

**Analytical Report PHARE RAXEN_CC
Minority Education**

RAXEN_CC National Focal Point Latvia

Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies

Minority Education
in Latvia

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1. Executive Summary

Minority education in Latvia has been closely tied to the reestablishment of the role of Latvian as the state language and the requirement that all residents should be proficient in the state language. The legacy of the Soviet Union in the schooling system, combined with the large minority population share, has complicated the task of finding the optimal solution to education reform. The aim of the first decade of reforms have largely focused on the language of instruction at schools and the desirable ratio between state and minority languages, and has proven to be a sensitive and even painful issue for both minorities and the majority.

The Latvian legislation and binding international documents establish a liberal democratic framework, including human rights guarantees. Legislative provisions on minority rights, although a contentious issue, have developed progressively since the early 1990s, largely as a result of international interaction and the desire of political leaders to join the European Union and NATO. Latvian legislation concerning minority education has developed gradually, starting in 1995, and has been aimed at establishing the mandatory inclusion of teaching not only of Latvian as a subject in itself, but also teaching of subjects in Latvian. The rationale for this government priority was ostensibly to ensure the competitiveness of minority students in higher education and the labour market, but it is clear that the policy equally stems from a definition of social integration on the basis of the state language and the strengthening of the position of Latvian throughout Latvia's society. Two education laws adopted in 1998 and 1999 respectively have formed the basis for the elaboration of a minority education programme. The primary school reform included the elaboration of acceptable models to be implemented starting in 1999 that entailed a gradual introduction of Latvian or bilingual classes in Russian language schools, while retaining a significant amount of teaching time in Russian. More contentious has been the secondary school reform, which is to be implemented in September 2004. Ambiguities in the laws, lack of information on the elaboration process and a lack of effective participation by minorities in the elaboration of government plans and programmes (as well as political instrumentalisation of the issue) have created an atmosphere of distrust among the minorities towards government policies. 2003 saw some major developments – including the official establishment of a more benign than the expected 60-40 proportion between the state and minority language of instruction in secondary schools, but also the first large-scale anti-reform public protests. The latest developments include the move towards establishing the proportion in the Education Law itself, instead of doing this in ministry or government regulations only.

The practice of minority schooling at the moment includes a large number of Russian language schools making a transition to bilingual education and a small number of other minority schools, practicing a mix of methods, but including the language of the minority as well as the state language as languages of instruction. Minority schools as such had been suppressed by the Soviet Union and were re-established in Latvia around independence. However, fewer than 1,500 pupils attend these schools, while approximately 100,000 go to Russian language schools, whose basis for establishment was not that of minority schools. Rather, they were a regular form of school during the Soviet period. It is therefore logical that

the education reform has been concerned with the Russian language schools. As the implementation of the bilingual reforms is underway, various surveys of the preparedness of schools and pupils for the transition have been made. By 2003, it appears that most schools have successfully increased teaching in the Latvian language, but there are still reports of serious shortcomings and lack of appropriate assistance in the implementation of the reforms. Finally, a special issue in Latvia that warrants state attention is the problem of education of Romani children. Despite the small number of children concerned (Roma is a traditional but small minority in Latvia), the failure of the system so far to ensure adequate education of this minority has led to dramatic problems of illiteracy, inadequate education and extremely high unemployment.

The diversity of Latvian society also ensures diversity in practice. There are several successful minority and Russian language schools in Riga, where many resources are centred. However, an outstanding example of multi-lingual and multi-cultural education while achieving high academic standards is provided by the Krāslava Varavīksne skola in the eastern part of Latvia.

In conclusion, the overview shows that progress in elaborating forms of minority education has been made, albeit tensions over both goals and means remain. In order to ensure a less conflictual and more optimal continuation of the reform process the state should ensure adequate and effective participation by minorities. The ratification of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities is urgently needed and could provide the constructive basis for internal dialogue on minority rights issues facing the country. A specific need includes the elaboration of a state action plan to provide adequate education for Romani children with the additional aim of eliminating segregation.

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3. Introduction

If one takes Latvia's regained independence in 1991 as a starting point, minority education in Latvia had a rather unusual point of departure. First, although always multi-ethnic, the ethnic composition of the state had changed dramatically over the post-war period and in the 1989 census Latvians represented only 52% of the population (compared to 77% in 1935), while the largest minority – Russians – were the next largest group at 34%. In the last census conducted in 2000, the Latvians amounted to 58%, the Russians to 30%, the Belorussians to 4%, Ukrainians and Poles each to about 2,5%, Lithuanians to 1,4%, Jews to less than half a percent, Roma to 0,3% and Germans and Estonians to even smaller figures.¹ In any case, around 40% of Latvia's population are minorities, while in the large cities – including Riga, the capital – Latvians are actually a numerical minority. The issue of minority schooling – language and identity in a new set of social and political conditions – is thus extremely salient.

Second, the independent Latvian state inherited from the Soviet system a segregated schooling system, in which Russians and other minorities attended schools with Russian as language of instruction, while Latvians went to Latvian schools, but where Russian was a mandatory part of the curriculum. As a result, at independence the largest minority language – Russian – had in fact a more prominent place in schooling than the newly re-established state language – and the language of the majority – Latvian. In 1991, most Latvians were bilingual Latvian- and Russian-speakers, while Russians and other minorities living in Latvia generally did not speak Latvian. On the other hand, other minority groups – Polish, Ukrainian, Belorussian and Jewish – did not have access to education in the language of their ethnicity, since they had been subject to the same policy of Russification as had the titular ethnic group. Only around independence were minority schools re-established (they had existed in independent Latvia before World War II) —Polish, Jewish, Ukrainian and Estonian at first, to be joined by a Belorussian and a Lithuanian school some three-four years later.²

This asymmetrical point of departure with instruction languages entails that if one sees the position of languages as a zero-sum game, then any reforms strengthening the state language in schools can be perceived as a lessening of the role of a minority language. On the other hand, Latvian was established as the only state language (and social integration policy largely focused on strengthening the position of the Latvian language and improving Latvian language skills among the population) and in order to participate fully in the evolving processes of the re-established state, it is clear that minority education would have to be complemented by the teaching of and in Latvian. The debates around the minority education reforms in Latvia reflect this main focus on the language of instruction, at least in the Russian language schools, and the definition of an appropriate content for a minority education programme has taken second seat.

¹ Latvijas 2000. gada tautas skaitīšanas rezultāti [Results of the 2000 Population and Housing Census in Latvia] (2002), Rīga: Latvijas Republikas centrālās statistikas pārvalde, p.13.

² Apine, I. et. al. (2001) Etnopolitika Latvijā, [Ethnopolitics in Latvia], Rīga, SFL, p. 14.

The following report will first describe the main legislation relating to minority education in Latvia and then make an overview over the policies followed since the independence of the country. An attempt is made to present the differing views on education reform and the concerns of minority representatives, as publicly expressed. The actual situation of schools with minority education programmes is then described, focusing on the most numerous Russian language schools, now making the transition to a bilingual form of education. A brief overview of the dozen minority schools of non-Russian minorities follows. Romani education is a special case in this context and thus highlighted separately. Finally, the description ends with an example of an exceptionally successful minority school. In addition, some critical remarks are provided.

4. Legislation and Policies

4.1. LEGISLATION³

The Constitution of Latvia Article 112 states that “Everyone has the right to education. The State shall ensure that everyone may acquire primary and secondary education without charge. Primary education shall be compulsory.” Article 114 states that “Persons belonging to ethnic minorities have the right to preserve and develop their language and their ethnic and cultural minority.” However, the term minority is not defined anywhere in the legislation. Since the Constitution was amended in 2002, it also includes the provision that Latvian is the only official language, which had previously been established in statutory law only.

Latvian was proclaimed the state language in 1989 and the necessity to strengthen the position of Latvian was a priority right away, while soon the added goal of serving as the basis for integration of society developed as well.⁴ The Language Law from 1999 not only establishes Latvian as the state language, but also sets the goal of promoting the Latvian language use and development and specifies the aim to ensure “the increased influence of the Latvian language in the cultural environment of Latvia, to promote a more rapid integration

³ Latvia is bound by a number of international instruments that bear on the issue of education, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (and the Optional Protocol number one), the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education, the European Convention on Human Rights (and Protocol I, with a provision on education rights). In addition, Latvia has signed the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in 1995, but by January 2004 the parliament had not yet ratified it. However, in this overview of minority education, only the relevant domestic legislation will be described.

⁴ Silova, I. And Catlaks, G. (2001) Minority Education in Post-Soviet Latvia: Balancing the Legacies of the Past and a Vision for the Future, in: Salili, Farideh and Hoosain, Rumjahin, eds. Multicultural Education. Issues, policies and practices, Greenwich: Information Age Publishing, p.135.

of society.”⁵ It also declares the Liv⁶ language as an autochthonous language that the state is responsible for preserving. All other languages are considered foreign. On the other hand, the law’s 1st paragraph also sets as a goal the inclusion of minority representatives in the Latvian society, while observing their rights to use a native or other languages. However, neither in this law nor elsewhere in Latvian legislation is there a definition of minority – and although the term minority native language is used in this law, it is not defined. Among other things, the law sets out when and where the state language must be used, especially (but not exclusively) in the public sphere.

The Children’s Rights Protection Law, which was adopted in 1998, includes Article 11 on the rights to education and creativity. The first part of the article states “The state shall provide to all children equal rights and the possibility to acquire an education according to their abilities.” The second part reads: “A child has the right to free elementary, secondary and vocational education.” The third part deals explicitly with minority children (again not defined, however): “Children belonging to the minority nationalities of Latvia have the right to acquire education in their native language in accordance with the Education Law.”

The basic laws concerning education are the Law on Education, the Law on General Education, the Law on Professional Education, the Higher Education Law and the Law on Scientific Activities. The structure of general education, as defined by law, consists of nine years of primary education (out of which the first four years are elementary education), which is compulsory for all. After completing the nine years, pupils may choose to continue education in secondary school (three years, grade 10-12), and vocational training (two or three years) or secondary professional education (four years). The education is state-funded and available to all, as stated in the Constitution. There is also privately funded education.

The first move towards including teaching in Latvian in minority education was made in 1995, when amendments were made to the Education Law in force at the time, stipulating that at least two subjects must be taught in Latvian in primary school grades 5 through 9 and three in secondary schools (grade 10-12).⁷

A new Law on Education was adopted in 1998 and included several new provisions. Article 9 of the Law on Education deals with the Language of instruction:

Section 9. Language of Acquisition of Education

⁵ Valsts valodas likums [Official Language Law]1. panta 5. daļa, <http://pro.nais.dati.lv/naiser> (7.01.2004).

⁶ Livs are an indigenous people in Latvia, whose rights are especially protected in the Constitution and in statutory law, but whose numbers have been dwindling over time, mainly by assimilation to Latvians, to barely a few hundred who identify themselves as Livs, with estimates of only some few tens who still know the language of their ancestors.

⁷ Baltic Institute of Social Science (2002) Analysis of the Implementation of Bilingual Education, Riga, p. 12.

- (1) Education shall be acquired in the official language in State and local government education institutions.
- (2) Education may be acquired in another language:
 - 1) in private educational institutions;
 - 2) in State and local government educational institutions in which educational programmes for ethnic minorities are implemented. The Ministry of Education and Science shall specify in such educational programmes the subjects of study which are to be acquired in the official language; and
 - 3) in educational institutions specified in other laws.
- (3) In order to acquire basic or secondary education, each educatee shall learn the official language and take examinations testing his or her knowledge of the official language to the extent and in accordance with procedures prescribed by the Ministry of Education and Science.
- (4) Professional qualification examinations shall be taken in the official language.
- (5) The work required for the acquisition of an academic (bachelor's or master's) or a scientific (doctor's) degree shall be prepared and defended in the official language, except in cases provided for in other laws.
- (6) Raising of qualifications and re-qualification that is funded from the State budget or local government budgets shall be carried out in the official language.⁸

Thus, state and municipal education is in the state language, except where the minority education programmes are realised.

The Law on Education establishes that a minority education programme is one of the specialised types of education programmes in public education. (Article 38(2)1). Article 41 elaborates on these Minority education programmes, and stipulates that

- Educational programmes for ethnic minorities shall be developed by educational institutions in accordance with State educational standards on the basis of general educational programme models approved by the Ministry of Education and Science.
- Educational programmes for ethnic minorities shall include content necessary for acquisition of the relevant ethnic culture and for integration of ethnic minorities in Latvia.
- The Ministry of Education and Science shall specify the subjects of study in the education programmes for minorities which must be acquired in the official language.”

In addition, the Transitional Regulations to the Law on Education Article 9 clarify that Paragraph one and two of the Section 9 of the Education Law “*shall come into force progressively*:

- on 1 September 1999 – with respect to institutions of higher education;

⁸ <http://pro.nais.dati.lv> (translation by Translation and Terminology Centre) 07.01.2004.

- on 1 September 1999 – State and local government general educational institutions with another language for studies shall commence the implementation of educational programmes of ethnic minorities or a transition to studies in the official language; and
- on 1 September 2004 – studies in the tenth form of the State and local government and in the first academic year of the State and local government professional educational institutions studies shall be commenced only in the official language.”⁹

Thus a tension between provision of the law was built into the 1998 law itself -- providing for programmes of minority education while stating that tenth grade secondary school instruction shall be only in Latvian starting in fall of 2004. In addition, the law does not clarify what the content of the minority education programmes should be, but leaves a large measure of control to the Ministry of Education and Science.

The ambiguity of the language requirements was further increased by the adoption in 1999 of the General Education Law. This law deals explicitly with the education for pre-school, primary and secondary education (and specialised education), thus excluding higher education. Paragraph 42 of this law concerns general secondary education and provides for the possibility to combine the programme with the minority education programme, “including in it the native language of the ethnic minority, and education content related to minority identity and integration in Latvia” (unofficial translation). Although the minority education programme is included for secondary education in this law, the wording leaves it open which are the minority-related subjects and which, beyond the minority language itself, could be taught in the minority language. This specification is left to the education standard regulations, which again are elaborated by the Ministry of Education.

The Law on Vocational Education adopted in 1999 similarly included the ambiguities with regards to the possibility of minority education programmes and language of instruction starting from 1 September 2004, as stipulated in the Law on Education.

The basic education legislation adopted in the late 1990s thus does provide for minority education, but the content of the programme and the issue of the language of instruction were left unclarified (and thus without clear legal guarantees, as the opponents to the law pointed out). The argument that the General Education Law of 1999 as a special law takes precedence over the 1998 law, and therefore the fact that instruction “only” in the state language in all 10th grades by 2004 is in fact not a valid norm – frequently used as an argument by government officials and majority parliamentarians resisting calls for law amendments over several years – does not appear very straightforward.

With the previous Language Law of 1992, Latvian became the sole language of instruction in state-funded higher education. Although laws have changed, this norm has not been challenged. The 1999 Law on Higher Education combined with the 1998 Law on Education confirms that state-financed higher education institutions are subsumed under the institutions required to teach in Latvian. In contrast to the laws affecting primary and secondary

⁹ Ibid.

education, this stipulation has not been widely discussed in society. (It does, however, together with the official priority set on the proficiency in Latvian as a goal of social integration as well as the argument about state language proficiency as a prerequisite for competitiveness on the labour market reinforce the need for minority students to have high proficiency in the official language.)

It should be noted that all private educational institutions (including higher education) may provide instruction in any language. However, state and municipal funding is foreseen only for schools, which follow state accredited education plans (i.e. for language of instruction it means either in Latvian or in accordance with the government elaborated norms for minority education programmes.)

Such has been the legal basis from the end of the 1990s until 2003/2004, and government policy was aimed at proceeding with the education reform – the gradual transition to increasing the teaching in Latvian in Russian language primary schools starting in 1999, and what has come to be called the 2004 school reform: the secondary school minority programme implementation with the quite unclear requirements of official language of instruction.

The Cabinet of Minister regulations No. 463 from 2000, “Regulations on the state general secondary education standard”, was amended on 13 May 2003 by Regulation No. 260 with the provision explicitly including, for the first time in a document with higher standing than Ministry of Education instruction, the ratio of 2/5 for the minority language in 10th grade of minority education programmes, with a minimum of five subjects taught in Latvian (instead of the three subject stipulated in 1995). The regulations also specified that the state examination language starting from 2007 is Latvian.

On 19 August 2003 the Cabinet of Ministers accepted the “Regulations on the share of minority language in the professional education programmes” No. 470, similarly establishing that a minority language could be used in instruction up to 2/5 of the overall instruction. Apparently aware of potential problems with passing the amendments in parliament, the Saeima, the Cabinet of Ministers passed amendments to the Law on Education according to the Constitution Article 81 (prerogative of Cabinet of Ministers to pass laws while parliament is not in session, but which later have to be accepted by parliament).

In January 2004, controversy erupted once more as amendments to the Law on Education were passed in a second reading in parliament, which did not explicitly include the ratio of 2/5 and 3/5 for secondary schools promised by the government, but reverted to a formulation that minority language could be used only to teach the minority language itself as well as subjects related to maintaining the identity of the minority. The Minister of Education’s New Era faction in parliament had together with the other government coalition factions and one opposition party voted for the amendments in the new wording. Only after significant protests and the comments by the State President that she would return the law for review to parliament if it passed with this wording in a third reading, did the parliamentary committee on education agree to support the specific inclusion of the norms passed in the Minister of Cabinet regulation for the third and final reading. Parliament passed the amendments in the

final reading on 5 February. Although the final result thus is to guarantee the minority language role in secondary schools at a maximum of 40% of instruction, the unexpected vote in parliament by all governing coalition parties managed to stir up insecurities and disbelief in the good intentions of government policies just a few months before the 2004 reform implementation.¹⁰

4.2. POLICIES

Minority education focus has almost exclusively been on language of instruction, although the various formulations in legislation, as seen above, include statements on minority education programmes including subjects relating to the maintenance of the minority identity and culture, in addition to language. As discussed above, the role of Latvian as the state language and the language of higher non-private education has entailed a basic policy rationale for increasing Latvian language and making the transition from Russian-speaking to bilingual minority schools.

Thus the late 1990s was also an active period not just in education legislation, but also in minority education policy and structure. The Integration Department, in charge of minority education, was formed within the Ministry of Education. In 1998 the Ministry of Education elaborated – together with international experts – a “Programme for the gradual transition to instruction in the official language in secondary schools and the increase until year 2005 of the relative weight of subjects taught in the state language in programmes of basic education”, which was presented to the Cabinet of Ministers for acceptance. The concept was built on the idea that the goal was a gradual transition to Latvian as the language of instruction as the main goal of the reform. The Society Integration Concept and Programme were elaborated in 1999, confirming strengthening of the state language positions and proficiency as the main action basis for social integration.

Also in 1999, the Ministry of Education elaborated the Sample programme for minority education, including four models of varying combinations of subjects taught in Russian and in Latvian and/or bilingually. The first model involves a rapid transition to Latvian, the second model entails that most instruction is provided bilingually, the third model means starting first grade with one subject in Latvian and adding another subject each year, while the fourth model means that from first to third grade instruction is in the native language, with Latvian only being taught as a subject as such, whilst the number of subjects taught in Latvian and bilingually is to increase over the years.¹¹ Although the models were adopted only in June 1999, the minority schools were required to choose one of the models to implement already at the start of the following academic year, in September 1999. The schools were not ready for the implementation of the models, not having enough information or time even to evaluate them or learn definitions and methods of bilingual teaching. The short implementation time over the summer holidays also precluded sharing any information with

¹⁰ Diena, Ierobežo krievu valodu skolās, 23 January 2004.

¹¹ Vēbers, E. Mazākumtautību izglītība Latvijā [Minority Education in Latvia] (2001), in Ceļā uz sociālo saliedētību un labklājību, Rīga: Soros Fonds-Latvija, p. 73.

parents of the pupils.¹² When many schools declared that none of the models suited their needs, however, the alternative to elaborate their own model, which then were to be approved by the Ministry of Education and Science, was accepted.

All through the process of elaborating the minority education reforms the Ministry of Education has had the main responsibility. Although some public discussions about programmes and models were initiated in 1998/1999 and included representatives from minority schools as well as a few other minority representatives, the process of decision-making on minority education has arguably not been sufficiently transparent. There also must be stated a lack of genuine participation by minorities. However, a positive step was the establishment in February 2001 of the Advisory Council on issues of minority education at the Ministry of Education and Science. The council included ministry and other state institution representatives, municipal representatives, minority school representatives as well as some non-governmental organisations' representatives. However, some NGOs have been critical of the composition and role of the council, arguing that it is more of a rubber-stamp institution for government policies, with no real influence, because a majority of the members in fact represent state and municipal institutions – and especially since the representatives from school, the headmasters, are dependent on the ministry for their jobs. In 2003 the question of genuine participation erupted again, as the council was up for re-election and the composition of the council was an issue.

In 2002, a working group was formed at the Ministry of Education, whose aim was to elaborate a sample programme (model) for general education in minority programmes of secondary education (“Vispārējā vidējās izglītības programmas paraugs”). The sample was to specify content, class hours and procedures, implementing the Cabinet of Minister regulations on standards of education. The working group included 12 education administration representatives, administrative representatives from minority schools and 6 Ministry of Education specialists.¹³ Non-governmental representatives were not included in the work group. However, the ministry argues that consultations with non-governmental representatives took place through the presentations at the Advisory Council as well as through information on basic directions provided for public discussion on the ministry home page. Pupils and parents were not directly included in the process. In 2003, the ministry representatives responsible for the programme had meetings with all minority school headmasters to discuss the programme. Although the sample programme was finally sent directly to the minority schools in the spring of 2003, the time for discussion and proposals was brief. Various ratios of minority and state language were discussed and in early spring the Ministry of Education representatives still publicly spoke of some 30% minority language in secondary schools. The draft programme also included the requirement that all mandatory subjects be taught in the state language. However, gradually the provisions were liberalised and the 60/40 ratio of state-minority language in secondary schools was proposed, as well as

¹² Zeļčermans, B. and Rogāļeva, N. Minority Education Policies in Latvia: Who Determines Them and How? (2001) in *ibid.*, p. 83; Silova, I. From Policy Talk to Policy Action: Legitimizing Long-Term Policy Trends (2002), in *Bilingual Education in Latvia: International Expertise*, Riga: SFL.

¹³ Unpublished materials from Ministry of Education and Science (2003) *Mazākumtautību izglītības politikas raksturojums: valsts ieguldījums* [The Characterisation of Minority Education Policy: the Investment by the State], p. 2.

a choice of which subjects to be taught in which language. Although minorities had had an inadequate possibility to influence the process directly, participation through public protest actions undoubtedly this time did play a role in the government's wish to rapidly settling the issue of language ratios. In May 2003, the Ministry of Education organised seminars for headmasters and the amendments to the Cabinet of Ministers' regulations on education standards were adopted.

Beyond the goal of the reform and the discussion of the optimal language ratios, an issue of major concern has also been the preparedness of schools for the implementation of the reform. On the positive side, the government has established support and training of teachers. With the assistance of the UNDP, the ten-year National Programme for Latvian Language Training (NPLLT) was elaborated and accepted by the government in 1996. The programme has over the years, among other things, provided language courses and methodological training for teachers who will teach Latvian as a second language and, since 1999, bilingual teaching methods and development of bilingual teaching materials. At the end of 2003, some 28,000 school teachers had received language training at the NPLLT since the inception of the programme, another 3,000 bilingual methodology training, over 1,400 methodology training and in a new programme established in 2003, some smaller numbers of teacher received training in teaching specific subjects in Latvian as a second language.¹⁴ The initial financing of the programme came from UNDP, and only in 2001 did the government start to contribute state funding (in the amount of 428,000 LVL), but most funding still came from various international donors, including EU, UN, Great Britain, Canada, Sweden and the United States. In 2003, the combined budget of the NLLTP was 1,039,191 LVL (~1,700,000 Euros). The state funding share constituted less than half of the budget (41%), while 29% was EU Phare 2000 and 30% UNDP funding.

Another positive initiative in the preparation of schools for the reform has come through the non-governmental sector. An active participant in elaborating pilot projects and working on issues of bilingual education has been the Soros Foundation Latvia through its Transformation of Education programme. The Open School Project was started in 1999 and has focused not only on language in learning and teaching methods, but also on the positive values of intercultural exchange, by bringing together Latvian and Russian language schools in cooperative projects. 20 minority schools and 17 Latvian language schools have participated from various parts of the country. The programme has been realised in partnership with the Ministry of Education and the National Programme for Latvian Language Training.

Another example of using a positive incentive is the 1998 decision on salary bonus for teachers teaching in Latvian in a minority school or teaching bilingually. However, in the "carrot and stick" mix of state minority education policy, it has been argued that the process has been too heavily relying on the "stick" – coercive measures and large amounts of legislation and regulations rather than positive involvement and assistance. So, there have also been more restrictive measures. In 1996, a norm was introduced by the Ministry of Education and Science requiring all teachers who had not been educated in Latvian should be certified at the third (highest) level of state language proficiency, regardless of the actual

¹⁴ <http://www.lvavp.lv> (visited 29 February 2004).

level of proficiency necessary to perform their work. Although the ministry claimed there was sufficient time to prepare for certification and made several readjustments of deadlines to allow for more time, the final certification process deadline was 1998, with the exception of Daugavpils, where an additional year and a half was added for the implementation of the norm. In January 1999, 88 teachers from Russian schools who had been unsuccessful in passing the certification exam were dismissed. This clearly did not convince Russian educators of the reforms.¹⁵ Even recently, at the end of 2003, a proposal by some parliamentarians to make all teachers positions civil servants positions also had repressive overtones, as this would entail a requirement for Latvian citizenship and would bar existing non-citizen teachers from continuing to teach.

MINORITY CONCERNS AND OPPOSITION

Opinion polls conducted in 1998¹⁶ show that there is a large consensus among residents, including minorities, in favour of learning Latvian. However, there is wide disagreement about how to achieve this goal and what role should be left for the Russian language in minority schools. However, there have been more or less strongly heard objections to the reform ever since its inception, not to speak of rather strong scepticism regarding the goal of the reform, suspicions that reforms are ultimately aimed at the elimination of Russian in all schools.

The main political focus of opposition to the reforms proposed by the government has been the parliamentary coalition For Human Rights in a United Latvia (FHRUL), which in early 2003 split up into its three component parties the People's Harmony Party, the Socialist party and the party Equality. In the fall of 2003, a sized-down and arguably more radical FHRUL actively continued opposition to the education reform. Although the 2002 election results doubtlessly indicated a support for the pro-Russian school stance of the initial coalition, the clear association between non-governmental minority organisations and opposition politicians on the one hand, and the majority politicians difficulty or unwillingness to establish a credible alternative pro-minority voice, has entailed a politisation of the issue of education which has not helped in finding compromise solutions. On the other hand, the insufficiently accessible official reform process and contradictory signals by government and state also have not contributed to minority trust in the good will of the majority. This situation has been aggravated by the differing attitudes of the linguistically divided local media.

The most active non-governmental organisation has been the Union for Support of Schools with Russian Language Instruction (LASHOR in its Russian acronym) – established in 1996 as a public organisation, intended for parents of pupils. The organisation has sought to actively participate in the process and influence government policy. The organisation has expressed support for learning Latvian, but criticizes the process and content of the proposed

¹⁵ Silova, I. And Catlaks, G. (2001) *Minority Education in Post-Soviet Latvia: Balancing the Legacies of the Past and a Vision for the Future*, in: Salili, Farideh and Hoosain, Rumjahin, eds. *Multicultural Education. Issues, policies and practices*, Greenwich: Information Age Publishing, p 136.

¹⁶ Baltic Data House (1998) *Towards Civic society*.

reforms, proposing alternative models and larger share of Russian as language of instruction (70%) – a majority of classes should be in the native language. The organisation has also advocated larger freedom of choice by schools and municipalities in the implementation of reforms, instead of the predominant ministry role. In addition, they have issued calls for state examinations in the language of instruction of the respective subject, instead of all exams in the state language.¹⁷

In the spring of 2003 a more radical anti-2004-reform platform was established, named the “Headquarters for the Defence of the Russian Language Schools”. It unites various non-governmental organisations, individuals as well as parliamentarians (from the new FHRUL) and started to organise large-scale, visible protest actions – which was something new to the Latvian social and political scene. Its more radical positions include slogans such as “Hands Off our Russian Schools” and calls for complete freedom in the choice of language of instruction. The Headquarter activities have been controversial because of the direct involvement of politicians in protest activities with secondary school pupils and persistent rumours of financing from Moscow and alleged coordination of activities with Russia.¹⁸

Protests over the reform for secondary schools were increasing in intensity as the implementation year was approaching, and 2003 saw the first relatively large-scale protest activities. In May 2003, after an extended period of getting the legally required permit, an orderly and demonstration against the education reform – coordinated by LASHOR and the “Headquarters” – took place in Riga with an estimated number of between 6,000 and over 10,000 participants. In September, a signature collection calling for a free choice of language of instruction allegedly led to over 100,000 signatures and was presented by LASHOR to the Minister of Education Karlis Sadurskis (although some of them were later challenged by an investigation as invalid or forged). Many smaller protest events followed throughout the year.

5. Minority Schooling in Practice

In practice, there are three types of schools: Latvian schools, Russian language schools (becoming bilingual) and other minority schools. There are still schools, which are so-called two-stream, including one Latvian language section and one Russian language section (with bilingual education). In 2003/4 there were 1046 schools in Latvia with a total of some 327,000 pupils.

The Number of General and Special Schools and Pupils in 2003/2004

¹⁷ Pimenov, I O perekhode obrazovaniya v Latviyskoy Respublike na gosudarstvennyy (latyshkiy) yazyk [On the Transition of Education in the Latvian Republic to the Official (Latvian) Language], 17 July 2003, unpublished position paper; and LAŠOR atzinums par Visparējās vidējās izglītības programmas paraugu [LASHOR Evaluation of the General Secondary School education Programme Sample], Unpublished document, 8 May 2003).

¹⁸ Šabanovs, Aleksandrs “Stābs” [Headquarters], Diena (Sestdiena supplement), 21 February 2004, pp. 10-15.

of instruction.¹⁹ (In the last few years school enrolment is actually decreasing in all categories of schools, due to demographic changes. The Russian language school enrolment is decreasing more rapidly than the others, though.) The principal reasons for the decreasing number of pupils in Russian language schools are emigration, the decreasing birth rate of ethnic Russians and the willingness of parents to send their children to Latvian language and non-Russian minority schools. In 2003/2004, around 8% of pupils of schools and classes with Latvian language of instruction were minority representatives.²⁰ The trend that increasing numbers of Russian children were sent to Latvian schools was noted in the mid- to late-1990s, but the Ministry of Education actually has been discouraging this trend by setting up restrictions for accepting Russian-speaking children into Latvian schools (such as fluency in Latvian by one of the parents, speaking Latvian at home, etc.).²¹

Yet, in academic year 2003/4, almost 100,000 pupils attended general full-time Russian language schools or classes, while only 1,300 pupils attended other minority schools. Thus, despite the trend for increased attendance in the minority schools the vast majority of non-Russian minorities attend Russian language schools. 15% of pupils attending Russian language schools are non-Russian minorities.²² These figures are explicable partly by the relatively recent formation of national minority schools, but also with the fact that many non-Russian minorities' native language is Russian.

According to data collected by the Ministry of Education and Science, in 2002 most (42%) minority language schools implemented the bilingual education model which stipulates the gradual increase of subjects taught in Latvian, starting from one subject in the first grade. 15% of schools implement the bilingual education model teaching most subjects in Latvian and some subjects bilingually. In other schools (13%) most subjects are taught mainly bilingually and some subjects - in minority language. The less popular model (11%) is teaching all subjects in minority language only at elementary school with gradual increase of subjects taught in Latvian and bilingually at primary education level.²³ 19% of schools (predominantly the non-Russian minority schools) have elaborated their own education model observing the Ministry's defined standards of language use.

Data show that the majority of residents, including minorities, support the bilingual education approach,²⁴ and it has been less criticised publicly compared with the 2004 education reform. According to the Ministry of Education and Science, there has been no decrease in the level

¹⁹ The number of students being taught in Latvian increased from 60.3% in 1995/1996 to 72.3% in 2001/2002, with a little decline to 69.8% in 2002/2003. In the 2002/2003 school year, 74.2% of first-graders began studies in Latvian. See: www.am.gov.lv .

²⁰ www.izm.gov.lv.

²¹ Silova, I. And Catlaks, G. (2001) *Minority Education in Post-Soviet Latvia: Balancing the Legacies of the Past and a Vision for the Future*, in: Salili, Farideh and Hoosain, Rumjahin, eds. *Multicultural Education. Issues, policies and practices*, Greenwich: Information Age Publishing, p. 142.

²² www.izm.gov.lv.

²³ See: www.izm.gov.lv; Elmārs Vēbers, "Reform of Bilingual Education," in *A Passport to Social Cohesion and Economic Prosperity. Report on Education in Latvia 2000, (2001)*, Riga: SFL, pp. 77-87.

²⁴ *Towards a Civic Society 2000/2001*, p. 104. According to the survey, 81% of citizens and 74% of non-citizens support bilingual education.

of knowledge of pupils in minority schools.²⁵ However, many of headmasters and teachers are concerned that bilingual education will result in a lower quality of education and knowledge of subjects for pupils.²⁶ Minority representatives are also concerned that education reform and bilingual education may have a negative impact on the ethnic identity of pupils as well as their language skills in the mother tongue.²⁷

Although in a 2002 survey minority school teachers evaluated their own readiness for bilingual teaching at the middle or the highest level,²⁸ insufficient Latvian language skills still represent a serious obstacle for teachers' work. More than one third of minority language schoolteachers evaluated their Latvian language skills at the lowest level, and only ten% at the highest level (even though teachers in public schools are required to have certified the highest level of proficiency in the state language). Other problems outlined by the teachers include insufficient access to methodology and materials about bilingual education.

In the academic year 2003/4 there were 112 Russian language secondary schools, 48 secondary schools with Latvian and Russian language of instruction, and seven non-Russian minority secondary schools.²⁹ According to the Ministry of Education and Science, in 2002 62% of minority language secondary schools taught subjects in two languages, and therefore were already prepared for the transition to predominantly Latvian language of instruction starting from 2004. Other schools (27%) teach three subjects in Latvian, while 11% of schools already teach subjects in Latvian.³⁰ At the same time, many representatives of civil society and schools have been more critical about the readiness of schools for the reform. For example, in 2002, independent researchers have estimated that among the 50 schools investigated, 16% were ready for the transition, and that 40% could manage with some difficulties, while 44 were not ready.³¹

According to 2002 survey data, around half of the minority parents, headmasters and teachers support the transition to Latvian as the language of instruction in 2004 at the secondary level, while the other half opposed it.³² At the same time, no significant public protests from

²⁵ EU Accession Monitoring Programme, Monitoring the EU Accession Process: Minority Protection, Volume I (2002), Budapest: Open Society Institute.

²⁶ For example, 51% of teachers and more than half of minority school headmasters believe that pupils' knowledge in specific subject areas decreases as a result of bilingual teaching; 42% of teachers and 54% of headmasters concluded that students' understanding of issues discussed by teachers decreases; and around one third of teachers and headmasters were concerned with a decrease in pupils' attention and interest in subjects. Analysis of the Implementation of Bilingual Education (2002), p. 39.

²⁷ Around one third of teachers and almost half of headmasters think that students' Russian language skills decrease as a result of bilingual teaching. See Analysis of the Implementation of Bilingual Education (2002).

²⁸ Baltic Institute of Social Sciences (2002), Analysis of the Implementation of Bilingual Education, Riga.

²⁹ www.izm.gov.lv; data collected by the Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies.

³⁰ www.izm.gov.lv.

³¹ Analysis of the Implementation of Bilingual Education (2002), Riga: Baltic Institute of Social Science.

³² Analysis of the Implementation of Bilingual Education, p. 20. According to another survey, 86% of ethnically Latvian citizens, 55% of ethnically Russian citizens and 47% of non-citizens support the

minority language schools' administration against education reform have been observed. For example, in October 2003, the Department of Education, Youth and Sports of the Riga City Council referred to the information provided by minority language schools about their readiness to the reform. According to the Department, most Russian language schools in Riga are planning to be ready for implementation of the education reform by 2004. However, many schools expressed the continued need of Latvian language courses for teachers, methodology courses and teaching materials. Most schools were also interested in avoiding the teaching of exact disciplines in Latvian as much as possible.³³

5.2. OTHER MINORITY SCHOOLS

In 2003/4 there were 12 national minority schools³⁴: six Polish schools (three secondary, two primary and one elementary school), two Jewish schools (one secondary and one primary school), one Ukrainian secondary school, one Belorussian primary school, one Lithuanian secondary school and one Estonian secondary school.³⁵ There were also minority Sunday schools and classes. The largest number of schools or classes with minority language as the basic language of instruction is in the capital Riga (72 Latvian, 79 Russian, eleven two-stream, two Polish, two Jewish, one Ukrainian, one Belorussian, one Lithuanian and one Estonian), and other largest cities and districts with the high percentage of minority populations.

There are various models of language use in curriculum of non-Russian minority schools. There are national minority schools and classes where subjects are taught mainly in Latvian, in minority language and bilingually. In some schools, Russian is used.

The first minority school in Latvia (and the first Jewish school in the USSR) was the Š. Dubnova Riga Hebrew Secondary School, which was established in 1989. The main language of instruction is Russian, but the curriculum includes courses in Hebrew and Jewish history and culture. The school also teaches Latvian language and culture. 275 children attend the school which has 38 teachers.

Another pioneer and one of the best known minority schools in Latvia is the Riga's Polish Secondary School named after Ita Kozakeviča, which was informally started in 1988, when Polish classes were initiated in Riga Secondary school No. 3. In 1991 the Polish Secondary

switch to Latvian as the language of instruction in secondary schools; 42% of non-citizens are against it, Towards a Civic Society 2000/2001.

³³ Diena, 22 October 2003.

³⁴ There is no definition of national minority schools in Latvia. According to the minority primary education programme developed by the Ministry of Education and Science, state-funded schools may elaborate their own education model observing the Ministry's defined standards. Thus far, predominantly non-Russian minority schools have elaborated such models, which promote the ethnic identity of students.

³⁵ See: www.izm.gov.lv; www.am.gov.lv; data collected by the Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies; Vēbers, E. (2000) Reform of Bilingual Education, in A Passport to Social Cohesion and Economic Prosperity. Report on Education in Latvia, Riga: SFL, pp. 77-87.

School acquired its own building. The study process begins in the kindergarten, which is part of the school. The kindergarten teachers are from Latvia and Poland, and they speak Latvian, Polish and English. Although many children start school with little or no previous knowledge of Polish, already in elementary school all study subjects are taught in the Polish language. Latvian language is taught three hours a week. In primary school subjects are taught bilingually. In both primary and secondary school the language of instruction is divided equally between Latvian and Polish. Russian is taught as a second foreign language. Among the 56 teachers working at the school, there are also teachers from Poland. The school has contacts with all Latvian Polish associations and other Polish schools. The pupils are provided with the possibility to test their Latvian language skills by studying in Latvian schools on a short-term basis.

Over time, other schools were established. An overview of all twelve non-Russian minority schools in Latvia can be found in the Appendix.

5.3. EDUCATION OF ROMANI CHILDREN

There is no Roma education that follows a minority education programme, and the issue is dramatically different from the education of other minority groups. Education indicators for Roma are dramatically lower than for other ethnic groups. In 2000, of the Romani people who were aged 15 or above, almost one quarter had not completed a fourth-grade education (compared to 1,6% among Latvians and 2,4% among Russians). If one includes the figures for those who have graduated grade 4, the percentage of Roma in Latvia who have no education beyond 4th grade rises to about one half. The illiteracy rate is disproportionately high among the Roma.³⁶

In 2002/2003 there were approximately 1,600 Romani children registered as attending school – more than 900 with instruction in Latvian and more than 600 with instruction in Russian. Since 1997, special classes for Roma children have been established in seven cities and towns of Latvia.³⁷ However, with the exception of the Riga State Technicum class established in 2001 (which also includes extracurricular Romani musical and cultural activities), because of the status of a special correctional education institution the children are de facto segregated from other school children even when they attend one and the same school. Although the goal is allegedly to help the Romani children integrate into the regular classes over time, in reality no such movement has yet been observed. These special classes are exclusively in Latvian, and only rarely, like in the Ventpils Evening High School, do teachers speak any Romani.

³⁶ Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies, *The Situation of Roma in Latvia* (2003), p.19 (based on figures from the results from the 2000 national census in Latvia).

³⁷ In Sabile, Talsi, Tukums, Riga, Kuldiga, Ventpils and Jelgava. The overall number of students is 225. *The Situation of Roma in Latvia* (2003), Riga: Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies, p.24.

6. Good Practices

6.1. KRĀSLAVA SECONDARY SCHOOL “VARAVĪKSNE”

The school was started in 1989 as the Krāslava secondary School No. 3, and in the 1993/94 academic year it introduced a concept of intercultural dialogue in a multicultural school. In 1995 it adopted its present name Krāslavas Varavīksnes vidusskola (Krāslava Rainbow Secondary School) and has since become known in Latvia for its successful realisation of bilingual education. The aim of the school programme was to encourage parents' and pupils' interest in other cultures, to promote respect and tolerance, and to foster society integration through knowledge of Latvian culture and language. In addition, the quality of the school and its approximately 80 teachers is validated by a high participation and excellent results in the yearly national competitions of best pupils in various disciplines.

Children belonging to eleven different ethnic backgrounds – Latvian, Russian, Belorussian, Polish and others – attend the school. In contrast to the minority schools elsewhere in the country, the Krāslava School is attended by almost the same amount of Russian and Latvian pupils (361 and 348, respectively). Since 1999 the secondary school has followed the second model of minority education – teaching mostly bilingually, but putting an emphasis on the learning of Latvian while retaining a strong ethnic identity – and Latvian, Russian, Belorussian are used as languages of instruction. At the same time, the school prides itself at teaching seven different languages and preparing its pupils in English, French, and German as well.

Varavīksne School is actively involved with international contacts, both American and European. Within the American Field Service Program the Varavīksne School has hosted 25 visiting pupils from different countries since 1996, thus encouraging the local pupils to learn about countries beyond Latvia as well.

In 2002 the Krāslava Varavīksne Secondary School received official recognition by being awarded the Society Integration Award in recognition of its achievements in the field of integration.

7. Conclusions and critical remarks

Minority schooling in Latvia has evolved over the first decade of independence. Even though significant progress has been made towards a solution adequate to the new needs of the state and its residents, tensions over the goals of reform and methods of implementation run still high.

Reforms especially intended for Russian language schools were initiated in 1998, and a liberalisation of the state language requirements has taken place over time. From an initial concept of transition to Latvian as the sole language of instruction, de facto a bilingual education programme has been elaborated. However, the focus on the ratio of languages of instruction has led to an ignoring of the quality and content of the education. Regardless of criticisms of one or other proposed language ratio, the lack of a scientific consensus on the amount of native language instruction necessary for the maintenance of identity and language proficiency makes it impossible to reach a solution. Instead of the proposed goal of the reform defined in terms of language ratio, the most serious criticism of the reform process should be directed at the lack of significant participation by the minorities themselves, as well as the overly politicised positions of some proponents and opponents of the reforms. Despite frequent reiterations of a wish for dialogue, the government and majority parliamentary party have not shown a real interest in knowing or understanding the point of view of the minorities. However, the general evolution of democracy and gradually increasing understanding of pluralism, participation and minority rights have played a role in the shift away from a concept of transition to Latvian as the only language of instruction in public secondary schools. Issues connected to the implementation of the reform and the readiness and willingness of minority schools to make the full transition to bilingual education as planned by the government remain, but the legal guarantee of the 40/60% ratio of minority and state language is a long-overdue, positive step.

Minority education will remain topical in Latvia in the future. However, once the goal of ensuring bilingual proficiency is settled, more attention will have to be directed on a broader conception of the purpose of minority education, including content issues teaching methods and programmes for new minorities. The state institutions need to be aware of the need to prepare methodologies, teachers and teaching materials for educating potential newcomers from various countries and cultures.

A potential problem for future with continuing the present education reform goals is the reproduction of the segregated schools – and thus, arguably society. The burning issues at hand have not allowed the discussion to touch on more fundamental issues of whether segregated or ethnically mixed, inclusive schools are preferable. The very concept of bilingual education in Latvia – at first sight liberal and promoting of tolerance – has a specific meaning and is intended to be applied asymmetrically only to minorities.

More short-term issues and recommendations for the state actors include the ratification of the Council of Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (signed in 1995 but not ratified by January 2004). However, it is not likely that the convention will

prove particularly effective in contributing to the minority education solutions in the country, but would rather serve as a signal from majority politicians to minority representatives that the proclaimed wish for dialogue is sincere. Also, the convention's explicit call for promotion of minority participation is particularly relevant, considering the shortcomings in this field when it came to the elaboration of the minority education reform in Latvia.

8. Appendix

Non-Russian Minority Schools

Nr.	School	Founded in	Language of instruction	Number of teachers	Number of pupils	Cooperation partners	Funding	Other information
1.	Riga's Lithuanian Secondary school	1991	Latvian (in primary school 60%) Lithuanian (after primary school only 3 subjects)	24 (4 guest lecturers)	195	In Latvia: - Lithuanian association - Lithuanian embassy in Latvia In Lithuania: - Ministry of Education Republic of Lithuania - Minority and Immigration department in Lithuania. - Palanga's government - Lithuanian World Union - Diaspora Lithuanian support centre	Latvian state budget. Partly by the Lithuanian Republic	
2.	Riga's Estonian Secondary School	N/a	In primary school bilingual, afterwards in Latvian	22	155	In Latvia: - Estonian association - Estonian embassy in Latvia In Estonia: - Tallinn city school Board - Ministry of Education of the Republic of Estonia	Latvian state budget. Partly by the Estonian Republic	
3.	Rezekne's Polish Secondary school	Primary school since 1993, secondary school since 2002	70% Latvian 30% Polish	34 (4 guest lecturers)	424	In Poland: - Wspolnota Polska - Help for Catholics in the East In USA: - Help for Poles in the East In Latvia: - other Polish schools - Latvian Polish union - Latvian Polish union – Daugavpils' branch	Latvian state budget. Partly from Poland	

						- Latvian Polish union Rezekne's branch - organisation 'Skolēnu interešu centrs' [Pupils' interests centre] - NGO 'Meridians'		
4.	Jekabpils' Polish primary school	1994	Bilingual	21 (3 guest lecturers)	118	In Latvia: - Jekabpils municipality and education department - Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia - Polish embassy - Latvian Polish union In Poland: - Wspolnota Polska - schools in Poland	Latvian state budget.	
5.	Riga's Itas Kozakevicas Polish secondary school	1988	Bilingual	56	340	Polish associations and organisations in Latvia and in the world. Latvian Polish schools. In Poland: -Organisation "Stovažešene Zvspulnota Polska" 2. Association "Contacts and help for Polish in East" 3. Education Ministry of Poland	Latvian state budget. Sponsors – organizations in Latvia and in the world.	Pupils have possibility to test their Latvian language skills, studying short-term in Latvian schools. The teachers have possibility to improve their knowledge in Polish education institutions.
6.	Daugavpils' Polish Secondary School	1991	Bilingual	45	408	In Latvia: Polish embassy in Riga In Poland: 1. Polish secondary schools 2. Polish cities – Zakopane, Cracow, Slupska, Warsaw 3. Association "Contacts and help for Polish in East"	Latvian state budget.	Every year approximately 150 pupils go to Polish language practices in Poland.
7.	Riga's	1991	Main language	N/a	317	In Latvia:	Latvian state	

	Ukrainian Secondary school		of instruction is Latvian, Ukrainian			Latvian schools – Jūrmalas primary school “Ābelīte”, Liepkalnes primary school, Aļoju secondary school - Latvian University philology faculty In Ukraine: - Kijev's National University's named after T. Ševčenko - Humanitarian lyceum In Canada: - Ukrainian Institute of Alberta University In Germany: - Free Ukrainian University in Munich	budget.	
8.	Riga's Belarussian Primary School	1993	Bilingual	18	84	Different Belorussian organisations in Latvia and Belorussia	Latvian state budget; private sponsors	The teachers have possibility to improve their qualification in Belarussia. Pupils have possibility to study short term in Belorussian schools.
9.	Š. Dubnova Riga's Jewish School	1989	Russian, Hebrew	38	275	Culture and Education Ministry of Israel.	Latvian state budget	
10.	Riga's Polish Primary School	1993	Latvian	20	102	Polish Cultural-historical organisation, other Polish schools	Latvian state budget	
11.	Kraslavas Polish Primary School	1991	Primary education – bilingual 50/50%; Grades 5-12 – only 2 subjects in Polish	21	93	- Poland's schools - Wspolnota Polska	Latvian state budget.	

12.	Riga Private Jewish School Ohel Menachem Chabad	1995	Russian, Latvian, Hebrew	28	85	N/a	Supported by Avner Fund, Rohr Foundation, the Israel Department of Education and private donors.	After graduating children can continue studies not only in high schools of Latvia, but also in the USA, Israel, Europe.
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