

ANNUAL REPORT TO CENL YEAR 2024



Name of country: **Latvia**

Name of library or equivalent national-level organization: **National Library of Latvia (NLL)**

Name of Chief Executive: **Andris Vilks (until 2 September 2024), followed by Dagnija Baltiņa (from 3 September 2024)**

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1. General overview of recent major developments at the National Library of Latvia (NLL)

In 2024, the NLL continued to fulfil its core mission by systematically enhancing access to the national collection and expanding its digitisation efforts. These activities contributed to promoting reading, research, and public engagement, while reinforcing the role of libraries in a knowledge-based society.

On 3 September 2024, Dagnija Baltiņa was appointed Director of the National Library of Latvia. Ms. Baltiņa previously served as Director of the NLL's Special Collections Department, researcher, lecturer at the Latvian Academy of Culture, and Secretary-General of the Latvian National Commission for UNESCO. In her strategic vision, she emphasises the importance of the national library network, the development of reading culture, the phenomenon of the book, the establishment of new partnerships, and transparent governance.

The NLL has actively implemented the new Development and Operational Strategy 2024–2028, introducing key strategic measures in all areas of activity. Significant progress was made in the field of national digitisation policy, with the Cabinet of Ministers approving Regulation No. 518 on the Governance of the Digital Cultural Heritage Platform, appointing the NLL as its managing institution.

The NLL continued its involvement in projects under the National Research Programme ([DHELI](#), [NOVEL](#), and [CERS](#)), while also launching a new research initiative, “The Book and Society in Latvia”, supported by the Latvian Council of Science. Concurrently, several projects co-financed by the EU Recovery and Resilience Facility were implemented, targeting improvements in energy efficiency, the development of a solar park, the enhancement of data cloud infrastructure, and broader sustainability measures.

As of 1 January 2024, the NLL assumed responsibility for the acquisition and provision of licensed e-resources for state-accredited libraries and scientific institutions, previously managed by the Culture Information Systems Centre (KISC).

In 2024, the NLL launched public engagement movement “Restart for Reading” and achieved record engagement in its reading promotion initiatives. More than 23,000 individuals participated in the Children’s, Youth and Parents’ Jury, and approximately 30,000 schoolchildren were involved in the National Reading Aloud Competition. As part of the initiative “Strengthening the Latvian Language through Literacy”, **the NLL received 400,000 EUR in state funding, of which 120,000 EUR was allocated to public libraries for book acquisitions, enabling the addition of nearly 10,000 new titles to their collections.**

The NLL continued its contributions to the multi-annual programme “500 Years of the Latvian Books”, focusing on the theme “Libraries and Reading”. This theme was explored through a series of exhibitions, workshops, thematic events, and national media campaigns. More than 60 communications were disseminated via the Latvian Library Portal (biblioteka.lv) and other platforms. In partnership with the University of Latvia, a national study on reading habits was launched. The year also featured international conferences and exhibitions that underscored the European context of Latvian publishing, the historical development of local printing, and the preservation of cultural heritage. Several important academic publications were produced as part of these efforts.

Highlights of the 2024 exhibition programme included:

- “Recorded. Replayed. From a phonograph to a music centre”, exploring the history of sound recordings and the written word;
- “Text is Not Our Type”, one of the central events in 2024 within the framework of the cycle “500 Years of Latvian Books”, highlighting the interaction of book design, human and technology.
- “Acceleration: The Short Path of the Latvian Book Publishing from Patronage to an Independent Sector in the 19th Century”, tracing the development of Latvian publishing.

One of the central features of the “Text is Not Our Type” exhibition was the reconstructed historical printing press based on the designs of renowned European typographer Christophe Plantin. The press was built according to original blueprints from the Plantin-Moretus Museum (Antwerp, Belgium), allowing people to imagine and experience what the book printing process was like in the past, when the composition of text made of individual metal letters was laid out in a mirror pattern on a printing form, followed by the application of ink and finally, by pulling a lever, the text was pressed onto the paper. Globally, only a few such reconstructed presses exist, held in specialised memory institutions.

In 2024, the NLL assumed a central role in the national programme commemorating the 300th anniversary of Immanuel Kant’s birth. The Library curated a comprehensive programme of exhibitions, public debates, and the international forum “Mind in Riga”, highlighting the contemporary relevance of Kantian thought and reaffirming the Library’s role as a space for intellectual engagement.

In November 2024, the National Library of Latvia inaugurated its newly designed Youth Space, developed as part of the Interreg “Urban Knowledge Hubs - Transformative Societal Spaces for Hybrid Libraries in the Baltic Sea Region” (BALTIC-UKH) project. Created in collaboration with the Young Architects’ Club ATELPA, the space was co-designed by young people for young people, offering a modern, flexible, and multifunctional environment that fosters creativity, digital literacy, and engagement in education and culture. The initiative represents a successful public-private partnership involving the NLL, Riga Technical University, NGOs, and private sector contributors, and reflects the Library’s commitment to inclusive service development and youth-oriented innovation.

In 2024 the NLL intensively implemented the EU project “EU4Dialogue: Improving exchanges across the divide through education and culture”, aimed at fostering a favorable environment for dialogue and cooperation in the South Caucasus and the Republic of Moldova. Together with seven consortium partners from Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, and Poland, a series of activities were carried out across four work packages. Within this project, the NLL developed and carried out collaboration with EU neighboring countries – Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia – by offering summer schools, internships, and mentoring opportunities to library and museum professionals, including participants from conflict regions such as Transnistria, Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia wherever possible.

2. Key facts and figures

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
User services					
Registered users	159 969	162 276	169 455	117 878 ¹	122 598
On-site visits	139 186	46 928	211 755	309 444	351 068
Virtual visits (in million)	3.623	4.445	3.752	3.933	4.561
Loans	114 987	53 573	133 241	159 023	184 050
Collection					
Collection (in million units)	4.283	4.329	4.361	4.388	4.414
Books (in million units)	2.007	2.020	2.031	2.038	2.044
Serials	868 234	883 897	896 262	905 553	916 406
Audio-visual materials	79 766	81 403	85 143	86 632	87 744
Microforms	96 310	96 310	96 310	96 219	96 118
Cartographic materials	43 014	44 035	45 011	46 203	49 843
Sheet music	225 221	226 487	227 135	228 926	230 559
Graphic documents	243 684	252 513	264 381	267 365	267 494
Manuscripts	30 994	31 470	32 165	32 438	32 637
Small prints	652 522	655 298	647 351	650 170	653 486
Other	4 635	4 685	2 846	2 862	2 922
E-resources collection (total number of units):	21 330	24 474	75 367	110 903	178 611
e-books	8 165	8 998	9 852	10 816	11 549
e-serials	9 420	10 748	11 667	12 615	13 390
Staff					
Employees	348	343	351	351	354
Including librarians	203	193	226	224	227
Infrastructure					
Size of premises used by NLL	48 595 m2				
Number of places for readers	700				
Budget and Expenditures					
Total budget (in EUR millions)	12.739	12.785	14.125	16.102	17.421
Financing from state budget (in EUR millions)	11.869	12.288	13.737	14.560	15.006
Expenses – salaries (in EUR millions)	5.559	5.544	6.011	6.442	7.052

¹ In order to ensure correct information about the number of registered readers, as of 01.01.2023, reader data is stored for 10 years after the end of the term specified in the reader's profile

Expenses – social insurance, allowances, compensations (in EUR millions)	1.393	1.354	1.580	1.673	1.852
Expenses – building of collection	778 535	925 731	264 950	296 259	215 865
Periodicals	20 416	21 492	11 714	11 220	12 452
Expenses – goods and services (in EUR millions)	3.564	4.310	3.447	3.020	3.541
IT services (in EUR millions)	0.801	1.390	1.207	1.319	1.830

3. Outlook for 2025

- To ensure the stabilisation of the NLL's funding, including through the optimisation of available resources;
- To improve the content, accessibility, and service culture of NLL services, ensuring that every user is served according to their individual needs;
- To address key security-related issues, including collection security, cybersecurity, and civil protection, by testing and gradually implementing the approved Emergency Plan for Collections' Protection;
- To organise year-round activities under the "500 Years of the Latvian Books" initiative, culminating in major events on 7–8 November 2025, and to advance national reading promotion and strategy development;
- To complete the development of the new NLL website and implement a comprehensive promotional campaign;
- To continue identifying potential collection movements over the next five years in order to ensure optimal collection placement and to adapt repository infrastructure accordingly;
- To continue the inventory of the digitised collections and further develop the Digital Library;
- To ensure and carry out an international evaluation of the NLL as a scientific institution, and to establish clarity regarding research base funding in dialogue with the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Culture;
- To improve staff well-being and strengthen efforts to attract and retain new employees;
- To implement additional measures for energy efficiency and the achievement of climate neutrality goals;
- To enhance and further develop the NLL cloud computing management and service platform;
- To ensure the development and maintenance of nationally significant ICT infrastructure within the NLL cloud platform hosted in the National Data Processing Cloud – including increasing system capacity and performance, guaranteeing service continuity and high availability, and positioning the NLL as a backbone institution in the national artificial intelligence ecosystem (providing both expertise and technological infrastructure);
- To ensure the successful implementation and use of the Shared Platform for Large-Scale Data Retrieval and Analysis across public administration institutions – including ministries, their subordinate agencies, educational and research institutions, cultural organizations, independent authorities, and municipalities – in support of evidence-based policy-making and implementation.