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General

Latvia is located in Eastern Europe between Estonia and Lithuania and borders the Baltic Sea.

The climate is maritime and wet, with moderate winters.

The country's terrain is of a low plain.

Buoyage System

The IALA Buoyage System (Region A) is in effect. See Chart No. 1 for further IALA Buoyage System information.

Currency

The official unit of currency is the Latvian lat, which consists of 100 santims.

Government

Latvia is an independent constitutional republic comprised of 26 counties.

The capital is Riga.

Holidays

The following holidays are observed:

Jan. 1, New Year's Day; Easter; Nov. 18, Independence Day; and Dec. 25, Christmas.

Industries

Latvia is developing a sound and growing market economy.

It is dependent primarily upon the import of raw materials as it modernizes its diverse, although antiquated industrial structure.

Manufactured goods include machinery for domestic and industrial usage, synthetic fibers, pharmaceuticals, electronics, and textiles.

Languages

The official language is Lettish although Lithuanian, Russian, and other languages are spoken.

Mined Areas

Formerly mined areas, open to navigation, are delimited by the following positions:

Approach to Riga—Area No. 150

- 56°59'N, 23°50'E.
- 57°12'N, 23°50'E.
- 57°12'N, 24°07'E.
- 57°19'N, 24°07'E.
- 57°19'N, 24°17'E.
- 57°13'N, 24°18'E.
- 57°11'N, 24°08'E.
- 57°06'N, 24°08'E.

Southwest of Kolka Cape—Area No. 151

- a. 57°36'N, 22°46'E.
- b. 57°40'N, 22°48'E.
- c. 57°39'N, 22°57'E.
- d. 57°35'N, 22°56'E.

Irbe Sea Narrows—Area No. 152

- a. 57°20'N, 21°28'E.
- b. 57°25'N, 21°15'E.
- c. 57°40'N, 21°32'E.
- d. 57°40'N, 21°26'E.
- e. 57°48'N, 21°26'E.
- f. 57°48'N, 21°35'E.
- g. 57°53'N, 21°50'E.
- h. 57°58'N, 21°59'E and continuing along the coast line of Saarema Island to:
 - i. 58°21'N, 23°00'E.
 - j. 58°00'N, 23°00'E.
 - k. 57°57'N, 22°48'E.
 - l. 57°46'N, 22°56'E.
 - m. 57°46'N, 22°36'E.

This area encompasses the territorial waters of Latvia and Estonia.

South of Uzava Lighthouse—Area No. 153

The restricted area is delimited by the coast line, the parallels of latitude 57°04'N and 57°10'N and the meridian of longitude 21°15'E.

Approach to Liepaja—Area No. 123

The restricted area is delimited by the coast line and the parallels of latitude 56°49'N and 56°06'N and the meridian of longitude 20°28'E.

The following anchorages have been established in formerly mined areas:

Approach to Riga—Area No. 44

- a. 57°07'N, 23°51'E.
- b. 57°08'N, 23°49'E.
- c. 57°09'N, 23°51'E.
- d. 57°08'N, 23°52'E.

Area No. 45

- a. 57°05'N, 23°53'E.
- b. 57°07'N, 23°51'E.
- c. 57°08'N, 23°55'E.
- d. 57°06'N, 23°56'E.

North of Ventspils Harbor—Area No. 50

- a. 57°30'N, 21°28'E.
- b. 57°32'N, 21°30'E.
- c. 57°31'N, 21°32'E.
- d. 57°29'N, 21°30'E.

This area is designated for the anchorage of gas and liquid cargo tankers.

Northwest of Ventspils Harbor—Area No. 50A

- a. 57°30'N, 21°21'E.
- b. 57°32'N, 21°22'E.
- c. 57°31'N, 21°23'E.
- d. 57°30'N, 21°23'E.

This area is intended for vessels of large tonnage.

Ventspils Harbor—Area No. 51

- a. 57°27'N, 21°29'E.
- b. 57°28'N, 21°27'E.
- c. 57°29'N, 21°29'E.
- d. 57°28'N, 21°31'E.

This is a quarantine anchorage as well as a designated anchorage for crude oil tankers or vessels carrying other explosive and inflammable cargo.

Area No. 51A

- a. 57°26'N, 21°31'E.
- b. 57°28'N, 21°31'E.
- c. 57°28'N, 21°34'E.
- d. 57°26'N, 21°34'E.

This area is designated for the use of fishing vessels.

Area No. 52

- a. 57°26'N, 21°27'E.
- b. 57°27'N, 21°25'E.
- c. 57°28'N, 21°26'E.
- d. 57°26'N, 21°29'E.

This area is designated as a dry cargo vessel anchorage.

Liepaja Harbor—Area No. 54

- a. 56°30'N, 20°53'E.
- b. 56°30'N, 20°56'E.
- c. 56°31'N, 20°56'E.
- d. 56°30'N, 20°53'E.

This area has been designated for the use of small transport and fishing vessels.

West of Liepaja Harbor—Area No. 55

- a. 56°31'N, 20°50'E.
- b. 56°32'N, 20°52'E.
- c. 56°33'N, 20°50'E.
- d. 56°33'N, 20°52'E.

West of Liepaja Harbor—Area No. 56

- a. 56°30'N, 20°43'E.
- b. 56°33'N, 20°48'E.
- c. 56°33'N, 20°45'E.
- d. 56°31'N, 20°48'E.

This area is a deepwater anchorage.

The following areas are former training grounds for the placement of mines. Shipping in these areas is not recommended; fishing and anchoring are prohibited:

West of Akmenrags—Area No. 234

- a. 56°49'N, 20°25'E.
- b. 56°52'N, 20°25'E.
- c. 56°52'N, 20°29'E.
- d. 56°49'N, 20°29'E.

Southwest of Akmenrags—Area No. 236

- a. 56°42'N, 20°42'E.
- b. 56°44'N, 20°42'E.
- c. 56°44'N, 20°45'E.
- d. 56°42'N, 20°45'E.

Anchoring, bottom fishing, underwater activities, and blasting are prohibited in the following areas due to sunken explosives:

West of Liepaja—Area No. 213

A circle with a radius of 5 miles drawn from 56°21'47"N, 19°44'53"E.

Southwest of Liepaja —Area No. 214

- a. 55°56'N, 18°39'E.
- b. 56°16'N, 18°39'E.
- c. 56°16'N, 18°51'E.
- d. 56°20'N, 18°55'E.
- e. 56°20'N, 19°31'E.
- f. 56°07'N, 19°15'E.
- g. 55°56'N, 19°15'E.

This area is located in the economic zones of Latvia and Sweden.

Pilotage

Pilotage is compulsory for entering and leaving all Latvian ports. Pilots should be ordered through the local agent 4 hours in advance and confirmed 1 hour in advance.

Regulations

Vessels should send their ETA to the respective harbormaster through their local agent 24 and 4 hours in advance.

During the ice navigation season all vessels bound for the port of Riga or ports on the coastline of Latvia in the Gulf of Riga are prohibited from entering Irbe Strait and the Gulf of Riga, or to leave these ports independently, without a special permit issued each time by the Captain of the icebreaker Varma. The special permit takes into account the real ice condition in this area after being approved by the port of Riga Harbormaster.

Search and Rescue

The Sea Search and Rescue Service, a branch of the Latvian Maritime Administration, has its headquarters at Riga. MRCC Riga, call sign "Riga Rescue Radio" maintains a continuous listening watch of the international frequencies.

Time Zone

The Time Zone description is ALPHA (-1).

U.S. Embassy

The U.S. Embassy is situated at Raina Boulevard 7, LV-1510 Riga 226050.

The mailing address is American Embassy Riga, PSC 78, Box Riga, APO AE 09723.