

Université Paris Ouest-La Défense

Année universitaire 2022/2023

RUSSIAN-SPEAKERS IN LATVIA AND THE WAR IN UKRAINE



LAYCOCK Edward

UFR Langues et cultures étrangères

Mémoire de Master 1

Spécialité : Études russes et post-soviétiques

Master Études Européennes et post-soviétiques

Sous la direction de Madame Anne Le Huérou

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my special thanks of gratitude to my research supervisor Mrs Le Huérou for guiding me through this research project. I would also like to thank Dr Martins Kaprans for sharing his expertise with me. A special thanks also goes out to Professor Daunis Auers of the University of Latvia and to journalists Kaspars Germanis and Inna Plavoka for sharing their knowledge with me. Thank you to Ioulia Shukan for suggesting this subject to me as well as the academic guidance. Finally, I would also like to thank my Latvian friend Edgars Buchens for accompanying me on my field trips to Latvia.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
I-THE NEW NATURE OF LATVIA’S RUSSOPHONE POLITICS	9
1.1 The 2022 Latvian Parliamentary Elections.....	10
1.2 The division of Russophones along regional lines during the election.....	13
1.3 The fragmentation of Harmony and the formation of new political parties in Latgale .	18
Chapter conclusion.....	21
II-LATVIANIZATION AND ITS IMPACT	23
2.1 The demolition of Soviet monuments and the ban on celebrating the 9th of May	24
2.2 The ‘language amendment’ and how it changes Russophone attitudes to the Latvian language.....	31
2.3 Educational reforms	34
Chapter conclusion.....	36
III-INTERNATIONALISATION OF THE RUSSOPHONE QUESTION IN LATVIA	37
3.1 Perceptions of Latvia’s ‘Russophone Question’ from China	37
3.2 Russia’s attempts to highlight Russophones’ status in Latvia as a product of discriminatory circumstances	39
3.3 The Latvian Russia Union and its international reach	43
Chapter conclusion.....	44
CONCLUSION	45
BIBLIOGRAPHY	48

INTRODUCTION

‘We live in parallel worlds’ - this phrase is one that I often encountered when asking Latvians to describe their relationship with Russian speakers living in their country. From 1945 to 1991 Latvia was part of the Soviet Union¹. This period in Latvian history is officially called the Occupation period, a reference to the illegal annexation of the Baltic States by Stalin at the beginning of the Second World War and the subsequent occupation of Latvia’s territory from 1945 onwards. Latvia regained its independence in 1991 but to this day it remains impossible not to be surprised by the amount of Russian that can be heard being spoken in the capital, Riga.

A Latvian ‘Russophone’ (short for ‘Russian speaker’) is someone who was born or has lived most of their life within the borders of modern Latvia and whose mother tongue is Russian. I have chosen to label these Russophones as ‘Latvian’ in order to link them to the state of Latvia as it exists today. However, it remains subjective to what extent a Russophone feels ‘Latvian’ or whether he or she feels attached to Latvia at all². Furthermore, the term ‘Russophone’ deliberately omits any associations with Russian ethnicity. In the post-war years, many Soviet citizens from different republics immigrated to Latvia, lured by the country’s economic prosperity compared to other regions of the USSR. Soviet nationality policy insisted that all nationalities were united by vital interests that were to help them reach the ultimate goal of creating a communist society³. Since Russian was the main language of communication in the USSR, those who moved from other republics to Latvia relied on the Russian language to communicate with the local population. Therefore, Russophones in today’s Latvia have different ethnic origins. The most common ethnic groups among Latvia’s Russophones are Russians, Belarussians, Poles, Jews and to a lesser extent Lithuanians⁴. Russophones currently make up around 37% of Latvia’s population of 1.88 million⁵. Famous Russophones from Latvia include Mischa Maisky (a world renown cellist of Jewish origin), Jelena Ostapenko (a famous

¹ *History of Latvia: A brief synopsis*, <https://www2.mfa.gov.lv/en/usa/culture/history-of-latvia-a-brief-synopsis>, consulté le 3 janvier 2023.

² KAPRĀNS Mārtiņš et MIERIŅA Inta, « Minority Reconsidered: Towards a Typology of Latvia’s Russophone Identity », in *Europe-Asia Studies*, n° 1, vol. 71, 2 janvier 2019, p. 24-47.

³ SMITH Jeremy, « Was There a Soviet Nationality Policy? », in *Europe-Asia Studies*, n° 6, vol. 71, 3 juillet 2019, p. 980.

⁴ Pascal Bonnard, *Le gouvernement de l’ethnicité en Europe post-soviétique: Minorités et pouvoir en Lettonie*, Paris, Éditions Dalloz, 2013, p.9.

⁵ *Russian in Europe · Russian-speaking countries & Russian language knowledge in Europe*, <https://languageknowledge.eu/languages/russian>, consulté le 3 janvier 2023.

professional tennis player of Ukrainian origin) and Stanislavs Tokalovs (a successful Latvian-Russian film director).

I am interested in this subject because I have travelled to Latvia 3 times and have been fascinated by the contrasts between Riga and the east of the country as well as the position held by the Russophone community in Latvia. As someone who has grown up in Western Europe and holds a Bachelor's degree in Russian studies, I find it interesting to focus on a country such as Latvia which is a fully integrated EU member state with Russian still being widely spoken throughout some of its regions. Estonia also has a large Russian speaking population, but Latvia remains the EU member state with the highest percentage of the population that is able to speak Russian, either as a mother tongue or a foreign language-this number is around 63%⁶. Symbolically, I see Latvia as a crossroad between East and West. Proximity through direct flights to Riga has also helped me develop my interests in Latvian society. I stayed in Latvia for a week at the end of August 2022 (23.08.2023-30.08.2023), then went for five days at a time from the end of February to the beginning of March 2023 (26.02.2023-04.03.2023) and during the first half of May 2023 (08.05.2023-13.05.2023). My first trip to Latvia during the summer of 2022 was for tourist reasons, whilst the next two trips were more research based. Nevertheless, I will still refer to some of the observations I made in Latvia as a tourist in order to enrich the content of this research paper.

Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia were all annexed under the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact (the Hitler-Stalin pact) in 1940. During the following years all three countries were invaded by Nazi Germany and then reinvaded and occupied by the USSR for c.46 years⁷. All three countries experienced migratory flows of Soviet citizens from different republics to the Baltic region. For this reason, ever since gaining their independence in 1991, the complex question of Russophone minorities has been on the agendas of all three Baltic States. Nevertheless, it must be noted that ethnic Russians have been present in the Baltic states for centuries. Russians first started settling in the Baltic States in the 11th century and represented a significant share of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1648-1764). From the 16th century onwards many Old Believers from Russia moved to the Baltic States to escape persecution following the reforms

⁶ *Russian in Europe · Russian-speaking countries & Russian language knowledge in Europe*, <https://languageknowledge.eu/languages/russian>, consulté le 3 janvier 2023.

⁷ DENIS Juliette et LE BOURHIS Eric, « La « région balte », un espace dessiné par le pacte germano-soviétique »; in *Matériaux pour l'histoire de notre temps*, n° 3, N° 133-134, 19 décembre 2019, p. 4-5.

of Patriarch Nikon of Moscow⁸. The Baltic States became part of the Russian Empire for the first time under Peter the Great at the beginning of the 18th century and remained so until the Russian revolution of 1917⁹.

In order to understand Latvia's Russophone minority it is crucial to understand processes of russification and derussification throughout Latvia's history. Russification is a form of cultural assimilation in which the Russian language and culture is imposed on non-Russians¹⁰. Russification throughout the Tsarist and Soviet eras was a form of centralization intended to ensure state control over a diverse population. Ironically, for the case of Latvia, the first real russification campaigns of the 1880's undertaken by Russian Empire consisted of strengthening Latvian cultural institutions and education in Latvian to weaken local German speaking landowners¹¹; during the 12th and 13th centuries Latvia was Christianised by Teutonic knights from Germany, establishing a German overlordship with an enserfed Latvian peasantry¹².

During the Soviet era, the Russian language was imposed as the 'all-Union' language with the expectation that Soviet citizens would adopt 'modern' lifestyles often drawn on Russian models. In Latvia this meant the spread of Russian culture from 1945 onwards. There was no ban on speaking Latvian or nurturing Latvian culture, but Latvians had to acknowledge the important over-arching role of Russian culture. A language teaching reform in 1958 aimed to make Russian a second native language for all non-Russians¹³. Sovietisation and the spread of Russian culture were supposed to translate into the acceptance of Soviet authority, but these backfired during the 1980's when Latvians began asking for more national autonomy.

Following Latvia's independence in 1991, the process of derussification began with the declaration of the 1940 Soviet annexation of Latvia as illegal and the restoration of the Latvian constitution of 1922, the 'Satsversme'-Latvia became an independent state for the very first

⁸ *Русскоязычная диаспора в странах балтии: современное состояние и перспективы* (La Diaspora russe dans les pays Baltes: sa forme moderne et perspectives), <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/russkoyazychnaya-diaspora-v-stranah-baltii-sovremennoe-sostoyanie-i-perspektivy/viewer>, consulté le 21 novembre 2022.

⁹ David Smith, *The Baltic States : Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania*, Londres, Routledge, 2002, p.12.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p.43.

¹¹ *Russification / Sovietization*, <http://ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/models-and-stereotypes/russification-sovietization>, consulté le 1 juin 2023.

¹² *History of Latvia: A brief synopsis*, <https://www2.mfa.gov.lv/en/usa/culture/history-of-latvia-a-brief-synopsis>, consulté le 3 janvier 2023.

¹³ *Russification / Sovietization*, <http://ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/models-and-stereotypes/russification-sovietization>, consulté le 1 juin 2023.

time in the interwar period¹⁴. During the 1990's Latvia went back to being a parliamentary democracy with its parliament, the Saeima, which elected a new president every four years. Arguably the most significant reform in Latvia's process of derussification on the dawn of independence was the Citizenship Law of June 1994, which stated that all inhabitants of Latvia that arrived after 1940 would not be recognized as citizens. This law had a heavy impact on Russian speakers in Latvia and, to this day, 9% of the population lives with this alien status of 'non-citizen'. Another important step in Latvia's derussification campaign of the 1990's was the successful removal of the remaining Russian troops in August 1994¹⁵.

Consequently, Russophone identity in Latvia went through a phase of redefinition during the 1990's. Latvia's aspirations to join the EU and NATO made Russophones look out of place and, in some cases, helpless. Many Russian speakers left Latvia, emigrating mainly to Russia, but a significant proportion of them stayed, hoping to be able to integrate in an independent and more western-oriented Latvia¹⁶. Ethnic tensions in post-Soviet Latvia have risen and fallen over the years with events such as the 2004 Russian school protests against a language reform that would see 60% of classes in public schools be taught in Latvian¹⁷ and the 2012 language referendum in which the vast majority of participants voted against the Russian language being granted an official status in Latvia¹⁸.

The annexation of Crimea by Russia and the War in the Donbass region in 2014 were the first external factors to significantly alter Latvians' perception of the Russophone minority living in their country. For the first time the world order that Latvia had grown accustomed to seemed threatened by a malevolent global superpower, supported by a smaller minority within Latvia itself. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on the 24th of February 2022 only increased the sensitivity of the Russophone question in Latvia: to what extent should the Russian language be tolerated in Latvia? Should Russian speakers retain the right to be educated in Russian? What ought to be done with Soviet heritage left intact up until now?

¹⁴ Filler André, Raviot Jean-Robert et Université Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense, *L'Impossible Nation Lettonne études Des Lieux D'une Natio-genèse Post-soviétique*. Nanterre., 2013, p.14.

¹⁵ MORRIS Helen M., *President, party and nationality policy in Latvia, 1991–1999*, in *Europe-Asia Studies*, n° 4, vol. 56, juin 2004, p. 543-546.

¹⁶ Pascal Bonnard, *Le gouvernement de l'ethnicité en Europe post-soviétique : Minorités et pouvoir en Lettonie*, Paris, Éditions Dalloz, 2013, p. 10.

¹⁷ *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, « Russian Speakers Protest Language Reform In Latvia », Disponible sur l'Internet : <https://www.rferl.org/a/1051443.html>

¹⁸ BBC News, « Latvia rejects making Russian an official language », Disponible sur l'Internet: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17083397>

To better understand these questions, I read books and research papers that offered a focus on Latvian history and politics. David Smith's *The Baltic States: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania* published in 2002 helped me understand the historical backdrop to current dilemmas facing modern Latvian society. Pascal Bonnard's *Le gouvernement de l'ethnicité en Europe post-soviétique* from 2013 gave me an insight into the ideological foundations of Latvia's post-Soviet independence and what the most important questions are when considering the Russophone minority. Finally, André Filler's doctoral thesis *L'impossible nation Lettonne: étude des lieux d'une natio-genèse post-soviétique*, also published in 2013, helped me to better understand electoral patterns in Latvian politics and the role of ethnolinguistics in these processes. For my research I have also read articles, listened to podcasts and have carried out fieldwork in Latvia. I have interviewed 4 Latvians whose opinion on the subject of Latvian Russophones I consider trustworthy and representative. Due to researching similar topics, I have been closely collaborating with Camille Calandre, a student of EHESS in Paris who carried out research on the 9th of May celebrations (Soviet Victory Day) in Latvia. For this reason, some of the secondary resources that I quote may be interviews that were conducted by Camille herself.

I have used the scholarly transliteration system for transliterating Russian Cyrillic into English. The reason for this was that the scholarly system is phonemic when compared to the orthography of the transliterated language. I have been using the website 'translitteration.com' that allows Russian to be transliterated to Latin script using the scholarly system¹⁹.

In my research I aim to outline how the status of the Russian speaking minority of Latvia has changed since the 24th of February 2022. Personally, the most important question in undertaking this task, was finding out whether anything has changed in Russian speakers' perceptions of themselves as well as any significant change that may have occurred in how they are seen from the outside-whether it be by fellow Latvians or the international community. I was lucky enough to be in Riga on a historic day, the 25th of August 2022, when the Soviet Victory monument came crashing down. Ever since then, I have followed developments in Latvia closely. What is the most significant impact of the War on Ukraine on the Russian speaking minority of Latvia? What external phenomena linked to this minority have been taking place since the war began and how do these influence the status of Latvia's Russophone

¹⁹ *Russian – Scholarly transliteration system*, <https://www.translitteration.com/transliteration/en/russian/scholarly/>, consulté le 22 juin 2023.

population? To what extent has their position in Latvia changed since the war began. These are questions I will look to answer through my research.

My first chapter will involve an analysis of the 2022 parliamentary elections in Latvia with a particular focus on political parties representing Russian speakers. My second chapter will look at 'latvianization' reforms that have been introduced in Latvia since Putin's invasion of Ukraine and how they impact Latvia's Russophones. Finally, my third chapter will look at the internationalisation of the Russophone question in Latvia in order to fully understand how this dilemma is perceived from the outside world and what efforts are being made abroad to voice concerns about this matter.

I-THE NEW NATURE OF LATVIA'S RUSSOPHONE POLITICS

To better understand my analysis of the 2022 Latvian parliamentary election, I will give a brief description of each of the three parties representing Russian speakers in Latvia. These three parties are 'Harmony' ('Saskana' in Latvian), 'Stability!' ('Stabilitātei-Ja') and the Latvian Russian Union ('Latvijas Krievu Savienība'). I will also look at the reactions of each of these parties to Russia's invasion of Ukraine on the 24th of February 2022. My analysis of the performance of Russophone parties in the recent elections will help me to determine how the war in Ukraine has impacted the political status of the Russian speaking minority of Latvia.

The mainstream party representing Russophones in Latvia is 'Harmony'. Harmony is a social democratic Party positioned on the centre-left of the political spectrum. Up until 2017 it was officially partnered with Vladimir Putin's 'United Russia'. Harmony's political agenda involves encouraging an open world without borders, more government intervention in the economy, redistribution of wealth from rich to poor and prioritizing economic growth over environmental protection²⁰; The party was founded in 2010 when three parties merged into one. These three parties were the 'National Harmony Party', the 'New Centre' and the Social Democratic Party. The former chairman of Harmony, Nils Ushakovs, is an ethnic Russian who served as mayor of Riga from 2009 to 2019.

'For Stability' is a Russophone party that has only appeared on Latvia's political stage at the 2022 parliamentary elections. It is a centre-right Eurosceptic party that seeks to re-evaluate Latvia's position in the EU with a possibility of leaving the European Union. Stability champions Russian speakers' rights by claiming that education in Russian should be widely available to Russophones and that non-citizens should be granted Latvian citizenship²¹. Their popularity dramatically increased during the Covid-19 pandemic when they insisted on suing deputies of Latvia's 13th Saeima who were in favour of Latvia's economic lockdown as well as claiming that Latvia's lockdown was used as a tool to segregate people and deprive them of their income. Populist rhetoric propagated by Stability also drew on anti-vaccination

²⁰ *Latvia: Parties at a glance*, <https://politpro.eu/en/latvia/parties>, consulté le 31 décembre 2022.

²¹ *Partijas «Stabilitātei!» Rīgas saraksta līderis – Rošļikovs*, <https://www.lsm.lv/raksts/zinas/latvija/partijas-stabilitatei-rigas-saraksta-lideris--roslikovs.a465253/>, consulté le 2 juin 2023.

sentiment which it claimed was a forceful attempt at harming people's health²². The party was founded in 2021 by a former member of Harmony named Aleksejs Roslikovs²³.

The Latvian Russian Union (LKS) is arguably the most marginal and radical representation of Latvia's Russian speakers due to its role as successor to the Latvian Communist Party. It was formed through an electoral alliance in 1998 between the socialist Party of Latvia, the 'Equal Rights' Party and a faction of the 'National Harmony' party. The Latvian Russian Union is left leaning on the political spectrum and mainly advocates the interests of the ethnic Russian minority of Latvia²⁴. Similarly to Stability, it asks that non-citizens be granted Latvian citizenship but also states that the Russian language should be granted a regional status in the municipalities where it is widely spoken. The LKS's political agenda is similar to Harmony's agenda with the only difference being its emphasis on multiculturalism²⁵.

Harmony was the only one of these three parties to openly condemn Putin's actions in Ukraine. Holding the most seats in parliament prior to the election²⁶ and being by far the biggest party representing Russophones in Latvia on the 24th of February 2022, it did this very quickly and with no hesitation²⁷. The Latvian Russian Union took a different stance by immediately stating its 'neutral' position. It released a statement on its website titled 'Time to look for solutions' in which it called upon all parties involved in the conflict to negotiate peace²⁸. 'Stability' refused to criticise Russia's invasion of Ukraine altogether²⁹.

1.1 The 2022 Latvian Parliamentary Elections

The Latvian parliamentary elections of October 2022 were revolutionary in nature. For the first time Harmony deputies were absent from the Saeima. Previously, 'Harmony' had united a large share of Russophones which allowed them to win parliamentary elections against a split

²² *Стабильность!* (Stabilité!), <https://www.partijastabilitatei.lv/index2.html>, consulté le 16 novembre 2022.

²³ *Aleksejs Roslikovs*, <https://puaro.lv/cv/aleksejs-roslikovs/>, 29 janvier 2023, consulté le 2 juin 2023.

²⁴ *Русский союз Латвии* (L'Union russe de la Lettonie), <https://rusojuz.lv/>, consulté le 15 décembre 2022.

²⁵ *Latvia: Parties at a glance*, <https://politpro.eu/en/latvia/parties>, consulté le 31 décembre 2022.

²⁶ *Latvian election results show shape of new Saeima*, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/politics/election/latvian-election-results-show-shape-of-new-saeima.a295038/>, consulté le 5 janvier 2023.

²⁷ *Harmony repeatedly condemns Russia's aggression against Ukraine and endorses EU's efforts to restore compliance with international law*, https://www.baltictimes.com/harmony_repeatedly_condemns_russia_s_aggression_against_ukraine_and_endorses_eu_s_efforts_to_restore_compliance_with_international_law/, consulté le 2 juin 2023.

²⁸ *JULIA, TIME TO LOOK FOR SOLUTIONS | Latvian Russian Union*, <https://rusojuz.lv/en/time-to-look-for-solutions/>, 26 février 2022, consulté le 9 janvier 2023.

²⁹ *Continuity and change after Latvia's 2022 parliamentary election*, <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2022/10/25/continuity-and-change-after-latvias-2022-parliamentary-election/>, consulté le 31 décembre 2022.

Latvian vote³⁰. Despite being quick to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Harmony's reputation became tainted as the mainstream 'Russian' party in Latvian politics³¹. It only won 4.81% of the vote which meant it wasn't granted a single seat in the Saeima (the Latvian parliament)-a party must have a minimum of 5% of the vote to be granted a seat in parliament. Stability was more successful in this respect, gaining 6.8% of the votes and 11 seats in the Saeima³², whilst the LKS won a meagre 3.6% of the vote, excluding it from parliament. The election was won by the Krisjanis Karins's pro-western party 'New Unity' that took 19% of the vote and 26 seats in parliament.

The results of the Latvian parliamentary election of 2022 suggest a strong abstention on the part of Russian speakers. The overall turnout of the election was at 59% with only 16% of the 162 000 voters living abroad taking part³³. Following the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation conducted a poll among Latvia's Russian speakers in March 2022 to find out what their attitudes were towards the war. It was discovered that a majority of 57% of Russophones did not want to take any side in the war, in contrast to 83% of Latvians who openly expressed their support for Ukraine³⁴. The same poll was conducted a few months later in July 2022 and it was found that the percentage of Russophones refusing to take sides in the war had fallen to 47%. However, this figure still appeared inferior to those Russian speakers who claimed to support Ukraine-40%³⁵. This 'neutrality' inevitably translated into apoliticism for many Russophones. The fall of Harmony is characteristic of this. It went from being the most successful party in Latvia to not even making it into parliament. For this reason, a large share of Latvia's Russophones played the role of bystanders in the 2022 election and the overall number of Russophone votes was split between several parties.

³⁰ *Election results pose problem for President*, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/features/commentary/latvian-election-results-pose-problem-for-president.a295064/>, consulté le 5 janvier 2023.

³¹ *Continuity and change after Latvia's 2022 parliamentary election*, <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2022/10/25/continuity-and-change-after-latvias-2022-parliamentary-election/>, consulté le 31 décembre 2022.

³² *All votes counted; seven lists make it into the Saeima*, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/politics/election/all-votes-counted-seven-lists-make-it-into-the-saeima.a476276/>, consulté le 30 décembre 2022.

³³ *Continuity and change after Latvia's 2022 parliamentary election*, <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2022/10/25/continuity-and-change-after-latvias-2022-parliamentary-election/>, consulté le 31 décembre 2022.

³⁴ *Pētījums: Cik daudz Latvijā ir putinistu?* (Recherche: combien y a-t-il de poutinistes en Lettonie ?), <https://ir.lv/2022/07/14/petijums-cik-daudz-latvija-ir-putinistu/>, consulté le 2 juin 2023.

³⁵ *Russians in Latvia: pro-Ukraine or pro-Putin?*, <https://www.veridica.ro/en/analyses/russians-in-latvia-pro-ukraine-or-pro-putin>, consulté le 17 mai 2023.

In an interview I conducted with Martins Kaprans , researcher at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at the University of Latvia, in February 2023, it was mentioned that there is a much stronger tendency for abstinence from any kind of sensitive question among Russian speakers than there is among ethnic Latvians. Mr Kaprans explained that *“When it comes to some sensitive issues like the war in Ukraine, there is a large group of respondents who either don’t have an opinion or who simply do not want to answer these questions. This accounts for roughly a third of Russophones”*. This suggests that the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian army and the association with Russia’s actions felt by many Russophones in Latvia led to heightened fear and a sense of confusion among many.

In March 2023 I interviewed Inna Plavoka, the chief-in-editor of the Russian language media portal chayka.lv. Inna explained that this state of being silent observers in politically sensitive moments is a trait that has been historically engrained in Russophones born during the early postwar years of the Soviet era in Latvia: *“people born during the 1950’s for instance were taught not to question or analyse reality, they were told to live their everyday lives, work and expect that those who were cleverer and knew better would make the decisions for them, thereby making everyone happy”*. Russian speakers in Latvia are intrinsically more apolitical than ethnic Latvians. The war in Ukraine reinforced the apolitical status of the Russophone community through the abstention of many Russophones at the 2022 parliamentary elections in Latvia.

Apart from the apolitical status of many Russophones in Latvia, the change in nature of the Russophone representation in parliament must be considered. ‘For Stability’ is now the only Russophone party in the Latvian parliament. Unlike Harmony, ‘For Stability’ is considered to be a populist party with Eurosceptic motives. Its ‘anti-establishment’ nature and the fact that it refuses to condemn the Russian invasion of Ukraine makes it significantly more radical than Harmony³⁶. According to Martins Kaprans Stability *“offered a more aggressive agenda than Harmony by playing with the idea of justifying the war in Ukraine, by taking a more aggressive stance towards the dismantling of Soviet monuments and school reforms. They tried to ethnicise as many issues as possible and return to strategies used by Russophone parties in the early 2000’s”*. For these reasons, the parliamentary elections not only highlighted the apoliticism of the Russophone electorate but also their fragmentation between

³⁶ *Стабильность!* (Stabilité !), <https://www.partijastabilitatei.lv/index2.html>, consulté le 16 novembre 2022.

those who were lured into voting for the populist rhetoric of Stability and those who chose to vote for other more mainstream parties in Latvian politics.

Stability's ascension to parliament is part of a more general wave of populism in Latvia. 'Latvia First' ('Latvija Pirmaja Vieta'³⁷ in Latvian) was another populist party to make it into parliament during the autumn elections³⁸. Similarly to Stability, 'Latvia First' also aims to bring Latvia's Covid policy makers to justice and demands compensation for those who became unemployed during the crisis³⁹. It is a party that aims to unite both ethnic Latvians and Russophones. A rally held by the two populist parties, 'For Stability' and 'Latvia First' in front of the freedom monument in Riga took place on the 27th of May 2023.

1.2 The division of Russophones along regional lines during the election

An unprecedented phenomenon that took place during the parliamentary elections of 2022 was the division of the Russophone electorate between Riga and Latgale. Latgale is the easternmost region of Latvia which used to be part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth before becoming part of the Russian Empire in 1772. This resulted in Latgale having a large Slavic population mostly made up of Poles, Russians and Belarusians as well as other ethnicities such as the native Latgalians, Latvians and Jews. Following the Russian Revolution of 1917, the First Latgale Latvians Congress in 1917 voted to join Latvia⁴⁰. The biggest city in Latgale is Daugavpils, which is the second biggest city in Latvia and is predominantly populated by Russian speakers⁴¹. The results of the 2022 parliamentary elections highlighted significant voting differences between Latgale and the Riga agglomeration-the two Latvian regions most heavily populated by Russophones. Previously, Russophones from both regions grouped together to vote for Harmony. This was the case both in 2014 and 2018 when Harmony won a majority of seats in the Saeima elections. 2022, however, showed a different trend with Russophone voters in Latgale leaning more towards Stability and voters in Riga voting for the

³⁷ ЛАТВИЯ НА ПЕРВОМ МЕСТЕ (La Lettonie en premier lieu), <https://latvijapirmajavieta.lv/ru/>, consulté le 5 juin 2023.

³⁸ All votes counted; seven lists make it into the Saeima, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/politics/election/all-votes-counted-seven-lists-make-it-into-the-saeima.a476276/>, consulté le 30 décembre 2022.

³⁹ ADMIN, ПРОГРАММА 4000 СИМВОЛОВ (Le programme des 4000 symboles), <https://latvijapirmajavieta.lv/латвия-на-первом-месте-программа/>, consulté le 5 juin 2023.

⁴⁰ David Smith, *The Baltic States : Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania*, Londres, Routledge, 2002, p.71-72.

⁴¹ History, <https://www.daugavpils.lv/en/city/daugavpils/history>, consulté le 5 juin 2023.

pro-Western New Unity with the most popular Russophone party in Riga remaining Harmony⁴².

This regional victory for Stability has been described as ‘*regionally limited radicalization*’ by Martins Kaprans. The ethnopolitical agenda of Stability has been most successful in the eastern regions of Latvia for a good reason. Inequality in Latvia cannot be better characterised than through the existing gap between Riga and Latgale. The average unemployment rate in the Riga agglomeration is only a half or a third of that of Latgale. Latvia has a decreasing population due to emigration among other factors, meaning the demographic effects are a lot more serious in Latgale than they are in Riga. Daugavpils and Rezekne (the two biggest cities in Latgale) have more residents of pre-working or post-working age than residents who are professionally active⁴³. Poverty, the lack of investment and underdevelopment in Latvia’s eastern regions fosters resentment towards the central government.

The time I spent in Latgale, not only helped me realize the existing inequality between the centre and periphery of Latvia, but also the differences in historical perceptions. Riga’s Museum of the Occupation of Latvia is a modern museum situated in the city centre and sends out a strong message to all residents and visitors about the way in which Latvians see their history between 1940 and 1991. I visited this museum in August 2022 and was very impressed by the permanent exhibition. When I visited a local history museum at the other side of the country, in Ludza (a town in Latgale not far from the Russian border), at the beginning of May 2023, I was met with a very different perspective of Latvian history. Unlike in Riga, I was the only visitor in the museum and soon found myself in a room dedicated to the Red Army’s victory in World War II. This room, pictured below, felt closer to the glorification of the ‘Great Patriotic War’ often found in national museums in Minsk and Moscow.

⁴² *All votes counted; seven lists make it into the Saeima*, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/politics/election/all-votes-counted-seven-lists-make-it-into-the-saeima.a476276/>, consulté le 30 décembre 2022.

⁴³ Chmielewski Bartosz, *Far behind Riga: Latvia’s problems with uneven development*, OSW, 2023, p.6.



©Edward Laycock

Whilst Soviet monuments in Riga now remain limited to cemeteries and are generally secluded from public areas, in Latgale they can easily be found intact. In a small Latgalian town of under 10 000 inhabitants one can easily find at least one or two Soviet monuments around the town centre. On the 11th of May 2023 I travelled to a town in Latgale called Zilupe, renowned for being the easternmost town in Latvia and being on the border with Russia. When making my way through the town I came across a gravestone neatly painted in bright colours on which it said 'Eternal memory to the hero partisans, fallen in battle for the freedom and independence of our Motherland in the Great Patriotic War 1941-45'. Presumably the monument pictured below had been well taken care in the build-up to the celebration of Victory Day on the ninth of May.



©Edward Laycock

I visited 2 cities and 2 smaller towns in Latgale. The two cities I visited were Rezekne and Daugavpils and the two towns were Ludza and Zilupe. In all these places the economic inequality with Riga is tangible. In Latgale, an empty atmosphere an empty atmosphere can often be felt through derelict buildings and very few people in the streets. To this extent the 2022 parliamentary elections in Latvia and the division of the political allegiances of Russophones in Riga and Latgale highlighted the unequal socioeconomic status of those living to the east of the country. The shift from mainstream Russophone politics to supporting a populist party after the beginning of the of the war in Ukraine only seems to suggest that this problem seems to be getting worse. The Latvian government's efforts to reduce trade with Russia and Belarus will create an economic barrier that will only widen disparities between the socioeconomic centre of the country and the peripheries. In the Baltic States, neither Lithuania nor Estonia suffer from internal inequality as much as Latvia does⁴⁴.

During my interview with Inna Plavoka it was explained that unemployment, inequality and poverty in Latgale have led to a way of life in which people 'survive' from day to day. Inevitably, this has led to many feeling dissatisfied with their lives and neglected by the

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.1-2.

government in Riga. This resentment translates into populist beliefs as many living in Latgale simply do not feel protected by the government. Inna Plavoka proceeded to talk about the importance of infrastructure in Latvia by emphasising that if one were to travel on the Latvian road network outside of Latgale, the assumption would be that Latvia's roads are generally in a good state. Latgale's roads are in a much worse condition than in the rest of the country and one of the worst roads, ironically, appears to be the one connecting Daugavpils to Riga (the two biggest cities in Latvia). To cover the 250 km from Riga to Daugavpils it takes around 4 hours by car. According to Inna "*this results in us feeling as if we live in another country*". Inna then pointed out that another way in which regional inequality is rampant is the money granted by the government for renovating apartment blocks. Smaller cities such as Liepaja on the western coast of Latvia are more capable of keeping apartment blocks in a good state with government funding, whereas Daugavpils residents struggle to do so⁴⁵.

The emergence of 'For Stability' in Latvian Russophone politics can be seen through the voting patterns of the three south-eastern districts of Daugavpils (Augsdaugavas novads), Kraslava (Kraslavas Novads) and Rezekne (Rezeknes Novads) that voted decisively for Roslikovs' party⁴⁶. This regionalization along with the radical turn in refusing to condemn Putin's war in Ukraine, illustrates Latgale's Russophone community's marginal status in Latvia. Personally, I would agree with Inna Plavoka's statement describing Latgale as a foreign country in all but name. It seems different culturally, economically, politically as well as linguistically with the Latgalian language not being recognized as official by the central government in Riga⁴⁷.

Whilst in Riga, signs of support for Ukraine are visible almost everywhere and many local Russophone residents are often in favour of this support, in Latgale Russophones are often, from my observations, either apolitical or pro-Russian. I noticed no more than a few Ukrainian flags in Daugavpils, whereas in Rezekne they were completely absent. In contrast

⁴⁵ Plavoka Inna, « Ситуация с реновацией домов в Даугавпилсе - плачевная ». Обсуждаем проблему с руководителем ИДЖКХ (La situation avec la rénovation des maisons à Daugavpils est déplorable. Nous discutons du problème avec le chef de PZhKH), <https://chayka.lv/2023/01/30/renovatsija/>, 30 janvier 2023, consulté le 6 juin 2023.

⁴⁶ All votes counted; seven lists make it into the Saeima, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/politics/election/all-votes-counted-seven-lists-make-it-into-the-saeima.a476276/>, consulté le 30 décembre 2022.

⁴⁷ Vajšļa S. "«латгальская проблема» в восприятии латвийской общественно-политической элиты." (le problème de latgale dans la perception de l'élite sociale et politique lettonne) *Вопросы политологии* (Les questions de la politologie) 10.7 (2020), p. 2303.

to Riga, Rezekne displays the national, regional (Latgalian) and European flag in front of its administrative instead of Riga's national, European and Ukrainian flag trend. One of the co-owners of the World War I museum in Daugavpils, called Oleg Vinogradov, told me that he openly disapproved of displaying the Ukrainian flag publicly. In the next subdivision I will look more closely at the fragmentation of the Harmony Party and how cities in Latgale are often ruled as 'principalities' by their mayors, whose attitude towards issues such as the war in Ukraine remains ambiguous⁴⁸. This political dimension helps to show how the war in Ukraine has highlighted the divided status of Russophones between the east and west of Latvia.

1.3 The fragmentation of Harmony and the formation of new political parties in Latgale

The assumption needs to be made that Harmony grossly miscalculated the consequences of their repeated condemnation of Putin's war in Ukraine⁴⁹. In my interview with Kaspars Germanis, freelance journalist for the news site Veridica and Central European Times, it was mentioned that a significant share of Harmony's voters switched allegiances to Stability. Bearing in mind Harmony's condemnation of the war and Stability's silent approval of it, this confirms that a significant proportion of Russian speaking voters, who used to vote for Harmony, still hold pro-Russian political views. Harmony suffered much from, not only from losing this electorate, but also from losing the politicians themselves. In early February 2023 around 120 Latgale members of Harmony began leaving the party en masse. These members generally came from Rezenkne, Rezekne municipality and Ludza⁵⁰. Their exit occurred following the expulsion of Rezekne mayor, Aleksandrs Bartasevics⁵¹, and the withdrawal of Daugavpils mayor Andrejs Elksnins⁵² from Harmony, who made it clear that their intentions

⁴⁸ *The Foreign Minister in his letter reminds the Mayor of Daugavpils about the position of Latvia on Russia's aggression against Ukraine* | Ārlietu ministrija (ministère des Affaires étrangères), <https://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/article/foreign-minister-his-letter-reminds-mayor-daugavpils-about-position-latvia-russias-aggression-against-ukraine>, consulté le 6 juin 2023.

⁴⁹ *Harmony repeatedly condemns Russia's aggression against Ukraine and endorses EU's efforts to restore compliance with international law*, https://www.baltictimes.com/harmony_repeatedly_condemns_russia_s_aggression_against_ukraine_and_endors_es_eu_s_efforts_to_restore_compliance_with_international_law/, consulté le 2 juin 2023.

⁵⁰ *Latgale members leave Harmony party en masse*, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/politics/politics/latgale-members-leave-harmony-party-en-masse.a495351/>, consulté le 8 février 2023.

⁵¹ *Harmony expels Rēzekne mayor Bartaševičs*, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/politics/politics/harmony-expels-rezekne-mayor-bartasevics.a495196/>, consulté le 7 juin 2023.

⁵² *Daugavpils city council leave Harmony party*, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/politics/politics/daugavpils-city-council-leave-harmony-party.a493527/>, consulté le 7 juin 2023.

were to form new regional Latgale-based political parties. In early April 2023, Bartasevics announced the creation of his own political party 'Kopā' (the word for 'together' in Latvian⁵³).

According to Martins Kaprans, this dimension of the 'regionalisation' of Latgale is all part of a more general effort of regional elites in Latgale to detach themselves from Riga. It remains to be seen what this detachment will bring; prior to the 2022 parliamentary elections and the war in Ukraine, Russophones in Riga and in the east were united under Harmony. With regards to the newly established regional parties in Latgale, smaller scale politics would, on one hand, mean less focus on geopolitically sensitive issues such as the war in Ukraine, but on the other hand would surely give people more courage to express more radical views due to a smaller regional audience. The political shift from Harmony to Stability in Latgale bears witness to this; the political elite in Latgale aims to disassociate itself from national level politics.

From the conversations I had with residents in Daugavpils, I understood that the mayor, Andrejs Elksnins, was extremely popular. Elksnins was born in Riga but moved to Daugavpils at a very young age. He is ethnically half Latvian and half Russian, making him perfectly fluent in both languages. He graduated from the Latvian State Police Academy in Riga, worked as an investigator and then as a lawyer, before joining Harmony and going into politics⁵⁴. His image as mayor of Daugavpils is vividly displayed on social media, particularly on his Facebook page, where he remains active⁵⁵.

Nevertheless, Elksnins has been involved in nationwide scandals. One of these involved attending a Belarusian Independence Day celebration organized by the Belarusian diplomatic consulate in Daugavpils. This event was held on the 8th of July 2022 and Elksnins was soon criticised by several Latvian media portals for attending an event organized by an aggressor

⁵³ ГАЙКЕ Виктория, *Александр Барташевич создаёт новую левоцентристскую партию* (Gaike Victoria et Alexander Bartashevich créent un nouveau parti de centre-gauche), <https://chayka.lv/2023/02/22/partija-bartashevich/>, 22 février 2023, consulté le 22 février 2023.

⁵⁴ *Андрей Элкснинш: немного о жизни и о себе* - Din.lv - информационный портал города Даугавпилс - Даугавпилс (Andrey Elksnins: un peu sur la vie et sur moi-même - Din.lv - portail d'information de la ville de Daugavpils - Daugavpils), <http://www.din.lv/daugavpils/12074-andrej-elksninsh-nemnogo-o-zhizni-i-o-sebe/>, consulté le 7 juin 2023.

⁵⁵ Page Facebook de Andrejs Elksnins, <https://www.facebook.com/AndrejsElksnins>, consulté le 7 juin 2023.

state⁵⁶. He responded to this criticism on his Facebook page by stating '*Hundreds of citizens of Belarus live in our city, thousands of ethnic Belarusians with Latvian citizenship, the Consulate General of the Republic of Belarus continues to work on the territory of Daugavpils, but it turns out that they should not be approached! Because it hurts the national interest*'⁵⁷. The other scandal Elksins was involved in concerned comments he made about the annexation of Crimea and Russia's aggression against Ukraine. Elksins gave a statement to the Latvian media portal 'Delfi' in which he called Crimea part of Russia. At a press conference in early November, explained that "I said Crimea is basically under Russian rule now-there are Russian laws and institutes of power there,"⁵⁸. He was reprimanded and reminded of Latvia's official position through a letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs⁵⁹.

Further north in Latgale, Rezekne's mayor, Bartasevics, spoke out against the Latvian government's dismantling of Soviet monuments campaign (which I will discuss later in more detail). He openly called the demolition of Soviet monuments in Latvia 'barbarism' and stated that "*We, Russians in Latvia, are not responsible for what is currently happening in Ukraine and we weep for all victims of this war, in which Slavic people die on both sides of the front. It is a tragedy for us all. We want peace for Ukraine and Russia as soon as possible*". Bartasevics was later invited by the Latvian State Security Service (VDD) to provide an explanation for his comments. The VDD is known to keep an eye on both Elksins and Bartasevics⁶⁰.

Another reason for the fragmentation of Harmony and the formation of new political parties in Latgale is because of the regional elite's historic economic ties to Russia and Belarus. As seen already, the mayors of Daugavpils and Rezekne seem to independently determine their foreign policy by taking different positions on the war in Ukraine. In addition to this, economic cooperation with Latvia's southern and eastern regions plays an important role in

⁵⁶ *Daugavpils mayor has no qualms about attending Lukashenko regime celebration*, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/politics/politics/daugavpils-mayor-has-no-qualms-about-attending-lukashenko-regime-celebration.a464581/>, consulté le 5 janvier 2023.

⁵⁷ *Дорогие жители...* (Chers résidents..) - *Andrejs Elksniņš*, <https://www.facebook.com/AndrejsElksnins/posts/pfbid02F88xedsk8Kb3A3Fvy4aomVnBfh2JUkvNXEFmgcXkQMtDjFpZuUgE3bmuDeR637wKl>, consulté le 21 juin 2023.

⁵⁸ LETA, *Authorities take notice of Rezekne mayor's controversial take on Soviet monuments and war in Ukraine*, <https://bnn-news.com/authorities-take-notice-of-rezekne-mayors-controversial-take-on-soviet-monuments-and-war-in-ukraine-240005>, 11 novembre 2022, consulté le 6 juin 2023.

⁵⁹ *Daugavpils mayor reminded about international law by Ministers*, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/politics/diplomacy/daugavpils-mayor-reminded-about-international-law-by-ministers.a481638/>, consulté le 5 janvier 2023.

⁶⁰ LETA, *Authorities take notice of...*, *op.cit.*, p.13.

the Latgalian economy and helps compensate for the inequality between Riga and the east of Latvia. I remember seeing many freight trains on the railway running from Riga all the way to the Russian border. Many of the wagons had ‘бензин’ written on them-the Russian word for petrol. Despite EU sanctions Russia still accounted for 7% of Latvia’s import structure in 2022 with Belarus accounting for a more meagre 1.1%. Natural gas, Iron and steel make up most of Russian imports into Latvia, whilst Latvia’s export to Russia consist of beverages, mechanisms and pharmaceuticals making up 5.5% of its export total in 2022⁶¹. Despite the steady decline in trade between Latvia, Russia and Belarus, economic ties with eastern neighbours remain an important source of income for the political elite in Latgale.

The cooperation between Latgale, Russia and Belarus has also had a cultural dimension. When visiting local museums in Latgale I saw that the exhibitions were financed by two ENPI cross border cooperation programmes. One of these programmes involved cooperation between Estonia, Latvia and Russia, whilst the other one was between Latvia, Lithuania and Belarus. EU sponsored Cross-border cooperation programmes are meant to promote economic and social development with the participation of non-EU states in border areas such as the ones that can be found in Latgale⁶².



©Edward Laycock

Chapter conclusion

The fragmentation of Harmony and the creation of new regional political parties in 2023 occurred with a backdrop of closer ideological, economic and cultural ties to Russia and

⁶¹ *Foreign trade with Russia, Belarus and Ukraine* | *Ekonomikas ministrija* (Ministère de l'économie), <https://www.em.gov.lv/en/foreign-trade-russia-belarus-and-ukraine>, consulté le 8 juin 2023.

⁶² *Cross Border Cooperation*, https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy/cross-border-cooperation_en, 7 novembre 2018, consulté le 8 juin 2023.

Belarus among Russophones in Latgale. The war in Ukraine and the Latvian parliamentary elections of 2022 have undoubtedly led to the loss of a unified status among Russian speakers in Latvia. Removing Harmony's dominance from Latgale will make it harder for the central Latvian government in Riga to enforce its policies in the east. Bartosz Chmielewski's article 'Far Behind Riga' rightly mentions that the centre-right parties that have governed Latvia for years perceive opposition such as Stability as harmful to the state. To this extent, the political *cordon sanitaire* that has been formed in Latgale is also due to the lack of any kind of cooperation or agreement between parties representing Russophones in Latgale and the coalition government in Riga⁶³. The ethnolinguistic and socioeconomic aspects of Latgale will continue to enforce the marginal status of eastern Latvia's Russophones, unless the coalition government's threat perception of the parties representing this part of the population changes and cooperation becomes possible.

⁶³ CHMIELEWSKI Bartosz, *Far behind Riga: Latvia's problems with uneven development*, OSW, 2023, p.5.

II-LATVIANIZATION AND ITS IMPACT

In this chapter I will look at actions undertaken by the Latvian government to ‘latvianize’ the country following Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and how this impacted the status of Russian speakers in Latvia. Originally, latvianization in Latvia was aimed at restoring the national identity of Latvians and their status as titular nation in the country. The process of latvianization involves the marginalization of the Russian language and culture in favour of the Latvian language and culture⁶⁴. This has been an ongoing process since Latvian independence in 1991, but Putin’s invasion of Ukraine has accelerated latvianization to unprecedented rates. Debates and controversies have surrounded these changes and how they should be implemented.

The latvianization reforms have a cultural, linguistic and educational dimension. The cultural dimension is the nationwide destruction of Soviet monuments and the banning of celebrations marking Soviet Victory Day on the 9th of May⁶⁵. The linguistic dimension involves the requirement for Russian and Belarusian citizens to pass language tests to renew their residence permits and the educational dimension involves the complete overhaul of schools in Latvia to teaching in Latvian. The Latvian educational system kept its bilingual nature from the Soviet era for most of its independent history, with some ‘minority’ schools teaching in both languages as opposed to only teaching in Latvian. Transitioning to only teaching in Latvian has been in government plans for a long time with major reforms taking place in 2004 and 2018⁶⁶. Putin’s war in Ukraine has been significant in bringing this issue to the forefront in Latvia with the transition to only teaching in Latvian expected to be completed by the academic year of 2026/7.

According to Daunis Auers, it would have been more complicated to push through latvianization reforms without the war in Ukraine. Initially pursued by Latvian nationalists of the National Front in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s, these policies were blocked on one hand, by Russia who still had troops in Latvia up until 1994⁶⁷, and on the other hand by the West that demanded that Latvia respect minority rights to join Western organizations. Therefore, Latvia’s accession to NATO and the EU was therefore a step forward towards implementing these

⁶⁴ GREEN Sonia Bychkov, *LANGUAGE OF LULLABIES: THE RUSSIFICATION AND DE-RUSSIFICATION OF THE BALTIC STATES*, p.223-224.

⁶⁵ *Latvia has banned celebrating May 9*, <https://mind.ua/en/news/20256369-latvia-has-banned-celebrating-may-9>, consulté le 23 mai 2023.

⁶⁶ LIEPINSH Imants et JAKUBEK Anna Maria, *Latvia school language reform irks Russian minority, backed by Jewish community*, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-latvia-school-language-reform-infuriates-russian-minority/>, consulté le 18 juin 2023.

⁶⁷ David Smith, *The Baltic States : Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania*, Londres, Routledge, 2002, p.37.

changes that would see it regain its status of the 1930's which consisted of having an ethnically, culturally and linguistically pure country profile. However, the 2007-8 financial crisis damaged the Latvian economy and the subsequent years saw many Latvians emigrate abroad. Among other problems, demographic and economic issues overtook the question of what to do with the Russian speaking minority in Latvia. As Daunis Auers has explained; *“there was a nationalist impulse, but it was always reined in”*. Finally, with the war in Ukraine in 2022, Latvia now finds itself in a much better position to implement these policies and its position in the EU and NATO has become far more important than before due to its positioning. Discussions are currently underway to increase the number of seats granted to Latvia in the European Parliament at the next elections in 2024⁶⁸.

2.1 The demolition of Soviet monuments and the ban on celebrating the 9th of May

On the 16th of June 2022 the Saeima passed a law to dismantle sites glorifying the Soviet and Nazi regimes. The main target of this law was the monument to Soviet soldiers in Victory Park in Riga, however the cabinet of ministers was given until the 31st of July 2022 to determine the other monuments to be dismantled. A further date was set by which the dismantlement of these sites had to take place-the 15th of November 2022. However, monuments on or near burial sites would need to be left intact due to Latvia's international commitments regarding burials and cemeteries⁶⁹. In the statement released by the Saeima Press Service it was specified that *‘The Law will not apply to monuments, commemorative signs, memorial plaques and sites, and architectural or artistic sites located in the burial sites of soldiers killed in the war, or to memorials to the victims of the Soviet or Nazi terror’*⁷⁰. This is why Soviet monuments such as the one in Daugavpils' Dubrovina Park (pictured below) under which Soviet officers are buried can still be found in Latvia today.

⁶⁸ У Латвии, возможно, будет еще один евродепутат после выборов 2024 года (La Lettonie aura peut-être encore un eurodéputée après les élections de 2024), <https://rus.lsm.lv/statja/novosti/politika/15.06.2023-u-latvii-vozmozno-budet-eshhe-odin-evrodeputat-posle-vyborov-2024-goda.a513022/>, consulté le 21 juin 2023.

⁶⁹ Saeima suspends bilateral agreement between Latvia and Russia on memorial buildings and monuments, <https://www.saeima.lv/en/news/saeima-news/31027-saeima-suspends-bilateral-agreement-between-latvia-and-russia-on-memorial-buildings-and-monuments>, consulté le 21 juin 2023.

⁷⁰ Saeima passes a law to dismantle sites glorifying the Soviet and Nazi regimes, <https://www.saeima.lv/en/news/saeima-news/31206-saeima-passes-a-law-to-dismantle-sites-glorifying-the-soviet-and-nazi-regimes>, consulté le 8 janvier 2023.



©Edward Laycock

The conversations I had with people in Latvia often verged on the subject of the demolition of Soviet monuments around the country. Russophones I spoke to often said they were against these actions and that no matter how much the Latvian authorities tried, they would not change their vision of history. On the other hand, Latvians that I spoke generally seemed to agree that these actions should have occurred much sooner, perhaps even 30 years ago, and that the Latvian government has dragged their feet in implementing these changes. On the day of the demolition of the monument to the Soviet soldiers in Riga, I remember crowds of people, some waiting for hours, journalists and police all waiting on Riga's Uzvaras boulevard, hoping to catch a glimpse of the moment when the giant Victory Monument would come crashing down. Whilst taking in this atmosphere, I heard an elderly lady walking in the opposite direction, speaking Russian to someone on the phone; *"I will never forgive all those who allowed this to happen"*. The Euphoria felt by many Latvians after the demolition of the monument was contrasted by shock among many Russian speakers, especially those belonging to the elderly generation. Indignation during protests turned ugly and 14 people were arrested in Riga on the 24th of August 2022, on the eve of the demolition⁷¹.

⁷¹ Полиция Латвии сообщила о 14 задержанных у памятника Освободителям Риги (La police lettone a communiqué l'arrestation de 14 personnes au monument des libérateurs de Riga), <https://tass.ru/proisshestiya/15545793>, consulté le 9 juin 2023.

In Daugavpils, the reaction to the demolition of the Soviet monument on Slavass Square, that occurred later in the year, was a lot more radical; during protests 37 people were detained by the police⁷². Prior to the protests, the mayor of Daugavpils, Andrejs Elksnins reacted questionably by urging local people to say their ‘farewells’ to the monument by laying flowers, lighting candles and taking photos⁷³. After the removal of the monument on Slavass Square in Daugavpils, candles were placed to form a slogan that said ‘We shan’t forgive, we shan’t forget’ next to where the monument used to be⁷⁴.

Inna Plavoka, who lives and works in Daugavpils, said that the worst reaction to the dismantling of Soviet monuments in Latvia was in Daugavpils. However, she emphasized this reaction was partly provoked by the local mayor, Andrejs Elksnins, who made statements that on one hand were ambiguous, but on the other hand were what his voters wanted to hear. Inna went on to underline that the Soviet monument on Slavass Square that was dismantled had no cultural value and that it was meant as an example of what the communist party considered to be ‘modern art’ back in 1969 when it was built⁷⁵. The people who laid flowers at the foot of the monument were often misinformed, thinking that Red Army soldiers were buried underneath it. There was no concrete information about the monument provided by the local authorities to counter Russian propaganda that deliberately overestimated the cultural value of the monument. Nor was there any talk of what would or could replace this monument. Inna explained that in her opinion, if more would have been done by the local authorities to explain the insignificance of these monuments and how Russian propaganda exploits this, then many people in Daugavpils would have looked at Soviet monuments differently.

My stay in Latvia in August 2022 helped me see a significant contrast between attitudes towards Soviet monuments in Riga and in Daugavpils. Whilst in Riga many cheered this process on, in Daugavpils I found a very different atmosphere; the city felt a lot smaller but there seemed to be far more Soviet era monuments than in Riga. Not knowing very much about the obligation to dismantle the monuments at the time, I came under the impression that the

⁷² *Thirty-seven people detained around Daugavpils monument / Article*, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/society/crime/thirty-seven-people-detained-around-daugavpils-monument.a480316/>, consulté le 5 janvier 2023.

⁷³ LETA, *Daugavpils mayor invites residents to say «farewell» to monuments to be removed in Latvia*, <https://bnn-news.com/daugavpils-mayor-invites-residents-to-say-farewell-to-monuments-to-be-removed-in-latvia-239641>, 28 octobre 2022, consulté le 8 janvier 2023.

⁷⁴ Vidéo Facebook de Daugavpils, <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?ref=saved&v=821264612421495>, consulté le 21 juin 2023.

⁷⁵ *26 июля 1969 года: открытие сквера Славы, обелиска и «головы»* (26 juillet 1969 : Ouverture de Glory Square, obélisque et "tête"), <https://grani.la.lv/26-iyulya-1969-godaotkrytie-skvera-slavy-obeliska-i-golovy>, 26 juillet 2015, consulté le 10 juin 2023.

Latvian authorities wouldn't dare to dismantle any of the monuments in Daugavpils. Whilst the Victory Monument in Riga was dismantled on the 25th of August 2022, the reluctance of local authorities meant that the monument of Slavav Square was only brought down 2 months later on the 31st of October (only 2 weeks before the official deadline for doing so)⁷⁶. So far, every time I have been to Daugavpils, I have seen flowers and wreaths lain at the foot of the Soviet monument in Dubrovina Park, suggesting the importance of this monument to the local community. Below is a picture I took on the 27th of February 2023 of where the Soviet monument on Slavav Square in Daugavpils used to be before it was dismantled.



©Edward Laycock

On the 20th of April 2023, the Latvian Saeima passed a law banning any public events on the 9th of May except for those that celebrate Europe Day. This was the first law in Latvia that made a festivity celebrated by Russophones officially taboo. The clamp down on the celebrations of the 9th of May started almost 3 years earlier during the Covid pandemic. In 2020, people were not allowed near the Victory Monument in Riga for the first time. This carried on in 2021 and in 2022, following the decision of Riga city council to dismantle the

⁷⁶ Gaika Viktorija, 37 задержанных, « Катюша » и летящие бутылки. Как сносили памятники в Даугавпилсе (37 détenus, "Katyusha" et des bouteilles volantes. Comment les monuments ont été démolis à Daugavpils), <https://chayka.lv/2022/10/31/pamyatniki-v-daugavpils-snesli/>, 31 octobre 2022, consulté le 18 juin 2023.

monument⁷⁷, it was already clear that there would be no return to the grandiose celebrations of the 9th of May that had taken place in previous years, mainly from 2009-2019. It has often been said that the organization of large-scale celebrations in Riga was a tactic of former mayor, Nils Usakovs, to gain support.

I was in Riga on the 9th of May 2023 and remember it being a very calm day. It differed greatly from the concert and fireworks that had marked this day only four years ago⁷⁸ and seemed to take the form of a quiet Remembrance Day. Elderly people went to cemeteries to remember the fallen, whilst a vast police cordon surrounded the area where the Victory Monument used to be. In Riga police was also present in the cemeteries where flowers were laid. Below is a picture taken at the tomb of the unknown Soviet soldier in Pokrova cemetery, Riga on the 9th of May 2023.



©Edward Laycock

Across Latvia, the 9th 2023 seemed to pass quietly. However, an exception can be made for Daugavpils where many videos were uploaded onto social media platforms such as TikTok of

⁷⁷ Рижская дума одобрила снос памятника советским солдатам. Начались протесты (Le conseil municipal de Riga a approuvé la démolition du monument aux soldats soviétiques. Les protestations ont commencé), <https://www.bbc.com/russian/news-61442343> , 13 mai 2022, consulté le 4 janvier 2023.

⁷⁸ ФОТО: В парке Победы отмечают 9 мая (Photo: dans le parc de la victoire on fête le 9 mai), <https://rus.lsm.lv/statja/novosti/obschestvo/foto-v-parke-pobedi-otmechayut-9-maja.a318387/>, consulté le 18 juin 2023.

people being stopped by the Latvian police for various reasons. The most controversial event that happened on this day was the police detention of a veteran of the Soviet-Afghan war, Grigory Boyarov, in Daugavpils for wearing his blazer with medals. Unsurprisingly, the veteran was then invited to the mayor's office after being released⁷⁹. According to Martins Kaprans, organizations of the veterans of the Soviet –Afghan war in Latvia are particularly susceptible to being instrumentalized for Kremlin interests due to the unsurprising scarcity of Soviet World War II veterans. Two remaining Afghan veteran organisations in Latvia are 'Salang' and 'Pereval' (the Russian word for 'Passage')⁸⁰.

The vast police presence in Latvia on the 9th of May marks a transition from fearing accusations of infringing on minority rights to returning to the grassroots of Latvian nationalism, which sought to give Latvia a pure ethnic, linguistic and cultural country profile. According to Daunis Auers this is strongly linked to how successful the Russian army has been abroad over the years; Reforms of 'latvianization' did not take place in 2014 or 2015 partly because of the success of the Russian army in capturing Crimea and Eastern Ukraine. The current status of the Russophone minority in Latvia has begun to resemble the status given to Latvians prior to their independence. This reversal of roles perpetuates fear between both communities; I even remember two elderly Russian speaking people on a bus in Riga talking about the 'fear' they felt they were forced to live in. In my interview with Kaspars Germanis it was mentioned that this aspect of the ethnolinguistic relationship in Latvia is unfortunate, but that it often seems as if '*Russians only understand the language of force*'.

However, according to Latvian philosopher and author of an article on the celebration of the 9th of May in Latvia, Artis Svece, with whom Camille Calandre conducted an interview, the reversal of roles in this power relationship is marked by a historic discrepancy. It is important to look at Latvia's 'colonization' and ask oneself why there are so many Russian speakers in Latvia in the first place. The power relationship is indeed in reverse, but it needs to be said that its current form is more just than what it used to be. Artis Svece makes a good comparison between contemporary Russian speakers in Latvia and British settlers in Zimbabwe or Zambia.

⁷⁹ FREEBALT, *Ветеран, задержанный 9 мая в Даугавпилсе за пиджак с медалями, все же возложил цветы к памятнику* (Le vétéran, détenu le 9 mai à Daugavpils pour une veste avec des médailles, a encore déposé des fleurs au monument), <https://freebalt.com/veteran-zaderzhannyj-9-maya-v-daugavpils-za-pidzhak-s-medalyami-vse-zhe-vozlozhil-czvetu-k-pamyatniku/>, 11 mai 2023, consulté le 11 juin 2023.

⁸⁰ «Тогда вставай вместо него!» (Alors lève-toi à sa place !), <https://grani.la.lv/togda-vstavaj-vmesto-nego>, 15 février 2019, consulté le 18 juin 2023.

These social groups tend to be accepted in society but nevertheless remain vulnerable to internal pressures and external post-colonial influence.

The symbolism of the 9th of May in Latvia is a good representation of the controversial relationship between ethnic Latvians and Russian speakers. Whilst for Russian speakers this is often the biggest day of their year, for Latvians it can be interpreted as a way of remembering the beginnings of the Soviet occupation of Latvia. Yet, according to Artis Svece, it remains important to recall that the occupation of Latvia was never among the official reasons for which Russophones celebrate the 9th of May. Officially it is meant as a celebration to remember the Red Army soldiers who died in the defeat of Nazism and to mark the end of the Second World War (or the ‘Great Patriotic War’ as it is called in Russia)⁸¹. Nevertheless, Artis Svece points out that Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has helped to highlight a group of Russophones that retain a ‘haughty’ and ‘colonialist’ attitude towards Latvia. This is the social group of Russophones that most often claims to have done a lot for Latvia and accuses Latvians of being ungrateful.

As an ethnic Belarusian whose grandfather fought in the Red Army, Inna Plavoka made it clear that she thinks the ninth of May should be a Remembrance Day for Russian speakers in Latvia, rather than a cause for celebration. In Camille Calandre’s interview with Artis Svece, this was underlined by explaining that, as the celebrations of the 9th of May began to grow with Harmony’s dominance in the Riga City Council from 2009 to 2019, these celebrations became increasingly hedonistic. Large quantities of alcohol and hooliganism led to an increased police presence around the Victory Monument in Riga where the festivities took place. Despite this, there would often be complaints that there were not enough policemen on this perimeter to ensure the safety of the public. This is why the police presence on the 9th of May of 2022 and 2023 in Latvia may have at first seemed excessive to outsiders such as myself.

One thing that both Kaspars Germanis and Artis Svece emphasized about the ninth of May, and more generally about Russophone integration in Latvia, is that it would be wrong to humiliate those who follow this tradition however controversial it may be considered. Perhaps the glamorous forms of celebrating the ninth of May that took place from 2009 to 2019 were more about celebrating identity, rather paying homage to history. Wanting to gather with others and celebrate is a natural human instinct and it remains to be seen whether anything will be able to replace the 9th of May for the Russophone community in Latvia. Artis Svece rightly

⁸¹ *Victory Day in Russia (9th of May) | Visit Russia, Moscow, Saint-Petersburg - Tsar Visit*, <https://www.tsarvisit.com/en/blog/victory-day-in-russia-9th-of-may>, consulté le 14 juin 2023.

suggested that these types of humiliating situations can often perpetuate forms of violence that exist between two communities living in the same state such as the case of the Israeli Palestinian conflict.

Personally, I very much agree with this thought of promoting a ‘sustainable’ form of latvianization that avoids any forms of humiliation, that can often backfire on policy makers by making members of minorities more radical. This is certainly my impression after having been to Daugavpils, where people who continue to follow Russian state media through the internet are becoming increasingly less willing to compromise their position for the sake of peaceful coexistence with those who disagree with them. Below is a picture taken by my Latvian friend, Edgars Bucens, whilst we were in Daugavpils on the 1st of March 2023-the graffiti pictured says ‘America you s*ck’ in Russian.



©Edward Laycock

2.2 The ‘language amendment’ and how it changes Russophone attitudes to the Latvian language

Since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the Latvian government has made amendments to the requirements for Russian and Belarusian citizens living in Latvia to extend their residence permits. These amendments involve passing a language test to confirm

basic knowledge of Latvian. This reform affects around 25 000 Russian and Belarusian citizens as well as non-citizens who have not yet confirmed their Latvian language skills⁸².

Even though these language tests only require candidates to demonstrate a very basic knowledge of Latvian at an A2 level, the idea of making elderly people under the age of 75 take language tests has shown to be controversial. In fact, the results of the tests speak for themselves with only around half of the candidates having passed so far⁸³. The 48% pass rate reveals much about the sociolinguistic environments of Latvia. According to the Common European Framework for languages, an A2 language level means a candidate 'can understand sentences and frequently used expressions', 'can communicate in simple everyday tasks' and 'can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her past'⁸⁴. Essentially this level of language knowledge would only require candidates to have very basic conversations in Latvian on a daily basis. However, the reality is very different. As the results of the first round of the language tests show, many Russophones in Latvia seem to live in closed 'Russian speaking bubbles' in which they do not have little need for the Latvian language. From some of the conversations in Latvia, I gathered that for many ethnic Latvians, even a high success rate in these language tests could be insignificant. The basic level of Latvian demanded is no guarantee that Russophones will be willing to step out of this Russian speaking bubble even if they manage to pass the test. There is no guarantee that these people will use Latvian more than before. During my interview with Kaspars Germanis, it was admitted that it is possible to live in cities where Russian is widely spoken such as Riga, Jurmala and Daugavpils without any knowledge of Latvian.

Furthermore, two employees working in museums in Rezekne and Ludza (Latgale, eastern Latvia) told me that, following independence, many Latvians continued to live in the linguistic status quo enforced by the Soviet Union by willingly switching to Russian when addressed in Russian. Inevitably, the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 has changed this habit for many ethnic Latvians, with many now answering queries addressed to them in the Russian language in Latvian. Nevertheless, from my own observations I saw many ethnic

⁸² *Around 25,000 people will face language test to extend residency rights*, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/society/society/around-25000-people-will-face-language-test-to-extend-residency-rights.a486540/>, consulté le 14 juin 2023.

⁸³ *Around half of Russians pass Latvian language exam*, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/society/society/18.05.2023-around-half-of-russians-pass-latvian-language-exam.a509202/>, consulté le 19 mai 2023.

⁸⁴ *The CEFR Levels - Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)* - www.coe.int, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/level-descriptions>, consulté le 14 juin 2023.

Latvians working in the services sector retain this habit. Over time the bilingual linguistic status quo has made learning Latvian unnecessary for many Russian speakers and can be taken as evidence for the low pass rate in the language tests, which required many Russophones to learn Latvian from scratch. Despite the war in Ukraine, many private businesses in Latvia still offer services in Russia for economic reasons.

In my interview with Inna Plavoka in March 2023, she told me that she was a non-citizen in Latvia and that she hadn't yet confirmed her knowledge of the Latvian language. She had previously not learnt Latvian out of offence of not being granted Latvian citizenship despite being born and raised in Latvia. On the 24th of February 2022 she realised that she had made a big mistake and is now studying Latvian intensively to confirm her level of Latvian and pass her language test. She explained that *“When the war started, I felt a sharp need to be part of Latvia and to feel Latvian. Before the 24th of February, I never thought in this way... I am a non-citizen and up until the 24th of February I felt very comfortable with this status”*. Inna underlined that the war in Ukraine had had the same impact on many other Russophones in Daugavpils.

Questions have also been asked about what will happen to those who will fail to pass the language test. It remains uncertain whether further concessions will be made or what the repatriations of foreign citizens would look like. Deportations of Russian and Belarusian citizens would surely be instrumentalized by Russian propaganda which would most likely accuse Latvia of carrying out the same acts Latvians themselves were subjected to by Soviet occupants; in 1941 and 1945-51 around 60 000 inhabitants of Latvia were deported to different locations in the depths of the USSR⁸⁵.

To this extent, the residence permit language test requirements reflect the unintegrated status of many Russian speakers in Latvia. However, there is another underlying issue of scarce Latvian language course availability⁸⁶. Free language courses provided by the government were quickly filled up and it became difficult to find available private Latvian language courses partly because of the deficit of teachers in Latvia⁸⁷. Inna Plavoka told me that for the

⁸⁵ David Smith, *The Baltic States : Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania*, Londres, Routledge, 2002, p.57.

⁸⁶ *За несколько часов заняли все места на бесплатных курсах латышского языка* (En quelques heures, nous avons pris toutes les places dans les cours gratuits de langue lettone), <https://rus.tvnet.lv/7687198/za-neskolko-chasov-zanyali-vse-mesta-na-besplatnyh-kursah-latyshskogo-yazyka>, 9 janvier 2023, consulté le 15 juin 2023.

⁸⁷ *Latvia's schools could be 1,000 teachers short for next year*, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/society/education/08.06.2023-latvias-schools-could-be-1000-teachers-short-for-next-year.a511908/>, consulté le 8 juin 2023.

first time she had to offer her mother, who was also due to take a Latvian language test, money for a language course as a present for her birthday. With the issue of Latvian language courses being unavailable or unaffordable to many, efforts by the Latvian interior minister were made in February 2023 to soften Russian and Belarusian citizens' residency rights conditions. As it stands, they are currently required to pass a language exam by the 31st of December, otherwise their residence permits will be declared void⁸⁸.

2.3 Educational reforms

The full 'latvianization' of the Latvian educational system has featured in the Latvian government's plans ever since independence. Perhaps one of the events marking the beginnings of the polarization over education in Latvia were the 2004 protests, in which some 6 000 Russian speakers protested outside Latvia's parliament against a law limiting the use of the Russian language in schools⁸⁹. In this part of the chapter, I want to demonstrate how the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 intensified the latvianization of the Latvian education system. In November 2022 it was announced that Russian would no longer be taught as a foreign language in Latvian schools. Instead of Russian, official EU languages would be taught and minority schools that teach in Russian would need to begin to transition to teaching in Latvian only, from the 1st of September 2023 onwards. The aim set by the Latvian government is that Latvian will be the language of instruction in all schools across the country by the academic year of 2026-7⁹⁰.

According to Daunis Auers, part of the reason for the full latvianization of the education system in Latvia is the low quality of education offered by minority schools that teach in Russian. Latvia kept the bilingual educational system initiated under the Soviet Union, but minority schools that have taught in Russian have struggled to recruit teachers and the level of Latvian in these schools has generally been poor. A study in 2018 showed that 9 out of the 10 most unsuccessful schools in Latvia taught in Russian⁹¹. Graduates from these schools

⁸⁸ *Amendments in Immigration Law: What Awaits Russian Citizens Living in Latvia - Foreign Policy Research Institute*, <https://www.fpri.org/article/2023/04/amendments-in-immigration-law-what-awaits-russian-citizens-living-in-latvia/>, consulté le 15 juin 2023.

⁸⁹ « Russian Speakers Protest Language Reform In Latvia », *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 2023, Disponible sur l'internet: <https://www.rferl.org/a/1051443.html>

⁹⁰ LETA, *Latvian Ministry of Education proposes replacing Russian language with EU languages in schools*, <https://bnn-news.com/latvian-ministry-of-education-proposes-replacing-russian-language-with-eu-languages-in-schools-240199>, 21 novembre 2022, consulté le 15 juin 2023.

⁹¹ *Из 10 самых неуспевающих школ Риги только одна — латышская. Почему?* (Sur les 10 écoles les moins performantes de Riga, une seule est lettone. Pourquoi ?), <https://rus.tvnet.lv/6473359/iz-10-samyh-neuspevayushchih-shkol-rigi-tolko-odna-latyshskaya-pochemu>, 10 décembre 2018, consulté le 18 juin 2023.

often graduated with a poor level of Latvian and struggled to find their way in Latvia. The public sector is closed to those who do not speak fluent Latvian, meaning it is impossible to work in local government, diplomacy or banks. Limited opportunities led many young Russian speakers to emigrate to Europe or Russia where they were able to study and then work in a language more familiar to them. This is especially relevant to the period following the 2008 global financial crisis when slow economic recovery pushed many Latvians (not only Russian speakers) to look for opportunities abroad.

The interviews I conducted confirmed the assumption that very many Russian speakers who graduate from minority schools in Latvia speak Latvian poorly. Regardless of the generation, many young, middle-aged and old Russophones struggle to express themselves in Latvian. This is a feature of the ‘parallel world’ phenomenon, which has been forming itself since Latvia’s independence with bilingualism still playing a part in most of the country’s modern history. However, the war in Ukraine has opened a window of opportunity to alter this situation. Transitioning to an education system that is taught uniquely in Latvian would mean raising the standard of teaching and the quality of education across the whole country.

At the same time, the war in Ukraine has highlighted that some minority schools in Latvia are simply not ready enough to go through this transition. In my interview with Inna Plavoka it was mentioned that in some schools in Latgale up to 40% of teachers in some schools have insufficient knowledge of Latvian to be able to teach in it⁹². Moreover, a survey conducted in 2021 showed that almost half of Latvian schools did not offer a wide choice of foreign languages for pupils to choose from, meaning that they could face potential problems in the future when Russian is removed all together from school syllabuses⁹³. Latvia is experiencing a shortage of teachers and in April 2023 teachers went on a 3-day strike due to unsatisfactory working conditions⁹⁴.

Daunis Auers has underlined the fact that the full latvianization of the Latvian educational system would be sociologically revolutionary for many families in which, for the first time a

⁹² *Are Russian schools in Latvia ready to teach in official language?*, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/society/education/02.05.2023-are-russian-schools-in-latvia-ready-to-teach-in-official-language.a507061/>, consulté le 3 mai 2023.

⁹³ *Запрет преподавания русского языка: Даугавпилское управление образования выясняет, какой ресурс есть у школ* (Interdiction d'enseigner la langue russe : le département de l'éducation de Daugavpils découvre les ressources dont disposent les écoles), <https://gorod.lv/novosti/337414-zapret-prepodavaniya-russkogo-yazyka-daugavpilsskoe-upravlenie-obrazovaniya-vyясnyaet-kakoi-resurs-est-u-shkol>, consulté le 14 février 2023.

⁹⁴ *Latvia's teachers begin three-day strike*, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/society/education/24.04.2023-latvias-teachers-begin-three-day-strike.a506054/>, consulté le 16 juin 2023.

new generation would grow up studying in a language other than Russian. These changes are especially significant for those who have young children and would like them to be able to study in Russian. Moreover, a more general stigma towards the Russian language and culture has developed in the Western world since the 24th of February 2022, putting in question even such things as studying Russian authors and poets or playing music by Russian composers at operas⁹⁵. In Latvia, his development has been marked by the recent removal of a statue of the famous Russian poet, Alexander Pushkin, from Riga⁹⁶.

Chapter conclusion

The steps made towards a full ‘Latvianization’ of the Latvian education system since the start of Putin’s invasion of Ukraine have highlighted the unequal status of Russophones in minority schools. The war has presented a window of opportunity for changing this status of many Russian speakers being less well educated. Ultimately, the education reforms will help the younger generation of Russophones integrate better into Latvian society and not force them into emigration in the near future. This is not to say that a unilingual educational system in Latvia would rid the country of ethnolinguistic tensions. In my interview with Inna Plavoka it was emphasized that Russophone families in Latvia tend to be more closely knit than those of their ethnic Latvian counterparts. This can result in Russophone children being taught one version of history at home and a very different version of history at school—a paradox that reflects on how it is technically impossible to stop those who want to celebrate the 9th of May in Latvia from celebrating it privately. The language amendment and the toppling of Soviet monuments present legislative alterations to Russophones’ status. It is likely that these changes will push many to understand the sheer necessity of integrational processes such as learning Latvian, whilst others will prefer to hold on to old and more radical beliefs, further isolating themselves in Latvian society.

⁹⁵ <https://euromaidanpress.com/author/orysia>, *Lithuanian Opera drops works by Russian composers as “culture in Russia too closely associated with aggressive politics”*, <https://euromaidanpress.com/2023/01/13/lithuanian-opera-removes-works-by-russian-composers-because-culture-in-russia-is-too-closely-associated-with-aggressive-politics-of-this-country/>, 13 janvier 2023, consulté le 21 juin 2023.

⁹⁶ « В Риге демонтировали памятник Пушкину. При чем тут хоккей? » (Le monument à Pouchkine a été démantelé à Riga. Qu'en est-il du hockey ?), in *BBC News Русская служба* (Service russe de la BBC).

III-INTERNATIONALISATION OF THE RUSSOPHONE QUESTION IN LATVIA

Since the 24th of February 2022, Russia has undertaken actions to present the status of Russophones in Latvia as a product of discriminatory circumstances. Naturally, this is not a new phenomenon, with representatives of the Russian Federation in international organisations previously denouncing their counterparts from the Baltic States at every possible occasion. These denouncements ran parallel to education reforms and civil rights issues in the case of non-citizens in Latvia and Estonia and were often voiced in the Council of Europe which caters for ethnic minority rights⁹⁷ across Europe.

Since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Russia has been excluded from the Council of Europe⁹⁸. This has resulted in the Russian Federation finding different ways of voicing concerns for its ‘compatriots’ abroad in Latvia. In this chapter I will look at how Latvia’s ‘Russophone Question’ is internationalized by different actors and how this affects the status of Russian speakers in Latvia. The issue of the minority’s status since the beginning of the war in Ukraine has drawn the attention of various foreign media outlets as well.

3.1 Perceptions of Latvia’s ‘Russophone Question’ from China

Since the 24th of February 2022 the world has seen a clear rapprochement in the military-strategic relationship between Russia and China. As a result of China’s efforts to assert itself as a mediator in the Russian-Ukrainian War with its ‘Peace Plan’⁹⁹, there has been an increase in interest in the broader consequences of the war in Chinese media. CGTN is a Chinese state-run foreign language channel that was launched in 1997¹⁰⁰. It can be classified as a form of Chinese ‘soft power’ abroad despite being less successful than its Russian TV channel counterpart, ‘Russia Today’. CGTN published an article on Russian speakers in Latvia on the 12th of February 2023 called ‘UN experts criticize Latvia over Russian language curtailment’¹⁰¹. In this article CGTN recounts the criticism that Latvia received from UN

⁹⁷ Massias, Jean-Pierre. "Russia and the Council of Europe: Ten Years Wasted?." *Understanding Russia and the New Independent States*. Paris: IFRI (2007), p.116

⁹⁸ *The Russian Federation is excluded from the Council of Europe - Portal* - www.coe.int, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/-/the-russian-federation-is-excluded-from-the-council-of-europe>, consulté le 19 juin 2023.

⁹⁹ « Безучастное участие: что стоит за мирным планом Китая по Украине? » (Participation inactive: qu'y a-t-il derrière le plan de paix de la Chine pour l'Ukraine ?), in *BBC News Русская служба* (service russe de la BBC), consulté le 19 juin 2023.

¹⁰⁰ *CGTN | Breaking News, China News, World News and Video*, <https://www.cgtn.com/about-us.html>, consulté le 19 juin 2023.

¹⁰¹ *UN experts criticize Latvia over Russian language curtailment - CGTN*, <https://newseu.cgtn.com/news/2023-02-12/UN-experts-criticize-Latvia-over-Russian-language-curtailment-1hi9t7yPDKo/index.html>, consulté le 21 février 2023.

human rights experts for its educational reforms and the way in which Latvia responded to this criticism, stating that the reforms were part of a more general and long-term ‘de-Russification effort’. The article reflects China’s neutral attitude towards the war in Ukraine by taking an impartial stand when explaining the origins of Russian speakers in Latvia. It explains that Latvia sees its incorporation into the USSR as an illegal annexation, whilst Russia has always believed that Latvia joined the Soviet Union willingly. There is no mention of the deportations of Latvians that ensued, only a comment on the significant growth of the Russian-speaking population which became ‘fuelled by settlers’ under Soviet rule.

CGTN also published a report on the social situation in Latvia following the outbreak of the war in 2022. The report is entitled ‘Russian language division in Latvia’ and discusses the measures put in place by the Latvian government to limit the broadcasting of Russian state media in Latvia¹⁰². As of June 2022, all Russia-based TV channels were banned in the territory of Latvia. This was done according to a law which stipulates that channels registered in a country threatening the territorial integrity and independence of another country should not be operational in Latvia. Hundreds of Russian websites including popular social media platforms such as ‘Vkontakte’ (‘in contact with’) and ‘Odnoklassniki’ (‘Classmates’) also came under the ban¹⁰³. The CGTN report seems to emphasize that Latvia is ‘de-Russifying’ more than it is ‘Latvianizing’. The case of Latvia seems to show how ‘De-russification’ and ‘Latvianization’ are in many cases inextricably linked due to the need to replace one language with the other. During my interview with Martins Kaprans it was made clear that all these reforms come under the category of ‘Latvianization’ since there is technically nothing left to ‘de-russify’ in Latvia; Latvian is the only official of Latvia and, officially, Russian is only recognized as a foreign language.

CGTN remained active on Twitter during the diplomatic crisis between Russia and Latvia that took place at the end of March 2022. On the 29th of March 2022 its official Twitter account, ‘@CGTNOfficial’, released information on the expulsion of Latvian diplomats from Russia¹⁰⁴. Two days it was communicated that Vladimir Putin had dismissed Russia’s ambassador to

¹⁰² *Prevalence of Russian language in Latvia causing some unease - CGTN Europe*, <https://www.cgtnnow.com/cgtn-europe/videos/220709-russian-language-division-in-latvia>, consulté le 21 février 2023.

¹⁰³ Rönngren, Emma. "Cancelling Russia: The situation for Russian speakers in Latvia following the invasion of Ukraine." *Baltic Worlds* 15 (2022), p.24.

¹⁰⁴ *CGTN sur Twitter*, <https://twitter.com/CGTNOfficial/status/1508756728132763649>, 29 mars 2022, consulté le 19 juin 2023.

Latvia¹⁰⁵. Furthermore, CGTN's page on TikTok also shows an interest on China's behalf in Latvia's language amendment and those who need to pass the test. The short clip that CGTN published on TikTok on the 16th of June 2023 features the same explanations as in the article previously discussed by underlining that 25% of Latvia's population is made up of ethnic Russians. It then goes on to again label this as a form of 'de-Russification' aimed at testing the loyalty of Russian citizens in Latvia. The video ends by stating that, unless those who do not pass the test comply with government instructions, they will be 'forcefully expelled' from Latvia. One of the candidates that features briefly in the video explains that having lived here for 40 years, Latvia is her home, and she would have nowhere else to go if she were to be deported¹⁰⁶. Undoubtedly, China is following the language tests in Latvia closely due to its own interethnic dynamics; on the 13th of June 2023 it was announced that school graduates in Tibet would no longer be able to take university entrance exams in the Tibetan language and would have to pass them in Mandarin Chinese. It is therefore in China's interest for language tests among ethnic minorities to be beneficial to their integration in society.

CGTN's emphasis on Latvia's actions being a form of 'de-Russification' rather than 'Latvianization' show a more critical stance towards Latvia's authorities. It must be said that China's diplomatic relations with the Baltic States significantly worsened since the Sino-Lithuanian Crisis of 2021, after which the Chinese government accused Lithuania of being an American satellite¹⁰⁷. CGTN rhetoric presents a degraded status of the Russian minority and interprets reforms that have been passed in Latvia as a form of discrimination they have to undergo. The ban on Russian state TV in Latvia is presented as a violation of freedom of speech and another arbitrary measure in Latvia's 'de-Russification' campaign.

3.2 Russia's attempts to highlight Russophones' status in Latvia as a product of discriminatory circumstances

In relation to Russophones in the Baltic States, Russia (often wrongfully) assumes the role of a historic motherland. In a 2019 study carried out by Martins Kaprans and Inta Mierina, it was found that a surprisingly low percentage of Russophones felt emotionally attached to the

¹⁰⁵ *CGTN sur Twitter*, <https://twitter.com/CGTNOfficial/status/1641721959758323713>, 31 mars 2023, consulté le 19 juin 2023.

¹⁰⁶ *CGTN Europe sur TikTok*, <https://www.tiktok.com/@cgtneurope/video/7241572903240731931>, consulté le 19 juin 2023.

¹⁰⁷ SMOLAR Eugeniusz, « Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia wobec Chin*. Win-win czy oportunistyczni klienci? » (Europe centrale et orientale et la Chine. Clients gagnants ou opportunistes ?), 2023, p.1.

Russian Federation: as an answer to the question ‘How close do you feel to Russia?’ 15% of respondents said that they felt close and only 4.8% said that they felt very close¹⁰⁸. According to Martins Kaprāns and Inta Mierina, Russophones in Latvia can be divided into 3 categories; Those who tow the Kremlin’s line are ‘compatriots’, those who take a ‘middle of the ground stand’ aligning their allegiances with neither Russia nor Europe are called ‘critical moderates’ and those who are pro-western and pro-European are labelled as ‘European Russians’¹⁰⁹. Since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, more pressure has been exerted on ‘critical moderates’ in Latvia to clarify who they support in the conflict, whereas the number of ‘European Russians’ has increased. In April 2022 a survey conducted by a Latvian state agency (SKDS) recorded the highest-ever support for Latvia’s western-oriented foreign policy¹¹⁰.

During my time in Latvia, I found that, paradoxically, there was very little attachment felt by Russophones towards Russia. Most of them were born and grew up in Latvia and only share a common language with Russia-this particularly applies to the younger generations of Russian speakers in Latvia. One lady I spoke to in Daugavpils was descended from a line of Old Believers who arrived in Latvia in the 16th century, highlighting how some Russophones in Latvia are completely detached from Soviet heritage and Russia’s role as the USSR’s successor state. Moreover, those who have non-citizen status and have visa free access to Russia, often don’t go there unless they absolutely must. Inna Plavoka, who studied in St Petersburg, told me that her visa-free access with her non-citizen status to the Russian Federation did not incite her to cross the border often; she had only been 3 times in the last thirty years.

Nevertheless, Russia keeps playing the role of a historic motherland for Russophones in the Baltic States. Recent evidence of this is the staging of a concert honouring Soviet Victory Day on the 9th of May 2023 on the other side of the river Narva dividing Russia and Estonia¹¹¹. Residents of the predominantly Russophone city of Narva in eastern Estonia were able to watch the concert from the other side of the river. As crowds gathered on the

¹⁰⁸ KAPRĀNS Mārtiņš et MIERIŅA Inta, « Minority Reconsidered: Towards a Typology of Latvia’s Russophone Identity », in *Europe-Asia Studies*, n° 1, vol. 71, 2 janvier 2019, p. 35.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 25

¹¹⁰ *Survey records highest-ever support for Latvia’s western-oriented foreign policy*, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/society/society/11.04.2023-survey-records-highest-ever-support-for-latvias-western-oriented-foreign-policy.a504354/>, consulté le 22 juin 2023.

¹¹¹ ERR News |, *Crowds gather in Narva to watch Victory Day concert on Russia’s border*, <https://news.err.ee/1608972320/crowds-gather-in-narva-to-watch-victory-day-concert-on-russia-s-border>, 9 mai 2023, consulté le 19 juin 2023.

riverbank to watch the concert, this staged act made Estonia's (and more generally the Baltic States') Russophone community resemble an oppressed minority that is deprived of its traditions. Unlike Latvia, Estonia has not banned public gatherings to celebrate the 9th of May¹¹² despite their controversy.

Furthermore, the former 'Sputnik' (Russian state-controlled media) correspondent, Aleksey Stefanov¹¹³, has been active in reporting on Russophones in Latvia from his exile in Russia and Belarus since the 24th of February 2022. He leads the YouTube and Telegram channels 'шпроты в изгнании' ('Sprats in exile') from which he spreads pro-Russian news on current events in Latvia. On the 14th of February 2023, Aleksey Stefanov published a video on his YouTube channel in which he interviewed Victoria Romanova who had recently moved from Latvia to Russia by participating in a Russian resettlement program¹¹⁴. The video was designed to lure other Russian speakers in Latvia into state resettlement programs organized by Russia. Stefanov makes a case of the resettlement schemes being well organised and highly effective. For domestic audiences in Russia, Stefanov's reporting is designed to paint a picture of Russophones clambering to escape Latvian oppression.

After having done some research into Russian state resettlement programs, I found a website called 'putdomoj.ru' ('the way home.ru') which targets Russian speakers from Latvia and many other countries from the former Eastern Bloc¹¹⁵. The resettlement initiative is led by a former businessman in Germany, Anatoly Bublik, who was himself resettled through the program in late 2022¹¹⁶. Bublik mainly communicates information about the resettlement program through a Telegram channel that has the same name as the previously mentioned website. It seems clear that Bublik was recruited shortly after his arrival in Russia by the government to lead this campaign. The resettlement of Russophones from the 'near abroad' (Russian terminology used for countries formerly making up the Soviet Union) allows Putin's

¹¹² ERR, *May 9 « Victory Day » events still hotly debated*, <https://news.err.ee/1608545722/may-9-victory-day-events-still-hotly-debated>, 27 mars 2022, consulté le 19 juin 2023.

¹¹³ *Алексей Стефанов* — Миротворецъ, <https://myrotvorets.team/aleksej-stefanov/>, consulté le 17 février 2023.

¹¹⁴ *Виктория Романова: «Россия нас приняла с распростертыми объятиями»* (Viktorija Romanova: "La Russie nous a accueillis à bras ouverts"), 2023, disponible sur l'internet: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ghbXWwZsqRs>

¹¹⁵ *Путь домой – Помощь в возвращении соотечественников в Россию* (Le chemin du retour - Aide au retour des compatriotes en Russie), <https://putdomoj.ru/>, consulté le 29 mai 2023.

¹¹⁶ *ТАТЬЯНА АЛЕКСЕЕВА, Интервью с Анатолием Бубликом. Из Германии в Россию. Не лёгкий Путь домой* (Entretien avec Anatoly Bublik. De l'Allemagne à la Russie. Pas facile de rentrer à la maison), 2023, disponible sur l'internet: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1FQYUC9BPN8>

government to populate areas of Russia that need socioeconomic input and account for Russia's prevalent demographic issue of having a declining population. On the official website of the resettlement programme, it says that '*The territories of priority residence include the regions of the Republic of Buryatia, the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), the Trans-Baikal Territory, the Kamchatka Territory, the Primorsky Territory, the Khabarovsk Territory, the Amur Region, the Magadan Region, the Sakhalin Region, the Jewish Autonomous Region, the Chukotka Autonomous District*'¹¹⁷. All these Russian regions are underpopulated, and they are all located in Siberia or in the Far East, meaning that the resettlement of Russophone Latvians is as much a form of social engineering as it is a show of benevolence for the Russian government.

In the interview with Romanova, it is said that her decision to move to Russia from Latvia was motivated by her will to live in a 'native' environment and return to her 'historic motherland'. However, what is not mentioned are numerous subsidies that Russophones from Latvia can receive when participating in the Russian State resettlement program. These subsidies include unemployment benefits, compensation for rent and travel expenses and a special 'resettlement' allowance from the government¹¹⁸. At the beginning of the interview with Romanova, Stefanov states that Russophone Latvians are 'running away' from Latvia, confirming the deliberate efforts made by Russian state media since the war in Ukraine to victimize Latvian Russian speakers. I personally did not see any signs of there being an exodus of Russophones leaving Latvia for Russia, whilst practically being on the border in Zilupe (Latgale). At the train station, there was only one unofficial taxi service to take people to the border crossing for 6 euros per person offered by two local young men, leaning against an old car next to where people were getting off the train. Out of the 20 odd people who got off the train with me, only two of them were heading for the border crossing. Both were lightly packed and did not look as if they were moving permanently.

¹¹⁷ Госпрограмма переселения, Консульский отдел Посольства Российской Федерации в Республике Казахстан (Programme de réinstallation de l'État, Section consulaire de l'Ambassade de la Fédération de Russie en République du Kazakhstan), http://consular.rfembassy.ru/lm/konsulskie_voprosy/sootechestvenniki/, consulté le 17 février 2023.

¹¹⁸ Выплаты переселенцам в 2023 году при участии в госпрограмме 2023 (Paiements aux repatriés en 2023 avec participation au programme de l'état 2023), <https://xn----8sbbemu6akbbsn.xn--plai/vyplaty-pereselencam-v-2022-godu-pri-uchastii-v/>, 15 décembre 2022, consulté le 20 juin 2023.

3.3 The Latvian Russia Union and its international reach

Ever since the Russia's invasion of Ukraine pushed Latvian authorities to implement unprecedented measures such as the dismantling of Soviet monuments across the country, the Latvian Russian Union (LKS) has remained active in voicing their opposition on the international front. Tatjana Zhdanok, member of the European Parliament and co-chairman of the LKS¹¹⁹, has raised Latvia's Russophone question at the EU institutions in Brussels. As Daunis Auers underlined in my interview with him, even if a political party only has one MEP and their political influence in the European Parliament can be considered as negligible, the money the political party receives from the Parliament is highly significant for its domestic development. Vladimirs Buzayevs, who represents the LKS in Riga city council has also been instrumental in raising Latvia's Russophone question in the UN by actively writing letters to a committee.

I have often heard comments about the Latvian Russian Union being Russian agents in all but name and that up to half of all their followers are loyal 'compatriots' to Kremlin politics. The party's most famous figure, Tatjana Zhdanok, voted against imposing additional sanctions on Russia following the invasion in 2022 and voted against the European Parliament's resolution in connection with the poisoning of Alexei Navalny¹²⁰. On the 23rd of June 2022 she also launched a petition against the destruction of Soviet monuments in Latvia. In a message to the European Parliament Petitions Committee Zhdanok stated that '*Latvian society is drowning in the abyss of hate speech towards the Russian-speaking population of the country*'. She went on to request that the European Parliament and the European Commission '*stop the ongoing full-scale campaign aimed at dehumanisation of the Russian-speaking citizens of Latvia*'¹²¹. Zhdanok's rhetoric is difficult to differentiate from what is often said on Russian state television, as she presents the status of Russophones' in Latvia as one that desperately needs saving through some form of foreign intervention.

In May 2023, Zhdanok's colleague, Vladimirs Buzayevs, wrote a lengthy letter to the UN Human Rights Committee denouncing the ban on Russian TV channels in Latvia. The letter

¹¹⁹ Latvian Russian Union, <https://rusojuz.lv/en/category/our-mer/>, consulté le 9 janvier 2023.

¹²⁰ *Texts adopted - Situation in Russia, the poisoning of Alexei Navalny - Thursday, 17 September 2020*, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2020-0232_EN.html, consulté le 20 juin 2023.

¹²¹ JULIA, *THE LAUNCH OF SIGNATURES COLLECTION: TO PRESERVE MONUMENTS AND TO HALT THE WAVE OF RUSSOPHOBIA IN LATVIA* | Latvian Russian Union, <https://rusojuz.lv/en/the-launch-of-signatures-collection-to-preserve-monuments-and-to-halt-the-wave-of-russophobia-in-latvia/>, 23 juin 2022, consulté le 20 juin 2023.

claimed that these actions were annihilating Russian language television broadcasting in Latvia and also proceeded to denounce the banning of various websites in Russian¹²². Previously in February 2023, Vladimirs Buzayevs and, fellow LKS politician, Youlia Sokhina, managed to attract the attention of UN experts with regards to Latvian education reforms. The case presented by Buzayevs accused Latvian authorities of linguistic discrimination against ethnic minorities and was examined by the European Court of Human Rights. The opinion given by the Court declared that Latvia's altering of education laws contradicted the country's international obligations and that Latvia should have consulted an international body such as the European Court of Human Rights before making these changes. Therefore, Latvia's education reforms were regarded as discriminatory¹²³.

Chapter conclusion

The efforts to denounce the Latvian authorities for damaging the status of Latvia's Russian speaking minority are marginal and the LKS should certainly not be considered as a worthy representative for Latvia's Russophone community; Russian speakers in Latvia remain fragmented politically. A survey carried out in March 2023 showed that, among 1000 Russophones, Harmony is still the second most supported political party among Russophones after Stability. Surprisingly, 'Latvian' political parties such as the 'Progressives', 'Greens' and 'Latvia First' turned out to be more popular among Russian speakers than the Latvian Russian Union. Nevertheless, I consider it necessary to demonstrate how controversies regarding the status of Russian speakers in Latvia are raised internationally. Perspectives from CGTN and China are especially significant, considering China's increasing investment and economic involvement in Europe through projects such as the Belt and Road initiative.

¹²² *Русский союз Латвии*, <https://t.me/rusojuz/922>, consulté le 20 juin 2023.

¹²³ *Latvia: UN experts concerned about severe curtailment of minority language education*, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/02/latvia-un-experts-concerned-about-severe-curtailment-minority-language>, consulté le 20 juin 2023.

CONCLUSION

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine on the 24th of February 2022, the Latvian Parliamentary election, that took place a few months later, confirmed the loss of prestige in Latvian Russophones' status and highlighted radical political beliefs still held by many in Latvia's Russophone population. The regional dimension of the election results for Russophone parties saw the re-emergence of the longstanding question in Latvian society of whether enough is being done to bridge the gap between Riga and Latgale, thereby highlighting a divided status in Latvia's Russophones community both politically and socioeconomically. The fragmentation of the previously politically united Harmony serves as further evidence of this.

Legislation passed by the Latvian parliament has altered the legal status of Russian and Belarusian citizens in Latvia, requiring them to take language test if they wish to extend their residence permits. The ban on celebrating the nineth of May has discredited the cultural status of Latvian Russophones, whilst the destruction of Soviet monuments has inevitably questioned the historic legitimacy of their presence. 'Latvianization' reforms have been seen as controversial by some with regards to ethnic minority rights. This has led to the ascension of questions surrounding Latvia's Russophones to an international level, where a wider audience can judge and perhaps contribute to solving Latvian society's inherent problems. Foreign attention from abroad has also helped to internationalise the controversies surrounding Latvia's Russophone community, highlighting how a minority's ethnolinguistic status remains fluid in relation to external shocks such as the war in Ukraine.

In conclusion, it seems pertinent to state that the war in Ukraine has changed the political, cultural and international status of Latvia's Russophone community. I would like to underline that, as it has been articulated by Martins Kaprans, this is linked to emergence of the 'Euro Russians' - a category of Russian speakers in Europe that are fully integrated in the Western world and supportive of European policies. They remain detached from the Russian Federation and consider themselves as European citizens identity wise. The appearance of the white-blue-white flag on the 28th of February 2022, symbolising a Russia without Putin, bears witness to this. In October 2022 I attended a talk with the exiled Russian film director, Kirill Serebrennikov, at the University of Paris Nanterre, during which he spoke of a new

emerging, 'European Russian' cultural identity among exiled Russian artists¹²⁴.

Serebrennikov left Russia after the invasion of Ukraine and was declared a 'foreign agent' by the Russian government shortly after.

Simultaneously, Martins Kaprans has underlined that the feeling of insecurity towards one's identity has increased among Russophones in Latvia and that it will take time for new identities to form. The political and cultural changes in the status of Latvia's Russian speakers have led to a more profound marginalization of a sub-category of them. The widening socioeconomic gap between the centre and periphery of the country and differences in ethnolinguistic identity have pushed many to become more radical. A recent statistical study published by the SKDS showed that more Russophones live in poverty than Latvian speakers live in poverty. To this extent the gap between Riga and Latgale is highly significant in determining the socioeconomic status of Latvia's Russophone minority. I would also like to emphasize that a similar ideological and socioeconomic gap exists between Russian speakers in Estonia, who in the capital, Tallinn, and who live in the eastern region of Ida Virumaa.

Unfortunately, the gap between Riga and Latgale is likely to widen in the coming years, with the eastern region's economy taking a blow due to the progressive breaking of Latvia's economic ties with Russia and Belarus. Politically, it is also likely that centre-right parties representing Latvian speakers in the Saeima will continue to isolate parties representing Russophones such as Stability or Harmony¹²⁵. According to Martins Kaprans, the formation of regional parties in Latgale is a strategic move for popular politicians among Russian speakers, such as Bartasevics and Elksnins, to retain their positions as mayors of Rezekne and Daugavpils in the 2024 municipal elections. Latvia has a long history of mayors turning their cities into 'principalities' determining their own foreign policy. Examples of this include the special relations maintained with Moscow by the former Riga mayor, Nils Usakovs, and the good economic relations with Russia and Belarus established by Aivars Lembergs, the former mayor of the port city of Ventpils¹²⁶.

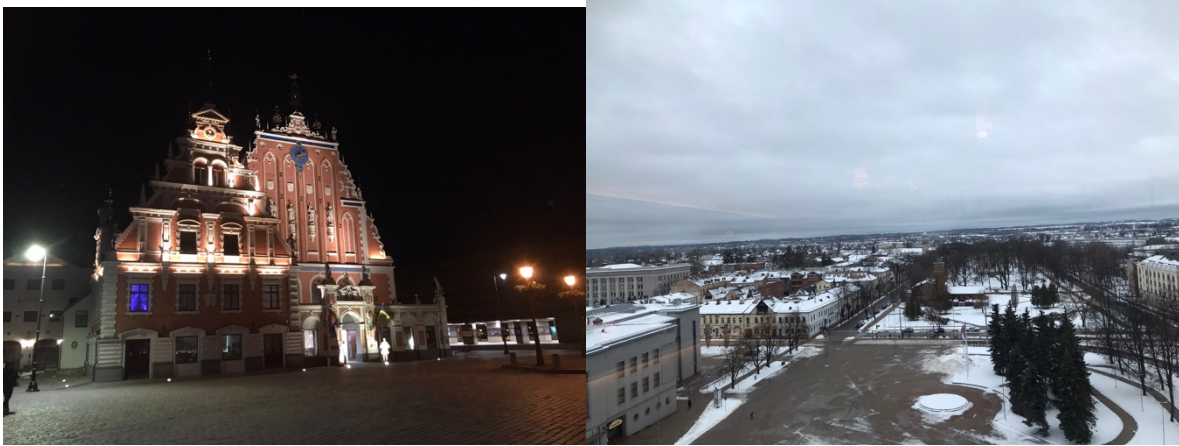
During my interview with Kaspars Germanis, it was admitted that ethnic tensions in Latvia will most likely remain for generations to come. For the time being, however, the election of

¹²⁴ VERRIER Antoine, *Kirill SEREBRENNIKOV*, <https://www.parisnante.fr/distinctions/kirill-serebrennikov>, consulté le 21 juin 2023.

¹²⁵ CHMIELEWSKI Bartosz, *Far behind Riga: Latvia's problems with uneven development*, OSW, 2023, p.7.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.5.

Edgars Rinkevics as the new president of Latvia and the current formation of Latvia's new coalition government, marks a move away from politics that are over concerned with ethnic and symbolic issues. In political terms it is a move from the right to more centrist politics¹²⁷. As a result, the hopes are that the new government in Latvia will help to reduce ethnic tensions, whilst continuing non-negotiable processes of 'latvianization'. It remains to be seen whether Latvia will come to focus on forming a 'republican' identity based on civic, rather than ethnic, nationalist ideology for its citizens in the future¹²⁸. There already exists a word to describe someone who identifies politically, but not ethnically, as Latvian. This is the Russian word 'латвиец' ('latviec'), rather than 'Латыш' ('Latyš') which designates an ethnic Latvian¹²⁹.



Riga & Daugavpils ©Edward Laycock

¹²⁷ LETA, *Edgars Rinkēvičs to become next President of Latvia*, <https://bnn-news.com/edgars-rinkevics-to-become-next-president-of-latvia-246190>, 31 mai 2023, consulté le 22 juin 2023.

¹²⁸ Pascal Bonnard, *Le gouvernement de l'ethnicité en Europe post-soviétique: Minorités et pouvoir en Lettonie*, Paris, Éditions Dalloz, 2013, p.8.

¹²⁹ *Латыш или латвиец – в чем разница - Аргументы Недели* (Letton (ethnique) ou letton (républicain)-quelle est la différence - Arguments de la semaine), <https://argumenti.ru/society/2023/02/815737>, consulté le 13 mai 2023.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

SMITH David, *The Baltic States : Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania*, Londres, Routledge, 2002, 704 p.

BONNARD Pascal, *Le gouvernement de l'ethnicité en Europe post-soviétique : Minorités et pouvoir en Lettonie*, Paris, Éditions Dalloz, 2013, 450 p.

FILLER André, RAVIOT Jean-Robert, *L'Impossible Nation Lettonne études Des Lieux D'une Natio-genese Post-soviétique*, Nanterre, Université Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense, 2013, 208 p.

Research articles

CALVET Louis-Jean, « Politique linguistique », in *Langage et société*, n° HS1, Hors série, 2021, p. 275-280.

CSERGŐ Zsuzsa, « THE IMPACT OF RUSSIA'S WAR ON UKRAINE », in .

KESA Katerina, « Circulation et transnationalisation de mouvements et idées populistes d'extrême droite dans l'espace baltique. Le cas du Parti populaire conservateur d'Estonie (EKRE) », in *Connexe : les espaces postcommunistes en question(s)*, vol. 6, 12 février 2021, p. 178-208.

PANOV Sergueï, « Discours nationaliste et politique linguistique en Lettonie indépendante », in *Mots*, n° 74, 2004, p. 125-135.

SADD William, « Sovietization of the Baltic States: Independence Negotiated, Then Stolen », in *Elements*, n° 1, vol. 5, 1 avril 2009.

SIMONYAN Renald H., « The Russian-speaking Diaspora in the Baltic States: a socio-cultural aspect », in *Baltic Region*, n° 2, vol. 14, 2022, p. 144-157.

STRUBERGA Sigita et OZOLIŅA Žaneta, « Crisis Communication and Resilience: Are Russian and Latvian Speakers in the Same Boat? », in *Social Sciences*, n° 5, vol. 11, mai 2022, p. 216.

BĒRZIŅA Ieva, KRUMINS Gatis, ŠILIŅŠ Jānis et ANDŽĀNS Māris, « History perceptions and national identity among Latvian youth: Entrapped between narratives of Latvia and Russia? », in *Nations and Nationalism*, 21 février 2023.

KAPRĀNS Mārtiņš et MIERIŅA Inta, « Minority Reconsidered: Towards a Typology of Latvia's Russophone Identity », in *Europe-Asia Studies*, n° 1, vol. 71, 2 janvier 2019, p. 24-47.

CHMIELEWSKI Bartosz, « Far behind Riga: Latvia's problems with uneven development », Warsaw, OSW, 2023.

CSENGŐ Zsuzsa, « THE IMPACT OF RUSSIA'S WAR ON UKRAINE », Washington DC, BEAR-PONARS Eurasia Conference "Between the EU and Russia: Domains of Diversity and Contestation, 2022.

DENIS Juliette, « Identifier les « Éléments ennemis » en Lettonie: Une priorité dans le processus de resoviétisation (1942-1945) », in *Cahiers du monde russe*, n° 2/3, vol. 49, 20 septembre 2008, p. 297-318.

DENIS Juliette et LE BOURHIS Eric, « La « région balte », un espace dessiné par le pacte germano-soviétique »: *Matériaux pour l'histoire de notre temps*, n° 3, N° 133-134, 19 décembre 2019, p. 3-5.

GREEN Sonia Bychkov, « LANGUAGE OF LULLABIES: THE RUSSIFICATION AND DERUSSIFICATION OF THE BALTIC STATES », vol. 19, Chicago-Kent college of Law, 1997.

MORRIS Helen M., « President, party and nationality policy in Latvia, 1991–1999 », in *Europe-Asia Studies*, n° 4, vol. 56, juin 2004, p. 543-569.

SMITH Jeremy, « Was There a Soviet Nationality Policy? », in *Europe-Asia Studies*, n° 6, vol. 71, 3 juillet 2019, p. 972-993.

WEEKS Theodore R, « Russification / Sovietization », *European History Online*, 2010.

GOLUNOVA Valentina, « No Rainbow without Rain? », in *Verfassungsblog: On Matters Constitutional*, 9 décembre 2022.

RÖNNGREN Emma, « Cancelling Russia: The situation for Russian Speakers in Latvia following the invasion of Ukraine », IRES Uppsala University, 2023.

KAPRĀNS Mārtiņš et MIERIŅA Inta, « Minority Reconsidered: Towards a Typology of Latvia's Russophone Identity », in *Europe-Asia Studies*, n° 1, vol. 71, 2 janvier 2019, p. 24-47.

SZABACIUK Andrzej, « Polityka etniczna Republiki Łotewskiej », in *Politeja*, 2 (41), vol. 13, 21 juin 2021, p. 329-351.

URAL INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT, NIKITINA Alena, ZERCHANINOVA Tatiana, URAL INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT, VASILEVA Elena, et URAL INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT, « State program of voluntary resettlement to Russia through the eyes of young Russian compatriots and experts », in *Public Administration*, n° 4, vol. 24, 2022, p. 70-78.

Internet websites

ERR LSM ERR News |, *Latvian minister resigns over recent Riga Soviet monument controversy*, <https://news.err.ee/1608598858/latvian-minister-resigns-over-recent-riga-soviet-monument-controversy> , 16 mai 2022, consulté le 20 mai 2023.

<HTTPS://EUROMAIDANPRESS.COM/AUTHOR/ORYSIA>, *Lithuanian Opera drops works by Russian composers as “culture in Russia too closely associated with aggressive politics”*, <https://euromaidanpress.com/2023/01/13/lithuanian-opera-removes-works-by-russian-composers-because-culture-in-russia-is-too-closely-associated-with-aggressive-politics-of-this-country/> , 13 janvier 2023, consulté le 21 juin 2023.

В продолжение русофобской политики: в Латвии продвигают новый закон против русского языка, https://baltnews.com/V_Latvii/20230117/1025854038/V-prodolzhenie-rusofobskoy-politiki-v-Latvii-prodvigayut-novyiy-zakon-protiv-russkogo-yazyka.html , 17 janvier 2023, consulté le 18 janvier 2023.

Между « ватниками » и « нашими ». Как вторжение РФ в Украину изменило латвийское общество, <https://rus.jauns.lv/article/novosti/551733-mezdu-vatnikami-i-nasimi-kak-vtorzenie-rf-v-ukrainu-izmenilo-latviiskoe-obshhestvo>, consulté le 23 mai 2023.

Latvia has banned celebrating May 9 | *Mind.ua*, <https://mind.ua/en/news/20256369-latvia-has-banned-celebrating-may-9>, consulté le 23 mai 2023.

Language, <https://eng.lsm.lv/topic/language/>, consulté le 8 février 2023.

Transport Ministry’s subsidiaries asked to « de-Russianize » websites, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/politics/politics/transport-ministris-subsidiaries-asked-to-de-russianize-websites.a494143/>, consulté le 31 janvier 2023.

Latvia’s word and non-word of the year 2022 announced, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/culture/culture/latvias-word-and-non-word-of-the-year-2022-announced.a494027/>, consulté le 31 janvier 2023.

ERR ERR |, *May 9 « Victory Day » events still hotly debated*, <https://news.err.ee/1608545722/may-9-victory-day-events-still-hotly-debated> , 27 mars 2022, consulté le 19 juin 2023.

ERR ERR ERR News |, *Crowds gather in Narva to watch Victory Day concert on Russia's border*, <https://news.err.ee/1608972320/crowds-gather-in-narva-to-watch-victory-day-concert-on-russia-s-border> , 9 mai 2023, consulté le 19 juin 2023.

FREEBALT, *Ветеран, задержанный 9 мая в Даугавпилсе за пиджак с медалями, все же возложил цветы к памятнику*, <https://freebalt.com/veteran-zaderzhannyj-9-maya-v-daugavpils-za-pidzhak-s-medalyami-vse-zhe-vozlozhil-czvet-y-k-pamyatniku/> , 11 mai 2023, consulté le 11 juin 2023.

RICKS Thomas E., *Questionable beliefs about the Ukraine crisis: Russia only understands force*, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2014/05/08/questionable-beliefs-about-the-ukraine-crisis-russia-only-understands-force/> , 8 mai 2014, consulté le 18 juin 2023.

ФОТО: *В парке Победы отмечают 9 мая*, <https://rus.lsm.lv/statja/novosti/obschestvo/foto-v-parke-pobedi-otmechayut-9-maja.a318387/>, consulté le 18 juin 2023.

Victory Day in Russia (9th of May) | Visit Russia, Moscow, Saint-Petersburg - Tsar Visit, <https://www.tsarvisit.com/en/blog/victory-day-in-russia-9th-of-may>, consulté le 14 juin 2023.

«Рассадник ваты». Как в Прибалтике запрещали праздновать День Победы, <https://regnum.ru/article/3804671>, consulté le 10 juin 2023.

Григорий бояров - Поиск в Google, <https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-d&q=%D0%93%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%B3%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%B9+%D0%B1%D0%BE%D1%8F%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%B2#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:120e959b,vid:Ot96RCie7Ig>, consulté le 10 juin 2023.

День победы (Даугавпилс), <https://gorod.lvдень победы>, consulté le 10 juin 2023.

9 мая полиция начала уголовный процесс против двух мужчин из Даугавпилса, <https://gorod.lv/novosti/341264-9-maya-politsiya-nachala-ugolovnyi-protsess-protiv-dvuh-muzhchin-iz-daugavpilsa>, consulté le 10 juin 2023.

LETA, *Daugavpils mayor invites residents to say «farewell» to monuments to be removed in Latvia*, <https://bnn-news.com/daugavpils-mayor-invites-residents-to-say-farewell-to-monuments-to-be-removed-in-latvia-239641> , 28 octobre 2022, consulté le 8 janvier 2023.

ГАИКЕ Виктория, *В Риге прошёл пикет против демонтажа памятника Пушкину*, <https://chayka.lv/2023/03/13/pushkin-piket/> , 13 mars 2023, consulté le 18 juin 2023.

___, *37 задержанных, « Катюша » и летящие бутылки. Как сносили памятники в Даугавпилсе*, <https://chayka.lv/2022/10/31/pamyatniki-v-daugavpils-snesli/> , 31 octobre 2022, consulté le 18 juin 2023.

___, *37 задержанных, « Катюша » и летящие бутылки. Как сносили памятники в Даугавпилсе*, <https://chayka.lv/2022/10/31/pamyatniki-v-daugavpils-snesli/> , 31 octobre 2022, consulté le 10 juin 2023.

Андрей Элксиньш и местные о сносе памятников в Даугавпилсе // Кто вам платит?, s.l., s.n., 2022.

« Деньги нашли, памятники в Даугавпилсе снесут ». Комментарий VARAM | *Демонтаж советских памятников*, s.l., s.n., 2022.

Две фирмы готовы демонтировать памятники в Даугавпилсе, <https://grani.la.lv/dve-firmy-gotovy-demontirovat-pamyatniki-v-daugavpils> , 10 octobre 2022, consulté le 9 juin 2023.

Removal of Soviet-era war memorial in Latvia angers ethnic Russians, <https://www.euronews.com/2022/08/24/removal-of-soviet-era-war-memorial-in-latvia-angers-ethnic-russians> , 24 août 2022, consulté le 9 juin 2023.

Рижская дума одобрила снос памятника советским солдатам. Начались протесты, <https://www.bbc.com/russian/news-61442343> , 13 mai 2022, consulté le 4 janvier 2023.

26 июля 1969 года: открытие сквера Славы, обелиска и «головы», <https://grani.la.lv/26-iyulya-1969-godaotkrytie-skvera-slavy-obeliska-i-golovy> , 26 juillet 2015, consulté le 10 juin 2023.

Watch | Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?ref=saved&v=821264612421495>, consulté le 21 juin 2023.

Saeima suspends bilateral agreement between Latvia and Russia on memorial buildings and monuments, <https://www.saeima.lv/en/news/saeima-news/31027-saeima-suspends-bilateral-agreement-between-latvia-and-russia-on-memorial-buildings-and-monuments>, consulté le 21 juin 2023.

« В Риге демонтировали памятник Пушкину. При чем тут хоккей? », in *BBC News Русская служба*.

Daugavpils plans « environmental object » in place of Soviet monument, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/society/environment/daugavpils-plans-environmental-object-in-place-of-soviet-monument.a497468/>, consulté le 10 juin 2023.

Полиция Латвии сообщила о 14 задержанных у памятника Освободителям Риги - ТАСС, <https://tass.ru/proisshestiya/15545793>, consulté le 9 juin 2023.

Protest against removal of Rīga Pushkin statue, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/culture/literature/13.03.2023-protest-against-removal-of-riga-pushkin-statue.a500575/>, consulté le 9 juin 2023.

Снос памятника «Алёша» в Резекне — это вандализм — мэр города, <https://rus.lsm.lv/statja/novosti/samoupravlenija/snos-pamjatnika-alsha-v-rezekne--eto-vandalizm--mer-goroda.a481685/>, consulté le 13 mars 2023.

Saeima passes a law to dismantle sites glorifying the Soviet and Nazi regimes, <https://www.saeima.lv/en/news/saeima-news/31206-saeima-passes-a-law-to-dismantle-sites-glorifying-the-soviet-and-nazi-regimes>, consulté le 8 janvier 2023.

Thirty-seven people detained around Daugavpils monument / Article, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/society/crime/thirty-seven-people-detained-around-daugavpils-monument.a480316/>, consulté le 5 janvier 2023.

Soviet-era monuments in Latvia: Should they stay, or should they go? | Euronews, <https://www.euronews.com/2022/11/10/soviet-era-monuments-in-latvia-should-they-stay-or-should-they-go>, consulté le 4 janvier 2023.

Две фирмы готовы демонтировать памятники в Даугавпилсе, <https://www.grani.lv/daugavpils/134260-dve-firmy-gotovy-demontirovat-pamyatniki-v-daugavpils.html>, consulté le 3 janvier 2023.

GUILLERMO, *The Short, (Un)happy Life of Development/For! – What It Can Teach Liberalism Europe-wide - Foreign Policy Research Institute*, <https://www.fpri.org/article/2022/10/the-short-unhappy-life-of-development-for-what-it-can-teach-liberalism-europe-wide/>, consulté le 22 février 2023.

Как власти Латвии распределяют деньги, которых нет, https://baltnews.com/V_Latvii/20221230/1025839590/Kak-vlasti-Latvii-raspredelyayut-dengi-kotorykh-net.html , 30 décembre 2022, consulté le 4 janvier 2023.

Continuity and change after Latvia's 2022 parliamentary election, <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2022/10/25/continuity-and-change-after-latvias-2022-parliamentary-election/> , 25 octobre 2022, consulté le 31 décembre 2022.

Wybory parlamentarne na Łotwie: zwycięstwo centroprawicy, <https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/analizy/2022-10-03/wybory-parlamentarne-na-lotwie-zwyciestwo-centroprawicy> , 3 octobre 2022, consulté le 31 mai 2023.

Législatives en Lettonie : les partis russophones dégringolent, <https://www.lesechos.fr/monde/europe/legislatives-en-lettonie-les-partis-russophones-degringolent-1853286> , 2 octobre 2022, consulté le 16 novembre 2022.

Насколько вероятно сотрудничество Ушакова со Шлесерсом?, <https://www.grani.lv/latvia/135861-naskolko-veroyatno-sotrudnichestvo-ushakova-so-shlesersom.html>, consulté le 9 janvier 2023.

Election results pose problem for President, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/features/commentary/latvian-election-results-pose-problem-for-president.a295064/>, consulté le 5 janvier 2023.

Latvian election results show shape of new Saeima, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/politics/election/latvian-election-results-show-shape-of-new-saeima.a295038/>, consulté le 5 janvier 2023.

« Радикализация русских и победа стабильности. В Латвии прошли выборы », in *BBC News Русская служба*.

Watch English-language election debate, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/politics/election/watch-english-language-election-debate.a472475/>, consulté le 31 décembre 2022.

Three parties sign coalition deal to form Latvia's government,
<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/12/14/three-parties-sign-coalition-deal-to-form-latvias-government>, consulté le 31 décembre 2022.

All votes counted; seven lists make it into the Saeima,
<https://eng.lsm.lv/article/politics/election/all-votes-counted-seven-lists-make-it-into-the-saeima.a476276/>, consulté le 30 décembre 2022.

LETA, *Edgars Rinkēvičs to become next President of Latvia*, <https://bnn-news.com/edgars-rinkevics-to-become-next-president-of-latvia-246190> , 31 mai 2023, consulté le 22 juin 2023.

How will Latvia's President be chosen on May 31?,
<https://eng.lsm.lv/article/features/features/21.03.2023-how-will-latvias-president-be-chosen-on-may-31.a501256/>, consulté le 3 mai 2023.

CHESKIN Ammon, *Russian speakers in post-Soviet Latvia: discursive identity strategies*,
Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, « Russian language and society series », 2016, 230 p.

VERRIER Antoine, *Kirill SEREBRENNIKOV*, <https://www.parisnante.fr/distinctions/kirill-serebrennikov>, consulté le 21 juin 2023.

МЕЩЕРЯКОВА Елена, *Бело-сине-белый флаг - новый символ российского протеста*,
<https://www.golosameriki.com/a/6646280.html> , 6 juillet 2022, consulté le 21 juin 2023.

СТЕФАНОВ Алексей, *Сбежавший в Беларусь журналист: «Моя миссия – достучаться до латышей»*, <https://telegra.ph/Sbezhavshij-v-Belarus-zhurnalists-Moya-missiya--dostuchatsya-do-latyshej-02-22> , 22 février 2023, consulté le 22 février 2023.

Languages in Latvia: local and foreign | On Latvia, <https://www.onlatvia.com/topics/culture-of-latvia/languages>, consulté le 19 juin 2023.

Latvia provides a base for exiled independent Russian journalists,
<https://www.euronews.com/2023/02/23/latvia-provides-a-base-for-exiled-independent-russian-journalists> , 23 février 2023, consulté le 3 avril 2023.

Media Hub, <https://mediacentre.sseriga.edu/media-hub/>, consulté le 3 avril 2023.

СОЛОГУБ Петр, *Бумажный рог изобилия: за что Евросоюз на самом деле платит Латвии*, https://baltnews.com/V_Latvii/20230117/1025852220/Bumazhnyy-rog-izobiliya-

[za-cto-Evrosoyuz-na-samom-dele-platit-Latvii.html](#) , 17 janvier 2023, consulté le 17 janvier 2023.

Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish presidents discuss tribunal for Russian war crimes,
<https://eng.lsm.lv/article/politics/president/latvian-lithuanian-polish-presidents-discuss-tribunal-for-russian-war-crimes.a492061/>, consulté le 18 janvier 2023.

Latvia's corruption perception ranking stays the same,
<https://eng.lsm.lv/article/society/crime/latvias-corruption-perception-ranking-stays-the-same.a494121/>, consulté le 31 janvier 2023.

Baltic and Polish Foreign Ministers meeting in Rīga Tuesday,
<https://eng.lsm.lv/article/politics/diplomacy/baltic-and-polish-foreign-ministers-meeting-in-riga-tuesday.a493998/>, consulté le 31 janvier 2023.

Запрет русского в частных вузах ограничивает их свободу, постановил Суд ЕС,
<https://rus.lsm.lv/statja/novosti/analitika/zapret-russkogo-v-chastnih-vuzah-ogranichivaet-ih-svobodu-postanovil-sud-es.a472704/>, consulté le 15 juin 2023.

Texts adopted - Situation in Russia, the poisoning of Alexei Navalny - Thursday, 17 September 2020, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2020-0232_EN.html, consulté le 20 juin 2023.

У Латвии, возможно, будет еще один евродепутат после выборов 2024 года,
<https://rus.lsm.lv/statja/novosti/politika/15.06.2023-u-latvii-vozmozno-budet-eshhe-odin-evrodeputat-posle-vyborov-2024-goda.a513022/>, consulté le 21 juin 2023.

ADMIN, ЧТО ПРОИСХОДИТ В ЛАТГАЛИИ? / МАРШ УЧИТЕЛЕЙ / НОВЫЕ РЕЙТИНГИ ПРЕЗИДЕНТА ЛЕВИТСА | Вилис Криштопанс,
<https://latvijapirmajavieta.lv/что-происходит-в-латгалии-марш-учител/> , 1 mai 2023, consulté le 5 juin 2023.

DELFI, *Элксниньш призвал жителей и гостей Даугавпилса воздержаться от провокаций 9 мая*, <https://rus.delfi.lv/news/daily/latvia/elksninsh-prizval-zhitelej-i-gostej-daugavpilsa-vozderzhatsya-ot-provokacij-9-maya.d?id=55485242> , 2 mai 2023, consulté le 7 juin 2023.

LETA, *Authorities take notice of Rezekne mayor's controversial take on Soviet monuments and war in Ukraine*, <https://bnn-news.com/authorities-take-notice-of-rezekne-mayors->

[controversial-take-on-soviet-monuments-and-war-in-ukraine-240005](#) , 11 novembre 2022, consulté le 6 juin 2023.

ГАЙКЕ Виктория, « *Это как пир во время чумы* », – в соцсетях возмутились концертом в честь Масленицы в Даугавпилсе, <https://chayka.lv/2023/02/18/maslenica/> , 18 février 2023, consulté le 7 juin 2023.

ПЛАВОКА Инна, « *Ситуация с реновацией домов в Даугавпилсе - плачевная* ». Обсуждаем проблему с руководителем ПЖКХ, <https://chayka.lv/2023/01/30/renovatsija/> , 30 janvier 2023, consulté le 6 juin 2023.

В Даугавпилсе пройдет шествие в поддержку Украины, <https://www.grani.lv/daugavpils/136705-v-daugavpilsse-proydet-shestvie-v-podderzhku-ukrainy.html> , 22 février 2023, consulté le 22 février 2023.

Почему Даугавпилсскому Университету нужна независимость?, <https://www.grani.lv/daugavpils/136660-pochemu-daugavpilsskomu-universitetu-nuzhna-nezavisimost.html> , 21 février 2023, consulté le 21 février 2023.

А. Элксниньш: «Если Даугавпилсу нужно перенять финансирование ДРБ - может, ликвидировать Минздрав?», <https://www.grani.lv/daugavpils/136227-a-elksninsh-esli-daugavpilsu-nuzhno-perenyat-finansirovanie-drb-mozhet-likvidirovat-minzdrav.html> , 27 janvier 2023, consulté le 29 janvier 2023.

Latvia's Kraslava Municipality interested in cooperating with Vitebsk Oblast | Region | | Shumilino Region | Shumilino | Shumilino News | Shumilino Region News | Shumilino Regional Executive Committee, <http://shumilino.vitebsk-region.gov.by/en/region-news-en/view/latvias-kraslava-municipality-interested-in-cooperating-with-vitebsk-oblast-7733-2011/>, consulté le 8 juin 2023.

Андрей Элксниньш: немного о жизни и о себе - Din.lv - информационный портал города Даугавпилс - Даугавпилс, [http://www.din.lv/daugavpils/12074-andrej_elksninsh_nemnogo_o_zhizni_i_o_sebe/](http://www.din.lv/daugavpils/12074-andrej-elksninsh_nemnogo_o_zhizni_i_o_sebe/), consulté le 7 juin 2023.

The Foreign Minister in his letter reminds the Mayor of Daugavpils about the position of Latvia on Russia's aggression against Ukraine | Ārlietu ministrija, <https://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/article/foreign-minister-his-letter-reminds-mayor-daugavpils-about-position-latvia-russias-aggression-against-ukraine>, consulté le 6 juin 2023.

History, <https://www.daugavpils.lv/en/city/daugavpils/history>, consulté le 5 juin 2023.

Latgale Special Economic Zone, <https://lpr.gov.lv/en/latgale-special-economic-zone/>, consulté le 1 juin 2023.

Special economic zones and free ports | Valsts ieņēmumu dienests,
<https://www.vid.gov.lv/en/special-economic-zones-and-free-ports>, consulté le 1 juin 2023.

Андрей Элкснинш: “Пришло время для создания новой партии”,
<https://gorod.lv/novosti/338938-andrei-elksninsh-prishlo-vremya-dlya-sozdaniya-novoi-partii>, consulté le 19 mai 2023.

About us | Invest in Latgale, <http://invest.latgale.lv/en/about-us>, consulté le 9 mars 2023.

J.Pilsudska Daugavpils valsts poļu ģimnāzija, <https://www.dpolvsk.lv/PL/?rub=1>, consulté le 15 février 2023.

Daugavpils city council leave Harmony party,
<https://eng.lsm.lv/article/politics/politics/daugavpils-city-council-leave-harmony-party.a493527/>, consulté le 27 janvier 2023.

Suspicious of EU fund misuse at Daugavpils University,
<https://eng.lsm.lv/article/society/education/suspicious-of-eu-fund-misuse-at-daugavpils-university.a493211/>, consulté le 25 janvier 2023.

Центр белорусской культуры собирает соцветие культур,
<https://www.grani.lv/daugavpils/136025-centr-belorusskoy-kultury-sobiraet-cocvetie-kultur.html>, consulté le 17 janvier 2023.

Daugavpils mayor has no qualms about attending Lukashenko regime celebration,
<https://eng.lsm.lv/article/politics/politics/daugavpils-mayor-has-no-qualms-about-attending-lukashenko-regime-celebration.a464581/>, consulté le 5 janvier 2023.

Daugavpils mayor reminded about international law by Ministers,
<https://eng.lsm.lv/article/politics/diplomacy/daugavpils-mayor-reminded-about-international-law-by-ministers.a481638/>, consulté le 5 janvier 2023.

ADMIN, ЧТО ПРОИСХОДИТ В ЛАТГАЛИИ? / МАРШ УЧИТЕЛЕЙ / НОВЫЕ РЕЙТИНГИ ПРЕЗИДЕНТА ЛЕВИТСА | Вилис Криштопанс,

<https://latvijapirmajavieta.lv/что-происходит-в-латгалии-марш-учител/> , 1 mai 2023, consulté le 5 juin 2023.

DELFI, *Элксиньши призвал жителей и гостей Даугавпилса воздержаться от провокаций 9 мая*, <https://rus.delfi.lv/news/daily/latvia/elksninsh-prizval-zhitelej-i-gostej-daugavpilsa-vozderzhatsya-ot-provokacij-9-maya.d?id=55485242> , 2 mai 2023, consulté le 7 juin 2023.

LETA, *Authorities take notice of Rezekne mayor's controversial take on Soviet monuments and war in Ukraine*, <https://bnn-news.com/authorities-take-notice-of-rezekne-mayors-controversial-take-on-soviet-monuments-and-war-in-ukraine-240005> , 11 novembre 2022, consulté le 6 juin 2023.

ГАЙКЕ Виктория, *« Это как пир во время чумы »*, – *в соцсетях возмутились концертом в честь Масленицы в Даугавпилсе*, <https://chayka.lv/2023/02/18/maslenica/> , 18 février 2023, consulté le 7 juin 2023.

ПЛАВОКА Инна, *« Ситуация с реновацией домов в Даугавпилсе - плачевная »*. *Обсуждаем проблему с руководителем ПЖКХ*, <https://chayka.lv/2023/01/30/renovatsija/> , 30 janvier 2023, consulté le 6 juin 2023.

В Даугавпилсе пройдет шествие в поддержку Украины, <https://www.grani.lv/daugavpils/136705-v-daugavpils-proydet-shestvie-v-podderzhku-ukrainy.html> , 22 février 2023, consulté le 22 février 2023.

Почему Даугавпилскому Университету нужна независимость?, <https://www.grani.lv/daugavpils/136660-pochemu-daugavpilsskomu-universitetu-nuzhna-nezavisimost.html> , 21 février 2023, consulté le 21 février 2023.

А. Элксиньши: «Если Даугавпилсу нужно перенять финансирование ДРБ - может, ликвидировать Минздрав?», <https://www.grani.lv/daugavpils/136227-a-elksninsh-esli-daugavpilsu-nuzhno-perenyat-finansirovanie-drb-mozhet-likvidirovat-minzdrav.html> , 27 janvier 2023, consulté le 29 janvier 2023.

Latvia's Kraslava Municipality interested in cooperating with Vitebsk Oblast | Region | | Shumilino Region | Shumilino | Shumilino News | Shumilino Region News | Shumilino Regional Executive Committee, <http://shumilino.vitebsk-region.gov.by/en/region-news->

[en/view/latvias-kraslava-municipality-interested-in-cooperating-with-vitebsk-oblast-7733-2011/](#), consulté le 8 juin 2023.

Андрей Элкснинш: немного о жизни и о себе - Din.lv - информационный портал города Даугавпилс - Даугавпилс, http://www.din.lv/daugavpils/12074-andrej_elksninh_nemnogo_o_zhizni_i_o_sebe/, consulté le 7 juin 2023.

The Foreign Minister in his letter reminds the Mayor of Daugavpils about the position of Latvia on Russia's aggression against Ukraine | Ārlietu ministrija, <https://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/article/foreign-minister-his-letter-reminds-mayor-daugavpils-about-position-latvia-russias-aggression-against-ukraine>, consulté le 6 juin 2023.

History, <https://www.daugavpils.lv/en/city/daugavpils/history>, consulté le 5 juin 2023.

Latgale Special Economic Zone, <https://lpr.gov.lv/en/latgale-special-economic-zone/>, consulté le 1 juin 2023.

Special economic zones and free ports | Valsts ieņēmumu dienests, <https://www.vid.gov.lv/en/special-economic-zones-and-free-ports>, consulté le 1 juin 2023.

Андрей Элкснинш: “Пришло время для создания новой партии”, <https://gorod.lv/novosti/338938-andrei-elksninh-prishlo-vremya-dlya-sozdaniya-novoi-partii>, consulté le 19 mai 2023.

About us | Invest in Latgale, <http://invest.latgale.lv/en/about-us>, consulté le 9 mars 2023.

J.Pilsudska Daugavpils valsts poļu ģimnāzija, <https://www.dpolvsk.lv/PL/?rub=1>, consulté le 15 février 2023.

Daugavpils city council leave Harmony party, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/politics/politics/daugavpils-city-council-leave-harmony-party.a493527/>, consulté le 27 janvier 2023.

Suspicious of EU fund misuse at Daugavpils University, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/society/education/suspicious-of-eu-fund-misuse-at-daugavpils-university.a493211/>, consulté le 25 janvier 2023.

Центр белорусской культуры собирает соцветие культур, <https://www.grani.lv/daugavpils/136025-centr-belorusskoy-kultury-sobiraet-cocvetie-kultur.html>, consulté le 17 janvier 2023.

Daugavpils mayor has no qualms about attending Lukashenko regime celebration,
<https://eng.lsm.lv/article/politics/politics/daugavpils-mayor-has-no-qualms-about-attending-lukashenko-celebration.a464581/>, consulté le 5 janvier 2023.

Daugavpils mayor reminded about international law by Ministers,
<https://eng.lsm.lv/article/politics/diplomacy/daugavpils-mayor-reminded-about-international-law-by-ministers.a481638/>, consulté le 5 janvier 2023.

9 мая: возможно ли вспоминать предков, не обижая современников?,
<https://rus.tvnet.lv/7689777/9-maya-vozmozhno-li-vspominat-predkov-ne-obizhaya-sovremennikov> , 6 mars 2023, consulté le 7 mars 2023.

Russification / Sovietization, <http://ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/models-and-stereotypes/russification-sovietization>, consulté le 1 juin 2023.

Usual March 16 Legion routine for Latvian police,
<https://eng.lsm.lv/article/society/society/usual-march-16-legion-routine-for-latvian-police.a312559/>, consulté le 29 mars 2023.

Bold new exhibition assesses Kārlis Ulmanis' life, times and legacy,
<https://eng.lsm.lv/article/culture/history/bold-new-exhibition-assesses-karlis-ulmanis-life-times-and-legacy.a493978/>, consulté le 31 janvier 2023.

Three Barricades Concerts for the Weekend in Latvia,
<https://eng.lsm.lv/article/culture/culture/three-barricades-concerts-for-the-weekend-in-latvia.a492480/>, consulté le 20 janvier 2023.

Liberation of Latgale commemorative events planned,
<https://eng.lsm.lv/article/culture/history/liberation-of-latgale-commemorative-events-planned.a491825/>, consulté le 16 janvier 2023.

Saeima passes a law to dismantle sites glorifying the Soviet and Nazi regimes,
<https://www.saeima.lv/en/news/saeima-news/31206-saeima-passes-a-law-to-dismantle-sites-glorifying-the-soviet-and-nazi-regimes>, consulté le 8 janvier 2023.

History of Latvia: A brief synopsis, <https://www2.mfa.gov.lv/en/usa/culture/history-of-latvia-a-brief-synopsis>, consulté le 3 janvier 2023.

РУССКОЯЗЫЧНАЯ ДИАСПОРА В СТРАНАХ БАЛТИИ: СОВРЕМЕННОЕ СОСТОЯНИЕ И ПЕРСПЕКТИВЫ, <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/russkoyazychnaya->

[diaspora-v-stranah-baltii-sovremennoe-sostoyanie-i-perspektivy/viewer](#), consulté le 21 novembre 2022.

НОВОСТИ, Эксперты ООН осудили Латвию за притеснение русскоязычных, <https://detaly.co.il/eksperty-oon-osudili-latviyu-za-pritesnenie-russkoyazychnyh/>, 9 février 2023, consulté le 18 juin 2023.

Latvia provides a base for exiled independent Russian journalists, <https://www.euronews.com/2023/02/23/latvia-provides-a-base-for-exiled-independent-russian-journalists>, 23 février 2023, consulté le 3 avril 2023.

CGTN | *Breaking News, China News, World News and Video*, <https://www.cgtn.com/about-us.html>, consulté le 19 juin 2023.

Latvia, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/topic/latvia/>, consulté le 18 juin 2023.

Пока есть спрос, вещание на русском необходимо — главред ЛТВ, <https://rus.lsm.lv/statja/novosti/analitika/28.03.2023-poka-est-spros-veshhanie-na-russkom-neobxodimo-glavred-ltv.a502754/>, consulté le 29 mars 2023.

Russian language division in Latvia - YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a73n8qcGvE4>, consulté le 19 juin 2023.

Аудитория запрещенных в Латвии телеканалов «ушла в тень» — медиаэксперт, <https://rus.lsm.lv/statja/novosti/analitika/auditoriya-zapreshhennyx-v-latvii-telekanalov-uslav-ten-mediaekspert.a497382/>, consulté le 21 février 2023.

UN experts criticize Latvia over Russian language curtailment - CGTN, <https://newseu.cgtn.com/news/2023-02-12/UN-experts-criticize-Latvia-over-Russian-language-curtailment-1hi9t7yPDKo/index.html>, consulté le 21 février 2023.

Prevalence of Russian language in Latvia causing some unease - CGTN Europe, <https://www.cgtnnow.com/cgtn-europe/videos/220709-russian-language-division-in-latvia>, consulté le 21 février 2023.

Pro-Kremlin activist Lindermans to face trial in court, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/society/crime/pro-kremlin-activist-lindermans-to-face-trial-in-court.a495824/>, consulté le 13 février 2023.

The old, new voice from the West returns to Rīga,

<https://eng.lsm.lv/article/features/features/the-old-new-voice-from-the-west-returns-to-riga.a491407/>, consulté le 18 janvier 2023.

LTV: Wide choice of Russian and Belarusian media on Latvian eastern border,

<https://eng.lsm.lv/article/features/media-literacy/ltv-wide-choice-of-russian-and-belarusian-media-on-latvian-eastern-border.a485301/>, consulté le 6 janvier 2023.

« Латвия аннулирует лицензию на вещание телеканала “Дождь” из-за “угрозы нацбезопасности” », in *BBC News Русская служба*.

S.A Telewizja Polska, *Latvian Russians appeal to Moscow ‘NOT to help’ them after language law passed,*

<https://tvpworld.com/69551281/latvian-russians-appeal-to-moscow-not-to-help-them-after-language-law-passed>, consulté le 14 juin 2023.

Скульптуру А. С. Пушкина убрали из парка Кронвальда, <https://grani.la.lv/skulpturu-a-s-pushkina-ubrali-iz-parka-kronvalda> , 30 mai 2023, consulté le 30 mai 2023.

Latvia: UN experts concerned about severe curtailment of minority language education,

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/02/latvia-un-experts-concerned-about-severe-curtailment-minority-language>, consulté le 20 juin 2023.

Ministry | Izglītības un zinātnes ministrija, <https://www.izm.gov.lv/en/ministry>, consulté le 20 juin 2023.

Школам нацменьшинств не хватает учителей латышского,

<https://rus.lsm.lv/statja/novosti/obschestvo/skolam-nacmensinstv-ne-xvataet-ucitelei-latysskogo.a499162/>, consulté le 15 juin 2023.

Путь домой – Помощь в возвращении соотечественников в Россию,

<https://putdomoj.ru/>, consulté le 29 mai 2023.

J.Pilsudska Daugavpils valsts poļu ģimnāzija, <https://www.dpolvsk.lv/PL/>, consulté le 29 mai 2023.

Russians in Latvia: pro-Ukraine or pro-Putin?, <https://www.veridica.ro/en/analyses/russians-in-latvia-pro-ukraine-or-pro-putin>, consulté le 17 mai 2023.

Latvia ready to take over Council of Europe role from Iceland, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/politics/diplomacy/16.05.2023-latvia-ready-to-take-over-council-of-europe-role-from-iceland.a508813/>, consulté le 16 mai 2023.

What's Happening With Russian Speakers in Latvia? - Foreign Policy Research Institute, <https://www.fpri.org/multimedia/2023/01/whats-happening-with-russian-speakers-in-latvia/>, consulté le 9 mai 2023.

Assemblée parlementaire du Conseil de l'Europe, <https://pace.coe.int/fr/>, consulté le 22 février 2023.

Specific monitoring in Latvia of the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities - National Minorities (FCNM) - publi.coe.int, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/minorities/latvia>, consulté le 22 février 2023.

Русскоязычные Латвии, <https://rus.lsm.lv/tema/ruskojazichnie-latvii/>, consulté le 17 février 2023.

S.A Telewizja Polska, Latvian Russians appeal to Moscow 'NOT to help' them after language law passed, <https://typworld.com/69551281/latvian-russians-appeal-to-moscow-not-to-help-them-after-language-law-passed>, consulté le 14 juin 2023.

Скульптуру А. С. Пушкина убрали из парка Кронвалда, <https://grani.la.lv/skulpturu-a-s-pushkina-ubrali-iz-parka-kronvalda>, 30 mai 2023, consulté le 30 mai 2023.

Latvia: UN experts concerned about severe curtailment of minority language education, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/02/latvia-un-experts-concerned-about-severe-curtailment-minority-language>, consulté le 20 juin 2023.

Ministry | Izglītības un zinātnes ministrija, <https://www.izm.gov.lv/en/ministry>, consulté le 20 juin 2023.

Школам национальностей не хватает учителей латышского, <https://rus.lsm.lv/statja/novosti/obschestvo/skolam-nacmensinstv-ne-xvataet-ucitelei-latyskogo.a499162/>, consulté le 15 juin 2023.

Путь домой – Помощь в возвращении соотечественников в Россию, <https://putdomoj.ru/>, consulté le 29 mai 2023.

J.Pilsudska Daugavpils valsts poļu ģimnāzija, <https://www.dpolvsk.lv/PL/>, consulté le 29 mai 2023.

Russians in Latvia: pro-Ukraine or pro-Putin?, <https://www.veridica.ro/en/analyses/russians-in-latvia-pro-ukraine-or-pro-putin>, consulté le 17 mai 2023.

Latvia ready to take over Council of Europe role from Iceland, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/politics/diplomacy/16.05.2023-latvia-ready-to-take-over-council-of-europe-role-from-iceland.a508813/>, consulté le 16 mai 2023.

What's Happening With Russian Speakers in Latvia? - Foreign Policy Research Institute, <https://www.fpri.org/multimedia/2023/01/whats-happening-with-russian-speakers-in-latvia/>, consulté le 9 mai 2023.

Assemblée parlementaire du Conseil de l'Europe, <https://pace.coe.int/fr/>, consulté le 22 février 2023.

Specific monitoring in Latvia of the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities - National Minorities (FCNM) - publi.coe.int, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/minorities/latvia>, consulté le 22 février 2023.

Русскоязычные Латвии, <https://rus.lsm.lv/tema/ruskojazychnie-latvii/>, consulté le 17 février 2023.

Latvia, <https://index.statelessness.eu/country/latvia>, 11 mars 2019, consulté le 3 février 2023.

Находите популярные видео | Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/watch/>, consulté le 18 janvier 2023.

JULIA, Aleksey Vasilyev has become the first vice mayor of Daugavpils! | Latvian Russian Union, <https://rusojuz.lv/en/aleksey-vasilyev-has-become-the-first-vice-mayor-of-daugavpils/>, 2 août 2021, consulté le 5 janvier 2023.

VLADOVA Aleksandrs Bartaševičs Andrejs Elksniņš Andris Morozovs Anna, DOLGOPOLOV Sergey, UŠAKOVS Nils, URBANOVIČS Jānis, PARTY Daugavpils City, PARTY National Harmony, CENTRE New, PARTY Social Democratic, DEMOCRACY Social, POLITICS Russian minority, FACTIONS, CONSERVATISM Social, LATVIA Politics of, PARTIES Political et ELECTIONS, Wikiwand - Social Democratic Party « Harmony », https://wikiwand.com/en/Social_Democratic_Party_'Harmony', consulté le 5 janvier 2023.

ГАЙКЕ Виктория, *Александр Барташевич создаёт новую левоцентристскую партию*, <https://chayka.lv/2023/02/22/partija-bartashevich/> , 22 février 2023, consulté le 22 février 2023.

ДЕМБОВСКАЯ Данута, *Монополии больше нет. За кого теперь будут голосовать русскоязычные избиратели?*, <https://rus.delfi.lv/delfi-plus/istorija-dnja/monopolii-bolshe-net-za-kogo-teper-budut-golosovat-russkoyazychnye-izbirateli.d?id=55200148> , 7 février 2023, consulté le 7 juin 2023.

Лидер «Согласия» Я. Урбанович прокомментировал выход из партии А. Элксниньша, <https://www.grani.lv/latvia/136211-lider-soglasiya-ya-urbanovich-prokommentiroval-vyход-iz-partii-a-elksninsha.html> , 27 janvier 2023, consulté le 29 janvier 2023.

Латгальские депутаты от «Согласия» сообщают, что не поедут на съезд партии, <https://www.grani.lv/latgale/136229-latgalskie-deputaty-ot-soglasiya-soobschayut-что-не-поедут-на-sezd-partii.html> , 27 janvier 2023, consulté le 29 janvier 2023.

Русский союз Латвии, <https://rusojuz.lv/> , 8 février 2019, consulté le 15 décembre 2022.

Vladimirs Buzajevs - « Latvijas Krievu savienība » / Rīgas domes vēlēšanas, <https://www.lsm.lv/velesanas2020/partiju-saraksts/latvijas-krievu-savieniba/94-vladimirs-buzajevs>, consulté le 20 juin 2023.

Partijas «Stabilitātei!» Rīgas saraksta līderis – Rosļikovs, <https://www.lsm.lv/raksts/zinas/latvija/partijas-stabilitatei-rigas-saraksta-lideris--roslikovs.a465253/>, consulté le 2 juin 2023.

Harmony repeatedly condemns Russia's aggression against Ukraine and endorses EU's efforts to restore compliance with international law, https://www.baltictimes.com/harmony_repeatedly_condemns_russia_s_aggression_against_ukraine_and_endorses_eu_s_efforts_to_restore_compliance_with_international_law/, consulté le 2 juin 2023.

Rēzekne mayor creates new party, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/politics/politics/03.04.2023-rezekne-mayor-creates-new-party.a503418/>, consulté le 19 mai 2023.

Андрей Элксниньш: “Пришло время для создания новой партии”, <https://gorod.lv/novosti/338938-andrei-elksninsh-prishlo-vremya-dlya-sozdaniya-novoi-partii>, consulté le 19 mai 2023.

Progresīvie and Gen Z: A leftward shift for Latvia?, <https://meduza.io/en/feature/2023/02/16/progresivie-and-gen-z-a-leftward-shift-for-latvia>, consulté le 9 mai 2023.

За Элксиньша и Барташевича могут проголосовать не только русскоязычные — журналист, <https://rus.lsm.lv/statja/novosti/analitika/za-elksninsa-i-bartasevica-mogut-progolosovat-ne-tolko-russkoyazychnye-zurnalist.a496600/>, consulté le 17 février 2023.

Latest party ratings show New Unity retains top spot, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/politics/politics/latest-party-ratings-show-new-unity-retains-top-spot.a496475/>, consulté le 15 février 2023.

MP Grevcova under scrutiny yet again for claims about occupation of Latvia, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/politics/saeima/mp-grevcova-under-scrutiny-yet-again-for-claims-about-occupation-of-latvia.a492911/>, consulté le 23 janvier 2023.

Jaunā Vienotība, <https://jaunavienotiba.lv/>, consulté le 9 janvier 2023.

Restart.lv - SDP « Saskaņa » jaunatnes organizācija | Rīga | Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/RestartLatvia/>, consulté le 5 janvier 2023.

Стабильность!, <https://www.partijastabilitatei.lv/index2.html>, consulté le 16 novembre 2022.

Latvia: Parties at a glance, <https://politpro.eu/en/latvia/parties>, consulté le 31 décembre 2022.

Sociāldemokrātiskā partija "Saskaņa" | Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/saskana>, consulté le 5 janvier 2023.

Our MEP | Latvian Russian Union, <https://rusojuz.lv/en/category/our-mer/>, consulté le 9 janvier 2023.

SDP « Saskaņa », <https://saskana.eu/>, consulté le 6 janvier 2023.

Latgale members leave Harmony party en masse, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/politics/politics/latgale-members-leave-harmony-party-en-masse.a495351/>, consulté le 8 février 2023.

Harmony expels Rēzekne mayor Bartaševičs, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/politics/politics/harmony-expels-rezekne-mayor-bartasevics.a495196/>, consulté le 7 juin 2023.

Daugavpils city council leave Harmony party, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/politics/politics/daugavpils-city-council-leave-harmony-party.a493527/>, consulté le 7 juin 2023.

ADMIN, *Выплаты переселенцам в 2023 году при участии в госпрограмме 2023*, <https://xn---8sbbemu6akbbsn.xn--p1ai/vyplaty-pereselencam-v-2022-godu-pri-uchastii-v/>, 15 décembre 2022, consulté le 20 juin 2023.

NATO, *NATO's military presence in the east of the Alliance*, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_136388.htm, consulté le 17 mai 2023.

«Тогда вставай вместо него!», <https://grani.la.lv/togda-vstavaj-vmesto-nego>, 15 février 2019, consulté le 18 juin 2023.

Cross Border Cooperation, https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy/cross-border-cooperation_en, 7 novembre 2018, consulté le 8 juin 2023.

« Latvia rejects making Russian an official language », in *BBC News*, 18 févr. 2012 p.

Russia tells Latvian ambassador to leave, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/politics/diplomacy/russia-tells-latvian-ambassador-to-leave.a493748/>, consulté le 29 janvier 2023.

Госпрограмма переселения | Выбрать раздел | Консульский отдел Посольства Российской Федерации в Республике Казахстан, http://consular.rfembassy.ru/lm/konsulskie_voprosy/sootechestvenniki/, consulté le 17 février 2023.

Программа переселения соотечественников, <https://latvia.mid.ru/ru/consular-services/latviya/change-country/>, consulté le 17 février 2023.

Foreign trade by partner – Statistics Latvia, <https://eksports.csb.gov.lv/en/years/countries/export/2022>, consulté le 20 février 2023.

Which parts of Latvia have most Russian citizens?, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/society/society/which-parts-of-latvia-have-most-russian-citizens.a497264/>, consulté le 20 février 2023.

Update: Situation at the EU's land border with Russia, <https://frontex.europa.eu/media-centre/news/news-release/update-situation-at-the-eu-s-land-border-with-russia-X3iWuK>, consulté le 23 février 2023.

Russian border crossings to & from EU by country 2022, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1337155/russian-border-crossings-to-and-from-the-eu/>, consulté le 23 février 2023.

В Латвии растёт запрос на участие в программе переселения соотечественников, <https://ruskiymir.ru/news/306190/>, consulté le 16 mai 2023.

Foreign trade with Russia, Belarus and Ukraine | Ekonomikas ministrija, <https://www.em.gov.lv/en/foreign-trade-russia-belarus-and-ukraine>, consulté le 8 juin 2023.

A Year of War. The Deniers, the Agitators, the Glorifiers—Who are They? | Re:Baltica, <https://en.rebaltica.lv/2023/02/a-year-of-war-the-deniers-the-agitators-the-glorifiers-who-are-they/>, consulté le 9 mai 2023.

Ветераны-«афганцы» не получают никаких льгот от государства, <https://rus.lsm.lv/statja/novosti/obschestvo/veterani-afganci-ne-poluchayut-nikakih-lgot-ot-gosudarstva.a170407/>, consulté le 18 juin 2023.

The Russian Federation is excluded from the Council of Europe - Portal - www.coe.int, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/-/the-russian-federation-is-excluded-from-the-council-of-europe>, consulté le 19 juin 2023.

ERR, Эксперты ООН резко раскритиковали перевод всех школ в Латвии на латышский язык обучения, <https://rus.err.ee/1608878576/jeksperty-oon-rezko-raskritikovali-perevod-vseh-shkol-v-latvii-na-latyshskij-jazyk-obuchenija>, 9 février 2023, consulté le 15 juin 2023.

LETA, Latvian Ministry of Education proposes replacing Russian language with EU languages in schools, <https://bnn-news.com/latvian-ministry-of-education-proposes-replacing-russian-language-with-eu-languages-in-schools-240199>, 21 novembre 2022, consulté le 15 juin 2023.

LIEPINSH Imants et JAKUBEK Anna Maria, Latvia school language reform irks Russian minority, backed by Jewish community, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-latvia-school-language-reform-infuriates-russian-minority/>, consulté le 18 juin 2023.

Вопрос министру: «Каково будущее “русских” школ?», <https://grani.la.lv/vopros-ministru-kakovo-buducshee-russkih-shkol-video> , 31 mars 2023, consulté le 25 mai 2023.

UN experts slam Latvia for clamping down on Russian-language minorities, <https://www.politico.eu/article/united-nations-experts-latvia-russian-language-minorities/> , 8 février 2023, consulté le 29 mai 2023.

Строго по методичке. В Латвии детей отучают от русской азбуки, https://baltnews.com/V_Latvii/20230118/1025854143/Strogo-po-metodichke-V-Latvii-detey-otuchayut-ot-russkoy-azbuki-.html , 18 janvier 2023, consulté le 18 janvier 2023.

Из 10 самых неуспевающих школ Риги только одна — латышская. Почему?, <https://rus.tvnet.lv/6473359/iz-10-samyh-neuspevayushchih-shkol-rigi-tolko-odna-latyshskaya-pochemu> , 10 décembre 2018, consulté le 18 juin 2023.

Latvia's teachers begin three-day strike, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/society/education/24.04.2023-latvias-teachers-begin-three-day-strike.a506054/>, consulté le 16 juin 2023.

Latvia's schools could be 1,000 teachers short for next year, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/society/education/08.06.2023-latvias-schools-could-be-1000-teachers-short-for-next-year.a511908/>, consulté le 8 juin 2023.

« Russian Speakers Protest Language Reform In Latvia », in *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 09:45:22Z p.

Are Russian schools in Latvia ready to teach in official language?, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/society/education/02.05.2023-are-russian-schools-in-latvia-ready-to-teach-in-official-language.a507061/>, consulté le 3 mai 2023.

Эксперты ООН видят нарушения прав нацменьшинств в переводе образования на латышский, <https://rus.lsm.lv/statja/novosti/politika/eksperty-oon-vidyat-naruseniya-prav-nacmensinstv-v-perevode-obrazovaniya-na-latyskii.a495693/>, consulté le 17 février 2023.

Запрет преподавания русского языка: Даугавпилское управление образования выясняет, какой ресурс есть у школ, <https://gorod.lv/novosti/337414-zapret-prepodavaniya-russkogo-yazyka-daugavpilsskoe-upravlenie-obrazovaniya-vyyasnyayet-kakoi-resurs-est-u-shkol>, consulté le 14 février 2023.

Picket protests against education language reform,
<https://eng.lsm.lv/article/society/education/picket-protests-against-education-language-reform.a254702/>, consulté le 8 janvier 2023.