

Latvia

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Snapshot

Area

64,589 square kilometers; one of
three countries (Estonia, Lithuania) in
the Baltic region

Population

2,204,708 (July 2011 est.)

Official Language

Latvian 59.3%, Russian 27.8%,
Belarusian 3.6%, Ukrainian 2.5%,
Polish 2.4%, Lithuanian 1.3%, other
3.1% (2009)

Ethnic Groups

56 ethnic groups

Median Age

40.6 years

Children under 5

114,165 (2010 est.)

Source

The World Factbook
[https://www.cia.gov/library/
publications/the-world-factbook/
geos/lg.html](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/lg.html)

Index Mundi

[http://www.indexmundi.com/latvia/
demographics_profile.html](http://www.indexmundi.com/latvia/demographics_profile.html)



**"Music expresses that which cannot be said and on
which it is impossible to be silent."**

–Victor Hugo

Demographics

Music therapy is a fairly new
healthcare profession in Latvia. In
1998, German music therapist Reiner
Haus started a collaboration between
the Liepāja Academy of Pedagogy
(now Liepāja University), the
University of Witten/Herdecke,
Germany, and the Datteln Clinic of
Children and Youth to explore the
possibility of creating a specialization
in music therapy. Within the past ten
years, considerable progress has
been made toward the establishment
of a music therapy program in Latvia.
Twenty-six music therapists thus far
have completed Master's programs in
music therapy at Liepāja and Rīga
Stradiņš Universities.

Background Information

The Music Therapy Association in
Latvia focuses on increasing societal
understanding and acceptance of the
field by promoting evidence-based
research and practice and by
working to strengthen formal art
therapy education in the Republic of
Latvia. The recognition of art therapy
in the Latvian Professional
Classification has resulted in better
educational and career opportunities
for music therapists. Graduates of
certain programs now are eligible for
professional certification equivalent to

that awarded to other health care
practitioners in the country.

Common Approaches

Societal conditions, governmental
legislation, and the varying needs of
clients and patients determine
developmental trends in music therapy in
Latvia. Today, an integrative, eclectic
approach allows music therapists to be
flexible in their choice of methods and
techniques (Paipare, 2011). This
integrative approach has been heavily
influenced by prominent leaders in the
music therapy field who have visited
Latvia teaching classes, offering seminars
and presenting current research.

Music therapists work in educational,
social services and healthcare settings in
Latvia. Early childhood is currently the
most actively served music therapy
population in Latvia. Several music
therapists work in nurseries (0 – 5 years)
for children with developmental delays
and disorders. In child development
centers, music therapists work with
children who have impaired motor or
cognitive development, cerebral
disorders, auditory and visual disabilities
(including cochlear implant rehabilitation)
and other neurological conditions. In
these early childhood settings, music
therapists often employ creative music
therapy interventions and techniques
(i.e., Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy).

In Liepāja and Rīga there are two music therapists working in psychiatric hospitals with children with autism spectrum disorders, behavioral and emotional disorders, and children who are victims of violence.

In rehabilitative settings, music therapists collaborate with other specialists (e.g., physiotherapist, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists) to provide services to children suffering from cerebral palsy, Down Syndrome, and motor and kinesthetic disorders.

Private practitioners often work with children who have been referred to a music therapist by medical professionals. Additionally, parents independently seek out private music therapy for their own children out of concern for perceived issues of behavior, attention and/or speech and language development.

Prominent Publications

- Mārtinsone, K., Mihailova, S., Mihailovs, I. J., Majore-Dūšele, I., & Paipare, M. (2008). Contexts of art therapy and its development in Latvia (integrative eclectic approach in Latvia). Rīga: RSU.
- Paipare, M. (2011). Music therapy. In K. Mārtinsone (Ed.) *Art Therapy*, pp. 340-373. Rīga, RaKa.

About the Author



Mirdza Paipare, MA, is a certified music therapist who currently serves as the President of the *Latvian Association of Music Therapy*, and as the Latvian representative at the *European Music Therapy Confederation*. Mirdza Paipare currently serves as the Director of the music therapy program at the Liepāja University.

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