |
|    |   | 3.4 City of Rēzekne             |
| 4. | Riga District Court ( <i>Rīgas rajona tiesa</i> )       | 4.1 Ādaži municipality          |
|    |   | 4.2 City of Jūrmala             |
|    |   | 4.3 Ķekava municipality         |
|    |   | 4.4 Mārupe municipality         |
|    |   | 4.5 Olaine municipality         |
|    |   | 4.6 Ropaži municipality         |
|    |   | 4.7 Salaspils municipality      |
|    |   | 4.8 Saulkrasti municipality     |
|    |   | 4.9 Sigulda municipality        |
| 5. | Vidzeme District Court ( <i>Vidzemes rajona tiesa</i> ) | 5.1 Alūksne municipality        |
|    |   | 5.2 Cēsis municipality          |
|    |   | 5.3 Gulbene municipality        |
|    |   | 5.4 Limbaži municipality        |
|    |   | 5.5 Madona municipality         |
|    |   | 5.6 Smiltene municipality       |
|    |   | 5.7 Valka municipality          |
|    |   | 5.8 Valmiera municipality       |
|    |   | 5.9 Varakļāni municipality      |
| 6. | Zemgale District Court ( <i>Zemgales rajona tiesa</i> ) | 6.1 Aizkraukle municipality     |
|    |   | 6.2 Bauska municipality         |
|    |   | 6.3 Dobeles municipality        |
|    |   | 6.4 Jelgava municipality        |
|    |   | 6.5 City of Jelgava             |

|  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
|  | 6.6 Jēkabpils municipality |
|  | 6.7 Ogre municipality      |
|  | 6.8 Tukums municipality    |

The territorial jurisdiction of Riga City Court is the administrative territory of the City of Riga.

The territorial jurisdiction of the Economic Court is the whole of the territory of the Republic of Latvia.

| Territorial jurisdiction of Regional Courts |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| No  | Territorial jurisdiction of the Regional Court                       | City or district courts  |
| 1.  | Kurzeme Regional Court ( <i>Kurzemes apgabaltiesa</i> )              | 1. Kurzeme District Court  |
| 2.  | Latgale Regional Court ( <i>Latgales apgabaltiesa</i> )              | 2.1 Daugavpils Court<br>2.2 Rēzekne Court  |
| 3.  | Riga Regional Court ( <i>Rīgas apgabaltiesa</i> )                    | 3.1 Riga City Court ( <i>Rīgas pilsētas tiesa</i> )<br>3.2 Riga District Court<br>3.3 Economic Court |
| 4.  | Vidzeme Regional Court ( <i>Vidzemes apgabaltiesa</i> )              | 4. Vidzeme District Court  |
| 5.  | Zemgale Regional Court ( <i>Zemgales apgabaltiesa</i> )              | 5. Zemgale District Court  |
| 6.  | Administrative Regional Court ( <i>Administratīvā apgabaltiesa</i> ) | 6.1 Administrative District Court ( <i>Administratīvā rajona tiesa</i> )                             |

**Administrative proceedings** are heard by

the administrative district court (courthouses located in Riga, Jelgava, Liepāja, Rēzekne and Valmiera)

the administrative Regional Court

the Department of Administrative Cases (*Administratīvo lietu departaments*) of the Supreme Court.

The territorial jurisdiction of the **Administrative Regional Court** and the **Administrative District Court** is the whole of the administrative territory of Latvia. The

Administrative District Court has five courthouses, one in each judicial region, i.e. one each in Riga, Jelgava, Rēzekne, Valmiera and Liepāja.

**Territorial jurisdiction of the Administrative District Court's courthouses**

| No | Courthouse  | Administrative territories  |
|----|---|---|
| 1. | Riga courthouse of the Administrative District Court    | 1.1 Ādaži municipality<br>1.2 City of Jūrmala<br>1.3 Ķekava municipality<br>1.4 Mārupe municipality<br>1.5 Ogre municipality<br>1.6 Olaine municipality<br>1.7 City of Riga<br>1.8 Ropaži municipality<br>1.9 Salaspils municipality<br>1.10 Saulkrasti municipality<br>1.11 Sigulda municipality |
| 2. | Jelgava courthouse of the Administrative District Court | 2. Aizkraukle municipality<br>2.2 Bauska municipality<br>2.3 Dobele municipality<br>2.4 Jelgava municipality<br>2.5 City of Jelgava<br>2.6 Jēkabpils municipality<br>2.7 Tukums municipality  |
| 3. | Rēzekne courthouse of the Administrative District Court | 3. Augšdaugava municipality<br>3.2 Balvi municipality<br>3.3 City of Daugavpils<br>3.4 Krāslava municipality<br>3.5 Līvāni municipality<br>3.6 Ludza municipality<br>3.7 Preiļi municipality<br>3.8 Rēzekne municipality<br>3.9 City of Rēzekne   |
|    |   | 4. Alūksne municipality<br>4.2 Cēsis municipality   |

|    |  |                                |
|----|--|--------------------------------|
| 4. | Valmiera courthouse of the Administrative District Court | 4.3 Gulbene municipality       |
|    |  | 4.4 Limbaži municipality       |
|    |  | 4.5 Madona municipality        |
|    |  | 4.6 Smiltene municipality      |
|    |  | 4.7 Valka municipality         |
|    |  | 4.8 Valmiera municipality      |
|    |  | 4.9 Varakļāni municipality     |
| 5. | Liepāja courthouse of the Administrative District Court  | 5. Dienvidkurzeme municipality |
|    |  | 5.2 Kuldīga municipality       |
|    |  | 5.3 City of Liepāja            |
|    |  | 5.4 Saldus municipality        |
|    |  | 5.5 Talsi municipality         |
|    |  | 5.6 Ventspils municipality     |
|    |  | 5.7 City of Ventspils          |

#### Jurisdiction by subject-matter

Pursuant to the [Law on criminal procedure](#) (*Kriminālprocesa likums*), a city or district court hears all criminal proceedings as the court of first instance.

Riga City Court has jurisdiction as court of first instance over criminal proceedings in which the case files refer to matters of State secrecy. In city or district courts, criminal proceedings are heard by a single judge. If the criminal proceedings are particularly complex, the president of the court of first instance may determine that the case is to be tried by a panel of three of that court's judges.

A ruling of a district or city court appealed against under the full appeals procedure (*apelācija*) is considered by a regional court as the appellate court.

An appeal in cassation (*kasācija*), on a point of law, against a decision by any lower court is heard by the Criminal Cases Department of the Supreme Court.

Criminal appeals, whether full appeals or cassation appeals, are heard by a panel of judges.

Pursuant to the [Law on civil procedure](#) (*Civilprocesa likuma*) proceedings are considered at first instance by a district or city court.

Riga City Court examines cases in which the files refer to matters of State secrecy and cases regarding the protection of patent rights, plant variety rights, the topography of semiconductor products, designs, trademarks, certification marks and geographical indications, along with cases on copyright and related rights, the protection of the *sui generis* rights of database makers and proceedings concerning the protection of trade secrets from illegal acquisition, use and disclosure. If the case under consideration involves a claim relating to a claim in a case which is within the jurisdiction of either Riga City Court, or a district or city court, or even a counterclaim before a district or city court that is within the jurisdiction of Riga City Court, it is up to Riga City Court to consider the case.

Pursuant to the [Law on patents](#) (*Patentu likums*), Riga City Court hears the following cases concerning the legal protection of inventions in civil proceedings, as court of first instance:

cases concerning the restoration of rights to a patent;

cases concerning the declaration of a patent as invalid;

cases concerning the right of prior use;

cases concerning illegal use of a patent (infringement of a patent);

cases where infringement of a patent is found to be null and void;

cases concerning the granting of a licence, the contractual provisions of a licence or compliance with those provisions;

cases concerning the right to compensation for the inability to use an invention publicly.

Pursuant to the [Law on designs](#) (*Dizainparaugu likums*), Riga City Court hears the following disputes concerning the legal protection of designs as court of first instance:

disputes over the recognition of rights to a design;

disputes over a finding that the registration of a design is invalid;

disputes over illegal use of a design (infringement of a design);

disputes over the granting of a licence, the contractual provisions of a licence or compliance with those provisions.

Cases concerning rights subject to a dispute examined by the Industrial Property Appeals Board are considered by Riga City Court.

Riga City Court issues enforcement orders for acts of the Council, the Commission or the European Central Bank pursuant to Article 299 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

Cases **regarding the submission of an opinion** to a foreign court in cases **concerning a child being illegally transferred** across the border to a foreign country or being kept in a foreign country, where the child's place of residence is in Latvia, are examined by Riga City Court.

Cases **concerning a child being illegally transferred** across the border to Latvia or being kept in Latvia, where the child's place of residence is in another country, are examined by Riga City Court.

District or city courts also hear **land registry cases**. In 2019, as part of the optimisation of the courts system, district or city courts also appointed 72 land registry division judges, who maintained their specialisation.

Riga Regional Court has jurisdiction as court of first instance over civil proceedings in which the case files refer to a matter of State secrecy. In the court of first instance, civil cases are heard by a single judge, whereas on appeal (full appeal or appeal in cassation) they are heard by a panel.

Parties to the case may **file an appeal** against the first-instance court's judgment (or ancillary judgment), but the prosecutor may only issue an extraordinary appeal in accordance with the procedures set out in this section, except against judgments which are not, by law, subject to appeal.

The first-instance court judgment made on the basis of the provisions of Chapter 30.4 of the Law on civil procedure and the judgment (ancillary judgment) of the appellate instance court may be appealed by the parties on a point of law under the **cassation procedure**, but the prosecutor may only file an extraordinary cassation appeal.

**Cases concerning administrative infringements** are heard by district or city courts and regional courts having jurisdiction in civil and criminal matters.

Pursuant to the [Latvian Law on administrative accountability](#) (*Latvijas Administratīvās atbildības likums*), a decision adopted by a higher authority may be challenged in a district or city court. A ruling by the judge of a district or city court may be appealed to a regional court, if the Latvian Code of administrative infringements explicitly provides for this. A ruling of an appellate court in administrative infringement proceedings may not be appealed and takes effect on the day it is handed down.

Pursuant to the [Law on administrative procedure](#) (*Administratīvā procesa likums*), administrative proceedings are heard at first instance in a courthouse of the Administrative District Court, unless the law provides otherwise. If proceedings are heard in the Administrative District Court as court of first instance, and

that court needs to verify information relating to a matter of State secrecy, the proceedings are heard in the courthouse of the Administrative District Court in Riga. If the law provides that administrative proceedings are to be heard at first instance by the Administrative Regional Court or the Administrative Cases Department of the Supreme Court rather than by the Administrative District Court, the relevant application is to be submitted to the Administrative Regional Court or the Administrative Cases Department of the Supreme Court as the case may be. A party to administrative proceedings may lodge a full appeal against a judgment or ancillary judgment of the court of first instance, except if the law provides that the judgment cannot be appealed, or must be appealed in cassation. An Administrative District Court judgment that has not yet taken effect may be appealed before the Administrative Regional Court. A party to administrative proceedings may lodge an appeal in cassation against a judgment or ancillary judgment of the appellate court if the court has infringed substantive or procedural rules or has exceeded its remit during the proceedings. In the court of first instance, administrative proceedings are heard by a single judge or a panel of judges, whereas in a court of appeal – full appeal or appeal in cassation – they are heard by a panel.

The **Supreme Court** comprises the Department of Civil Cases, the Department of Criminal Cases and the Department of Administrative Cases. The Department of Civil Cases, the Department of Criminal Cases and the Department of Administrative Cases of the Supreme Court are the cassation bodies in all cases heard by district or city courts and regional courts, and are the bodies of first instance in cases involving decisions of the Council of the State Audit Office (*Valsts kontroles padome*) adopted in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 55 of the Law on the State Audit Office (*Valsts kontroles likums*). In the Supreme Court's Departments, cases are heard by panels composed of three judges or, in certain cases prescribed in law, in extended composition.

#### Legal databases

##### Name and URL of database

[Latvian National Courts Portal](#)

[E-services website of the Latvian courts](#)

[Website of the Supreme Court](#)

##### Is access to the database free of charge?

Yes, access is **free of charge**.

##### Contents of the database in brief

The Latvian National Courts Portal provides general up-to-date information about courts in Latvia.

The Latvian Courts e-services website allows the user to access a database of anonymised court judgments, follow the progress of judicial proceedings electronically, file an e-claim to a court, calculate the cost of judicial proceedings and service payments using a fee and duty calculator, receive and fill in e-forms, and access other court e-services.

The Supreme Court website contains an archive of case-law rulings providing access to recent Supreme Court rulings and collections of case-law. The information can be found in the section Judikatūra ('Case-law').

##### Background

The information published in the Latvian National Courts Portal and the Supreme Court rulings and collections of case-law published in the portal of the Supreme Court are currently available only in Latvian.

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