

# **Foreign Ministry archives services of the European Union MEMBER STATES**

## **LATVIA**

### **1. Full title of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of Archives**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Latvia.  
Archives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Latvia.  
Latvian State Historical Archives

### **2. Contact details**

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### **3. Summary of the historical background of the archives service**

The Republic of Latvia declared its independence on the 18<sup>th</sup> of November, 1918, but the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was founded only in July, 1919, for the reason that a part of Latvia was occupied and the Liberation war continued.

The records regarding foreign affairs begin in 1918 with the appointment of a Minister of Foreign Affairs. After Latvia's occupation by the USSR in 1940, the archives of the Ministry were displaced to Moscow, then brought back in the 1960s and 1990s.

After regaining of independence in August 21, 1991, the Ministry organized the return of archives from diplomatic legations abroad (London and Washington), which were the only representatives of the Republic of Latvia during soviet occupation. These archives now have been transferred to the Latvian State Historical Archives.

Today all archives of the Ministry and legations from 1918 to 1990 are kept in the Latvian State Historical Archives (Latvijas Valsts vēstures arhīvs).

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was founded in May 1990 after the declaration of independence. In August, 1991 the first archivist in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was appointed and Division of Archives and Chancellery organized. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia invented the system where all original documents were sent to the archives on the same day and copies were distributed to structural units. The first classification scheme and filing system was based on correspondent principle with thematic subclasses. Since 1996 a new classification scheme based on functional principle has been introduced.

#### **4. Physical access**

a) The diplomatic historical archives (1918 - 1940) are accessible to national and foreign researchers in Latvia State Historical Archives, 16 Slokas Street, Riga. Researchers are asked to present a letter from research director.

Office / working hours: on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays 9.00 to 16.00; on Wednesdays 13.00 - 20.00.

b) The archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (from 1990) are open for Ministry staff and national researchers every day. All materials are open for Ministry staff without special permission, excluding secret or confidential materials. Request to use documents from national researchers should be addressed to the State Secretary of the Ministry. There is no practice of foreign researchers using the documents of the Ministry. Finding aids and files are consulted by archivists.

#### **5. Practical facilities**

Latvian State Historical Archives (Latvijas Valsts vēstures arhīvs): see 4 above for opening hours.

#### **6. Reproduction of documents**

Photocopying is provided.

#### **7. Access regulations**

Archives Act, issued 26.03.1991;

Law on Information Publicity, issued 29.10.1998;

Law on Protection of Personal Data, 2002

Regulations on Records Management Department of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1999.

The legislation of the Republic of Latvia is applied equally to both national and foreign researchers. The prescript Nr. 53 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of

Latvia issued on March 21, 2003 denotes particular kinds of information to which some access limitations are applied.

## 8. Concise description of the principal record groups and collections

a) The main holdings of **Latvia State Historical Archives (1918-1991)** are:

- records of Foreign Ministry;
- records of legations abroad;
- private diplomatic archives.

The volume of documents is estimated at about 350 linear metres of shelving.

b) There are five main record groups in the **Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (from 1990)**:

- international treaties concluded by Republic of Latvia;
- records of the Ministry (diplomatic correspondence, political, administrative, consular, personal papers);
- records of missions abroad;
- private diplomatic archives;
- audiovisual documents.

The complete holdings of the Foreign Ministry archives are in total nearly 1000 linear metres. Files kept in the Documentation center (intermediate archives) comprise approximately 700 linear metres, archives files about 300 linear metres.

## 9. Finding aids

a) At the Latvia State Historical Archives researchers have access to the existing inventories. Registry of collections of Latvian State Historical Archives is now being computerized.

b) Inventories are accessible for a part of the archives' holdings from the beginning of the 1990s up to 1997. On finding aids for the remaining part of the documents the researchers may consult the archivists.

## 10. Reference works and articles

a)

Recueil des principaux Traités conclus par la Lettonie avec les Pays Etrangers Volume 1, 1918-1930, Rīga, 1930; Volume 2, 1930-1938, Rīga, 1938. Publié par le Ministère des Affaires Etrangères sous la direction de G. Albat, Ministre Plénipotentiaire, Secrétaire Général au Ministère des Affaires Etrangères.

Malbone W. Graham. *The Diplomatic Recognition of the Border States. P. 3. Latvia.* – Berkeley: University of California Press; London: Cambridge University Press, 1941.

*Latvian - Russian Relations, Documents.* Compiled by Dr. A. Bilmanis. – Washington, D.C. Published by the Latvian Legation. First printing, 1944; Second printing, 1978.

*The Occupation and Annexation of Latvia: 1939-1940. Documents and Materials / I.* Grava-Kreituse, I. Feldmanis, D. A. Loeber, J. Goldmanis, A. Stranga. – Riga, 1995.

b)

*A list of International Treaties Concluded by the Republic of Latvia.* Compiled by Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia, Riga, 1996.

*Latvijas Republikas Ārlietu dienesta rokasgrāmata.* – Rīga, 1997. Manual for Foreign Service. Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Lerhis A. “Padomju režīma represijas pret neatkarīgās Latvijas diplomātiem // Totalitārie režīmi un to represijas Latvijā 1940.-1956”. gadā. *Latvijas Vēsturnieku komisijas 2000. gada pētījumi.* Rīga, 2001. (The Soviet Repressions Against Diplomats of Independent Latvia. Totalitarian Regimes and Their Repressions Carried out in Latvia). Published in Yearbook 2000 of the Commission of the Historians of Latvia.

A. Lerhis. *Development of Foreign Service of the Republic of Latvia (1917 – 1941).* Dissertation of Ph. D. degree. R., 2002 (in Latvian, not published).

S. Križevica. “Latvijas Ārlietu ministrijas izveidošana. 1918. gada novembris – 1919”. gads. *Latvijas Arhīvi.* Nr. 4, 1999. (The Formation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia. 1918-1919).

R. Treijs. *Latvijas diplomātija un diplomāti (1918.-1940.).* – Rīga, 2003. (Diplomacy and Diplomats of Latvia (1918-1940)). Short Biographies.

*Dokumenti par Latvijas valsts starptautisko atzīšanu, neatkarības atjaunošanu un diplomātiskajiem sakariem : 1918 - 1998,* Riga, 1999. (A Document Collection on the International Recognition of Latvia, Renewed Independence and Diplomatic Relations. 1918-1998.) Latvian Archivist Society, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia, Latvian State Historical Archives.

Ē. Jēkabsons, V. Ščerbinskis *Latvijas ārlietu dienesta darbinieki. 1918 – 1991.* Rīga, 2003. (Biographical dictionary The Latvian Foreign Office. 1918-1991); Latvian State Historical Archives, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Archivist Society.