

**Valmiera**

## GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

Valmiera enjoys an advantageous geographic location at of the intersection of a number of national roads only 108 km from capital city Riga, 115 km from Aluksne, 97 km from Gulbene, 115 km from Madona, 30 km from Cesis and 50 km from Valka on the Estonian border. ([See Annex 1](#))

## TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Public transport services in Valmiera are provided by the [VTU Valmiera](#) company.

In future years, the municipality plans to optimise traffic flow through the city, to improve the quality of public transport and logistics services and develop favourable conditions for labour-force mobility in the city and the region.

In terms of regional and long-distance bus routes to and from Valmiera bus station, 27.3% of trips are Smiltene or Cesis bound, whereas 72.7% head towards Riga, Valka or Rujiena.

The Valmiera City Council, in common with many others, is keen to see the route of *Rail Baltica* pass through the city, as well as in the expansion of other railway services for city and regional residents. Currently, Valmiera railway station handles both transit–freight and passenger traffic ([See Annex 2](#)). In 2008, 224 760 tonnes of freight were reloaded at Valmiera railway station cargo and 112 714 passengers commenced or ended their journeys at Valmiera. Railway services are provided by [Latvijas dzelzceļš/Latvian Railways](#).

For the near future, the Valmiera City Council is focussed on the construction of a large parking area, a significant factor in optimising traffic flows. It needs to be conveniently located, must not contravene environmental requirements but still facilitate safe inner-city communication.

## CITY STATISTICS

Valmiera, with its 27 497 inhabitants, is the 8<sup>th</sup> largest Latvian city. The city's total area is 18.18 km<sup>2</sup> or 1 818 ha of which 251.69 ha have industrial, commercial or mixed commercial zoning. About 4.6 ha of the industrial zones are located close to railway infrastructure. Valmiera possesses high-pressure gas supplies for manufacturing processes. In August 2008, Valmiera had 22 082 employed persons and the unemployment rate was 5.6% (January 2009), but the average monthly wage was EUR 492.50 (July 2008). Valmiera is an industrial city and had 1478 registered enterprises in August 2008, one of the highest per capita figures in Latvia. There is one local higher education institution – Vidzeme University College which had 1423 students in the 2008/2009 academic year. ([See Annex 3](#))

## REGIONAL STATISTICS

The re-aligned Valmiera district, in the northern part of Latvia, comprises five counties (Beverina, Burtnieki, Valmiera, Strenci and Priekuli). Its total area is 2 175.27 km<sup>2</sup> and the population is 33 107. The total number of residents in Valmiera and its surrounding region is 60 604. ([See Annex 4](#))

## BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

Valmiera is an industrial city with highly developed manufacturing and long-standing mercantile traditions.

Of Valmiera's enterprises, 9% are engaged in manufacturing and employ 24% of the working population. The majority of enterprises, around 30%, operate in retail, employing some 15% of those in employment.

Business activity in the Valmiera region is concentrated in Valmiera itself which is home to more than half of the region's companies, but in the other districts in the Vidzeme planning region, most business activity occurs outside district centres.

The most developed business sectors in the city of Valmiera are as follows:

1. Chemical industry, textile industry ( [Valmieras Stikla šķiedra](#), [Culimeta Baltics](#), [Valmiera-Andren](#) )
2. Food production ([Valmieras piens](#), Maiznīca Ieva)
3. Metalworking ([Valpro](#), [Valtanks](#), [Vidzemes Metālserviss](#))
4. Retail/wholesale ( Lars Limited, T. N. Rozalinde, A. I. Rīts, Valrek, Agroserviss Valmiera, [Metāla Alianse](#) )
5. Construction ( [Vekover](#), Vidzemes energoceltnieks, [SCO Centrs](#), [Vidzemes būvnieks](#), [Grods](#), [Ekers](#), [Bazalts](#), [Anvars un Partneri](#) )
6. Furniture production ( [Valmieras Mēbeles](#), Dizaina centrs )
7. Other manufacturing companies: V.L.T. (egg trays and cartons), AGA (liquefied oxygen and nitrogen)

Valmiera's larger manufacturers, for example, Valmieras Stikla šķiedra (glass fibre), Valpro Corp, Valmieras Mēbeles, V.L.T., etc., export around 80-90% of their production to many places around the world. Valmieras Stikla šķiedra has attracted significant foreign investment, totalling LVL 20 628 460. It is worth noting that, at the beginning of 2007, Valmiera was 5<sup>th</sup> in terms of foreign investment attracted by cities, with more than LVL 22 million having been invested in the city's enterprises.

Valmiera is continuing the rapid development of its industrial base, but at the same time is maintaining its position as one of Latvia's greenest cities, proving that the balanced and sustainable development of industrial zones and the natural environment is possible. This has been achieved through the principles of coordination and partnership underlying development, i.e., constructive cooperation between representatives of municipalities, business and the community, and by attracting EU funding for sustainable projects significant to the community, the local economy and the city's environment. ([See Annex 5](#))

## **FOREIGN INVESTMENT PROJECTS**

The largest attracter of investment in Valmiera is Valmieras Stikla Šķiedra, with a total of EUR 29 351 823. Meat processor Trials is second with EUR 1 364 818) and Culmeta Baltics third with EUR 472 396. Manufacturing companies have attracted by far the most investment with a total of EUR 31 965 182), whereas the service sector received EUR 167 886. ([See Annex 6](#))

## **INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS**

The most significant infrastructure development projects implemented are the construction of the Valmiera Elementary School and the development of water management systems in the East Latvian Rivers' basin.

The most significant infrastructure development projects at the planning stage are the reconstruction of the city's main streets: Rigas, Terbatas, Valkas, Matisu and Stacijas ielas.

Other significant infrastructure development projects are the reconstruction of the bridge across the Gauja river, the reconstruction of the bus station opposite the Cēsu iela roundabout and the construction of a new building for Valmiera's Business and Innovation Incubator.

## **HUMAN RESOURCES**

At the end of October 2008, Valmiera's unemployment rate was 3.3% of the residents of active working age, or 590 people in actual figures. ([See Annex 7](#))

65% of all the people employed in the region work in Valmiera. The majority of those work for companies where the number of employees is over 50, but in terms of numbers employed, the majority of companies have fewer than 10 employees. Such proportions suggest that the city's residents are active and enterprising, unafraid of risks and responsibility, prepared to found and develop new enterprises. For figures regarding labour force availability, see [Annex 8](#).

In 2007, the leading sector in Valmiera in terms of numbers employed was manufacturing, engaging about 5000 people or 23% of those in employment. Second was wholesale and retail trade with more than 4000 people or 20% and third was education, engaging about 2500 people or 11% of those employed. ([See Annex 9](#))

The skills of potential employees in Valmiera are mostly based on the education available in the city. The main areas are: digital program managers, the food-processing and forestry sectors. Valmiera also has translators, journalists, managers, computer system technicians and catering specialists available. Average salary levels are presented in [Annex 10](#).

The average monthly gross wage in Valmiera's public sector in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2008 was EUR 700.05. (LVL 492), but in the private sector it was EUR 554.92 (LVL 390).

## **EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

### **Vidzeme University College**

[Vidzeme University College](#) offers high quality and flexible study programmes with skilfully balanced theory and practice. Courses are adapted to the current needs of the community and to changes in the labour market. Course quality is sustained by experienced and professional academic staff, progressive forms of study and by students themselves knowing the goals they wish to attain and how to achieve success.

Vidzeme University College offers degrees in Business Administration, Communication and Public Relations, Information Technologies, Media Studies and Journalism, Political Science, Tourism Organisation and Management and Tour Guide studies and post-graduate studies in Business Environment Administration, Governance and Communication, Strategic Tourism Management and Socio-technical System Modelling. See [Annex 11](#) for the numbers of Vidzeme University College graduates by course.

### **Branch of the College of Accounting and Finance**

Offers:

1<sup>st</sup> level vocational higher education study programmes: specialist in public administration, accounting and finance, business and finance.

### **Branch of the Law College**

Offers:

1<sup>st</sup> level vocational higher education study programmes: the science of law, human resource management.

### **Vidzeme Vocational Education Centre (VPIC)**

VPIC is a joint Latvian-German project. VPIC offers welding courses to the level of the European Welding Federation Certificate. In cooperation with the Festo and Siemens companies, programmes for the training of industrial automation specialists were developed and introduced. The Vidzeme Vocational Education and Training Centre also offers people with restricted mobility opportunities to acquire trades most sought after in the labour market using modern equipment and up-to-date training programmes. VPIC is equipped with lifting and additional equipment required for people with restricted mobility.

VPIC offers more than 100 courses structured within four major training and education sectors.

- Metalworking
- Electrical engineering, industrial electronics
- Economics and management
- Application of materials produced by the KNAUF and Baltic Color companies

## **RESEARCH AND COMPETENCE CENTRE**

Research and skills support systems in Valmiera are based around the [Valmiera Business and Innovation Incubator](#) and the [Institute of Social and Technical Systems Engineering of the Vidzeme University College](#).

### **Valmiera Business and Innovation Incubator**

The [Valmiera Business and Innovation Incubator](#) (VBII) commenced operating at the end of 2007, within the framework of Latvia's Ministry of Economics Programme on the Development of Innovation Centres and Business Incubators, with the objective of facilitating the foundation and development of new innovative enterprises by providing premises, infrastructure services and consultancy on fundamental business issues.

VBII was founded with the purpose:

1. To facilitate business activity in Valmiera and Vidzeme
2. To change public attitudes towards technological commerce
3. To promote the principle of public and private partnership
4. To develop new export sectors
5. As a pilot project for the Vidzeme Education, Science and Technology Park Development Project
6. To enhance the competitiveness of enterprises in the Vidzeme region

### **The Institute of Social and Technical Systems Engineering of Vidzeme University College**

The [Institute of Social and Technical Systems Engineering of Vidzeme University College](#) was founded in July 2006.

Major research trends at the Institute:

- Logistics Information Systems and RFID Technologies
- Business Process Modelling
- Hybrid Imitation Modelling Systems
- The utilisation of Virtual and Enlarged Reality in Teaching

The Institute possesses Logistics information systems and a RFID Technologies laboratory designed for joint research by industry professionals and academic personnel.

The Institute publishes an annual scientific compilation for the Vidzeme University College ICTE in Regional Development (ICTE – information technologies, telecommunications and electronics).

Negotiations on the foundation of a Virtual Reality Laboratory have commenced.

### **INVESTMENT INCENTIVES**

Valmiera is a significant player in Latvia's economic and industrial development and offers diverse and numerous investment opportunities:

- It is possible to develop industrial territories (developed engineering and technical infrastructure) according to potential investor needs for significant enterprises.
- If large enterprises are established, skilled labour will be required. While individual municipalities cannot always secure investment, facilitating mobility within the labour force means that the availability and supply of labour can be considered on a regional basis.

- The Valmiera city municipality can offer high-quality education and continuing education infrastructure, tailored to labour market demands, to neighbouring municipalities so that training or retraining can be carried out efficiently.

- Industrial centre – the largest manufacturing and retail enterprises in the Vidzeme region have been concentrated in Valmiera since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and many of them are already known outside Latvia. The following are the most recognisable and significant: Valmieras stikla šķiedra, Valmieras Piens, VRPB, Triāls, and Valpro Corp. Valmiera enterprises are noted for their social responsibility with regard to employees and for the management of their production processes conforming with the strictest environmental requirements. Valmiera enterprises are the largest employers in the region, employing both city residents and many from the surrounding areas;

- Administrative service centre – many significant public institutions have branches in Valmiera, for example, the Vidzeme Regional Office of the State Revenue Service, the North Vidzeme Regional Agriculture Administration Office, the Vidzeme Regional Office of the State Land Service, the Vidzeme Regional Office of Latvia's Enterprise Register, the Valmiera Directorate of the State Food and Veterinary Service, the Valmiera branch of the Road Traffic Safety Directorate, the Vidzeme District Court, the Vidzeme Regional Department of the State Housing Agency, the North Vidzeme Regional State Labour Inspectorate, the Valmiera Regional Department of the State Building Inspectorate, the Valmiera Region Unit of the State Probation Service, the Valmiera Inter-regional Department of the State Centre for Forensic Medicine, the Vidzeme Regional Office of Latvijas Valsts ceļi, (*state Roads Agency*) the Vidzeme District Children's Rights Protection Centre, the Valmiera Regional Department of the Federal Police, Vidzeme University College, the Vidzeme Vocational Education and Training Centre, the Valmiera Zone State Archive, the Valmiera Regional Office of the Latvian Naturalisation Board, the Valmiera Division of the Latvian Chamber of Industry and Commerce, etc.

- Education centre – Valmiera provides high-quality education at ten pre-schools, two elementary and six secondary schools, at three vocational education and training institutions, and four further and specialised education institutions: the residential school for hearing-impaired children, the Development Centre, Vidzeme University College and the Vidzeme Continuing Education Centre. The residents of Valmiera are proud of the quality of their pre-school education institutions and the safety of children who attend them, as well as the position in national results of teaching at general education institutions. As a result, city and regional residents willingly use the services of the city's education institutions.

- In 2007, a business incubator was launched in Valmiera to facilitate the founding and development of new enterprises and support newly-founded enterprises during their first three years of operation.

## **CULTURAL LIFE AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES**

Valmiera is one of the largest and oldest cities in Vidzeme. The city is mentioned in historical records dating back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The Gauja river flows through Valmiera, dividing the city in two. Visitors can reach the city easily by road, rail or water

transport. The city's name will always be associated with legendary walker and Olympic medallist Janis Dalins. Visitors can enjoy a peaceful walk in Vecpuiši Park, along the steep banks of the Gauja and, in the city itself, a visit to the church of St. Simon and the ruins of the 13<sup>th</sup> century castle. In the evening, you can enjoy a performance at the Valmiera Drama Theatre or go to the cinema. Venturing outside Valmiera, Zilaiskalns (*the Blue Hill*) and the Gauja National Park are not far away.

Cultural and sports centre –the city is home to Vidzeme's only professional repertory theatre – the Valmiera Drama Theatre, the Valmiera Local History Museum with one of the largest collections and acknowledged experience in museum consultancy, and the Valmiera Cultural Centre with regionally and nationally appreciated cultural events. Over recent years, Valmiera has proved itself as the capital of Vidzeme sports events: the Vidzeme Olympic Centre and J. Dalins Stadium host sports events of both national and European significance. The first [Olympic champion](#) in [BMX cycling](#) Maris Strombergs comes from Valmiera where he has been training since childhood.

Valmiera hosts a number of regular cultural and entertainment events and concerts, appealing to all ages and offering enriching experiences to their audiences, so helping create positive attitudes towards themselves, the community and cultural values. Valmiera events often attract residents of other Vidzeme cities and towns, who appreciate their artistic value.

The cultural development of the city is founded on its sound economic environment, as well as the infrastructure established by cultural institutions.

Valmiera hosts the following cultural institutions: the Valmiera Drama Theatre, Valmiera Cultural Centre, Valmiera Integrated Library, Valmiera Local History Museum and the *Laipa* art gallery.

Cultural education institutions: Valmiera Art Secondary School and Valmiera Music School. At the time of writing, a project is being elaborated to renovate the former bathhouse with a view to rebuilding it for the needs of the music school.

The Valmiera Cultural Centre can accommodate relatively large audiences with 700 seats in its Large Hall, whereas the Valmiera Drama Theatre can seat 400 people in its Large Hall (seats) and there are several smaller venues. The Valmiera 5<sup>th</sup> Secondary School's hall and the Church of St. Simon are used for classical music concerts.

A significant addition to the city's sporting and cultural life is the Vidzeme Olympic Centre, where large-scale events can be held. Every year, Valmiera holds a number of cultural and sports events: the International Winter Music Festival, the International Competition for Young Pianists, the R. Blaumanis Festival of Theatre Arts, the International Youth Choir Festival, Baltic Medieval Festival, City Festival, International Art Symposium, Festival of Flowers, Simjuda Fair, the Valmiera Resident of the year event. The classical music programme sees at least two professional music concerts in the city each month, upcoming musicians perform on the open-air stage set in the castle ruins, concerts are held at the Music School, the city organises New Year celebrations, etc.

The city also hosts some all-Latvian events each year, for example, the International air-balloon festival, the Ligo and Jani (summer solstice) festival, International Baltic Ballet Festival, etc.

In terms of sporting events, the following are popular with Valmiera residents: amateur skiing festival Circle of Fear, the May Day International Cycling Marathon from Cesis to Valmiera, the Valmiera Games – international youth track & field events, Vidzeme Olympic Runners' Day, the Latvian Outdoor Basketball Championship, Sport Winners, etc.

For photos of Valmiera city, see [Annex 12](#).

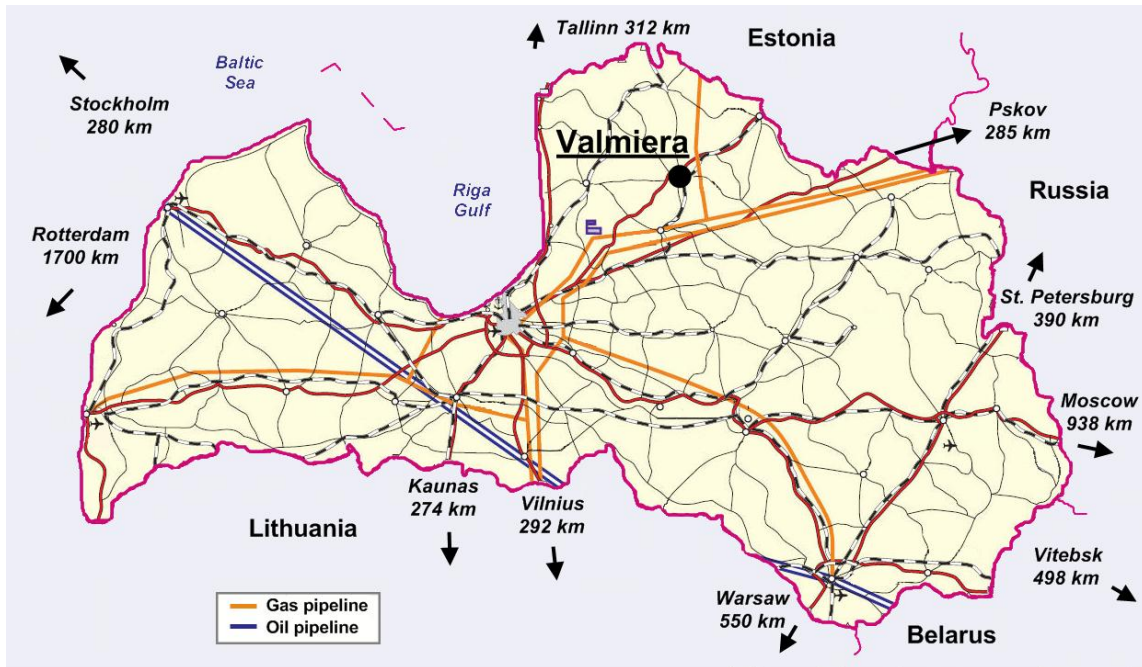
#### **CONTACT INFORMATION ON BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT ISSUES**

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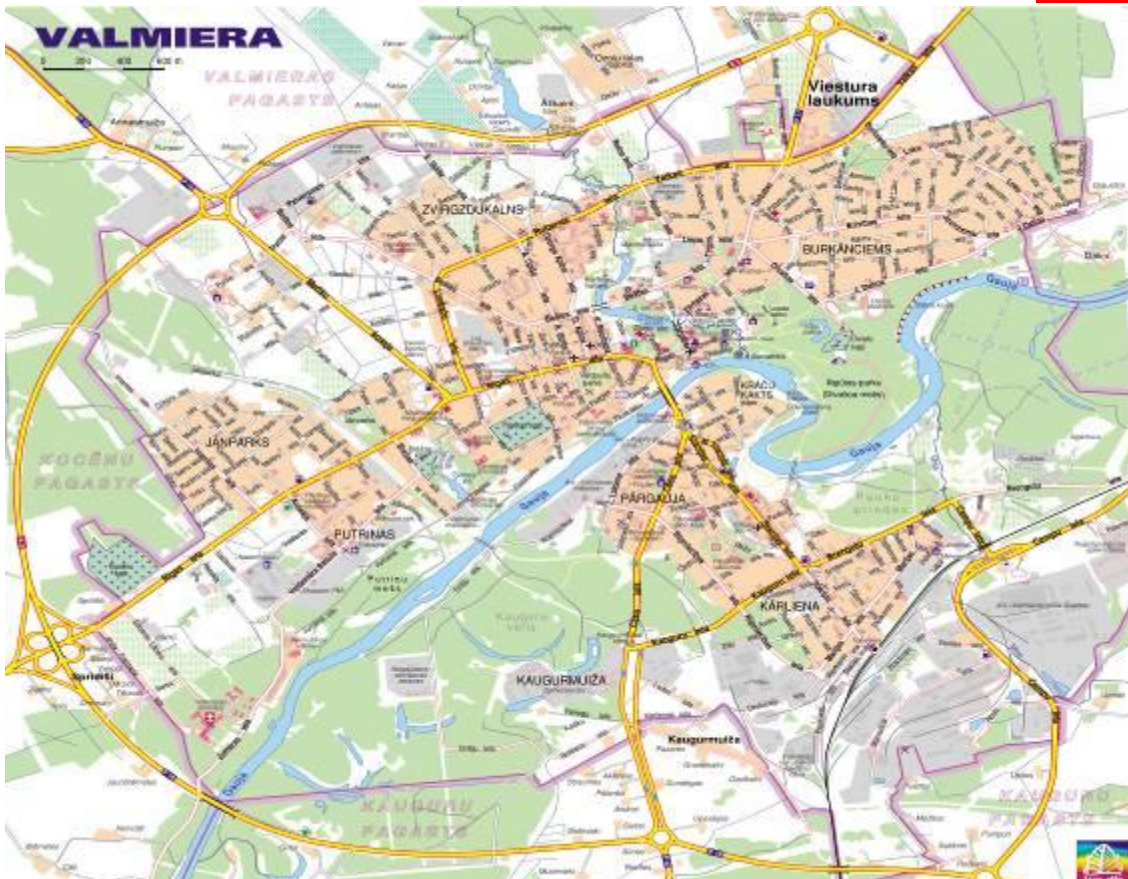
ANNEXES

1. GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF THE CITY (MAP, PHOTOS)

Valmiera location on the map of Latvia



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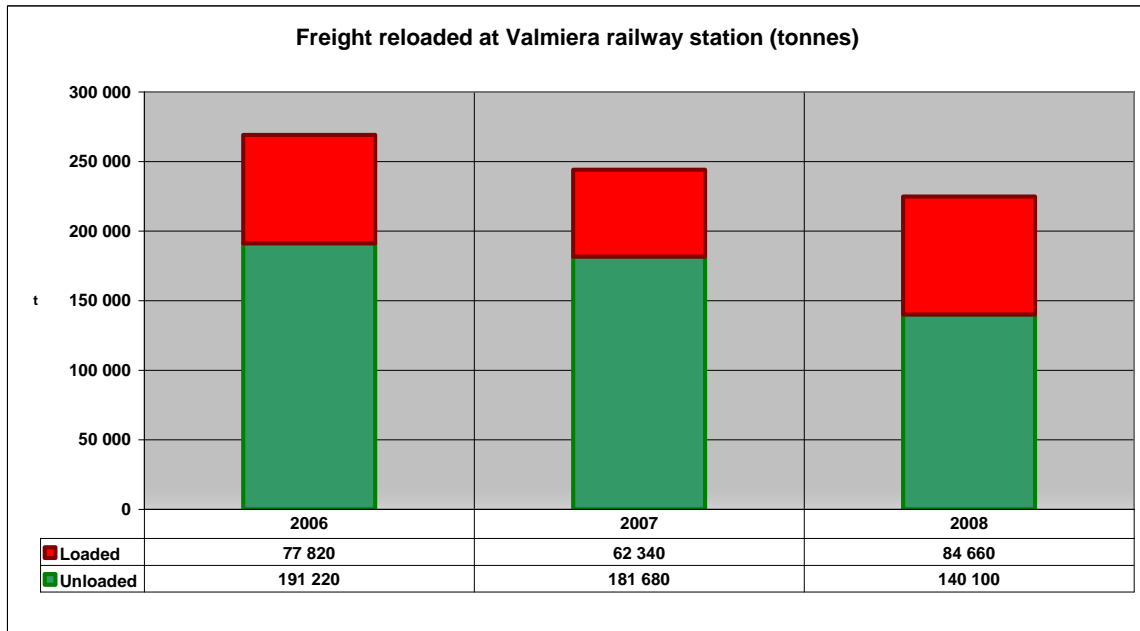


Source: Valmiera City web page ([www.valmiera.lv](http://www.valmiera.lv))

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## 2. RAILWAY STATISTICS

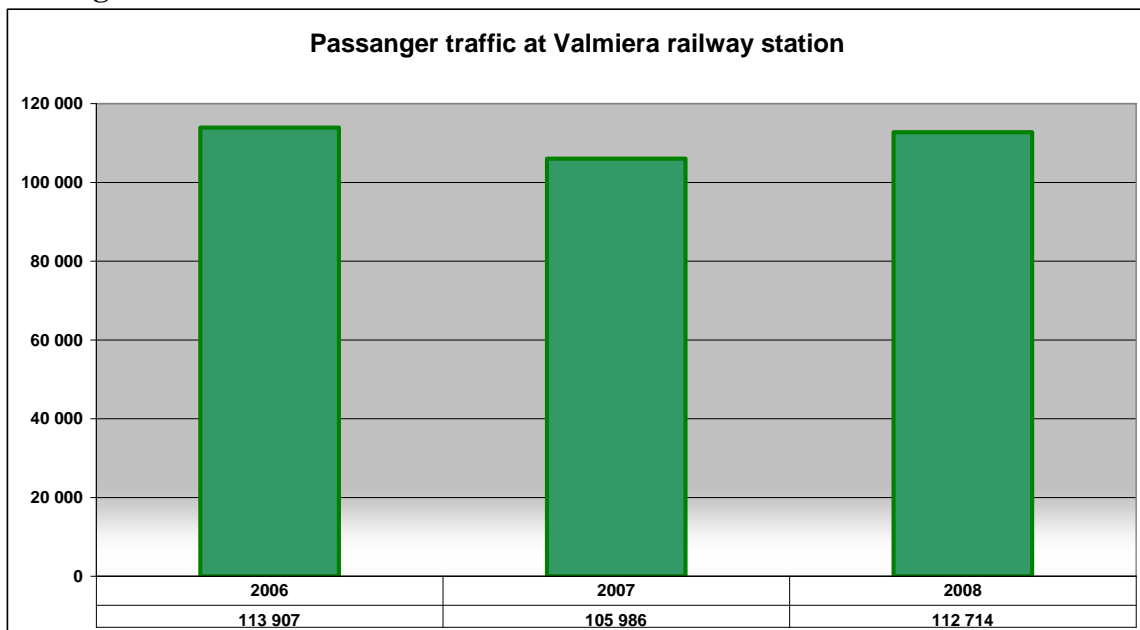
### Freight



Source: S Latvijas Dzelzceļš ([www.ldz.lv](http://www.ldz.lv))

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### Passenger traffic



Source: Latvijas Dzelzceļš ([www.ldz.lv](http://www.ldz.lv))

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### 3. STATISTICS ON THE CITY

Number of residents in the city of Valmiera (2008)	27 497
Number of people employed in Valmiera (2008)	22 082
Registered legal entities (31 August 2008)	1 478
Unemployment rate (January 2009)	5.6%
Average wage in Valmiera, EUR (July 2008)	492.5
Number of students at Vidzeme University College (2008/2009 academic year)	1423

Source: Valmiera City Council ([www.valmiera.lv](http://www.valmiera.lv))

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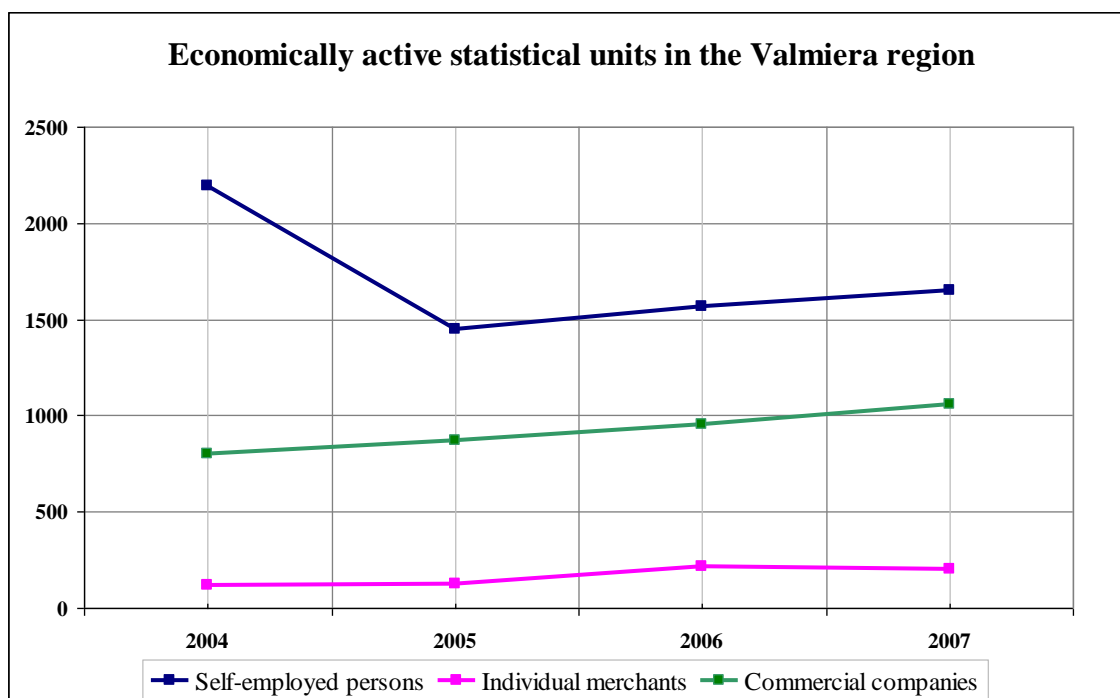
### 4. REGIONAL STATISTICS

Administrative area	Population	Area (ha)
Valmiera City	27 497	1 818
Beverina County	3 568	30 112
Burtnieku County	8 662	70 133
Valmiera County	7 037	49 662
Strenci County	4 283	37 452
Priekuli County	9 557	30 168
<b>Total:</b>	<b>60 604</b>	<b>219 345</b>

Source: Valmiera City Council ([www.valmiera.lv](http://www.valmiera.lv))

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### 5. ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE STATISTICAL UNITS IN THE VALMIERA REGION



Source: Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia ([www.csb.gov.lv](http://www.csb.gov.lv))

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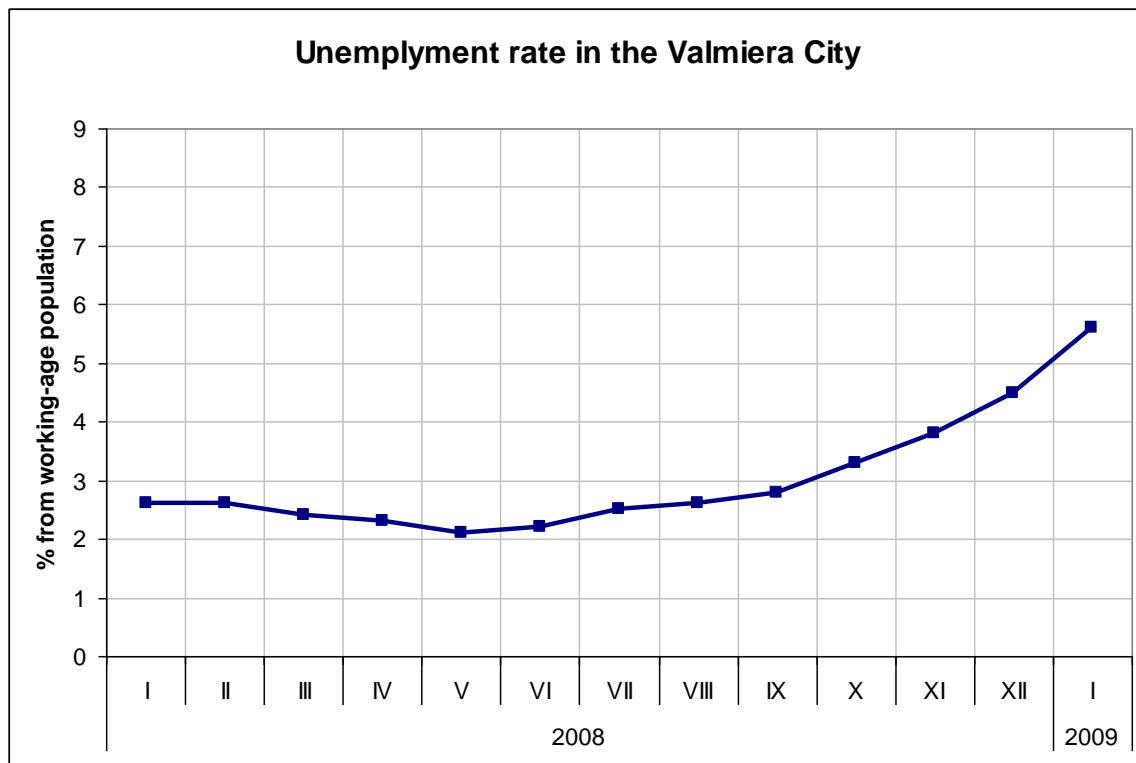
## 6. FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Recipients of most investment (2008)	Sector	Investments (EUR)
Valmieras Stikla šķiedra	Textiles, Manufacture of chemical products	29 351 823
Triāls	Food, Meat processing	1 364 818
Culimeta Baltics	Textiles, Manufacture of chemical products	472 396
V.L.T.	Manufacture of paper products	415 481
Valmiera-Andren	Metal processing	253 948
Elveri	Vehicle freight forwarding	128 059
Valtanks	Metal processing	106 716
Nīga	Real Estate	24 587
Valforest	Wood processing	15 239
<b>Total:</b>		<b>32 133 068</b>

Source: Valmiera City Council ([www.valmiera.lv](http://www.valmiera.lv))

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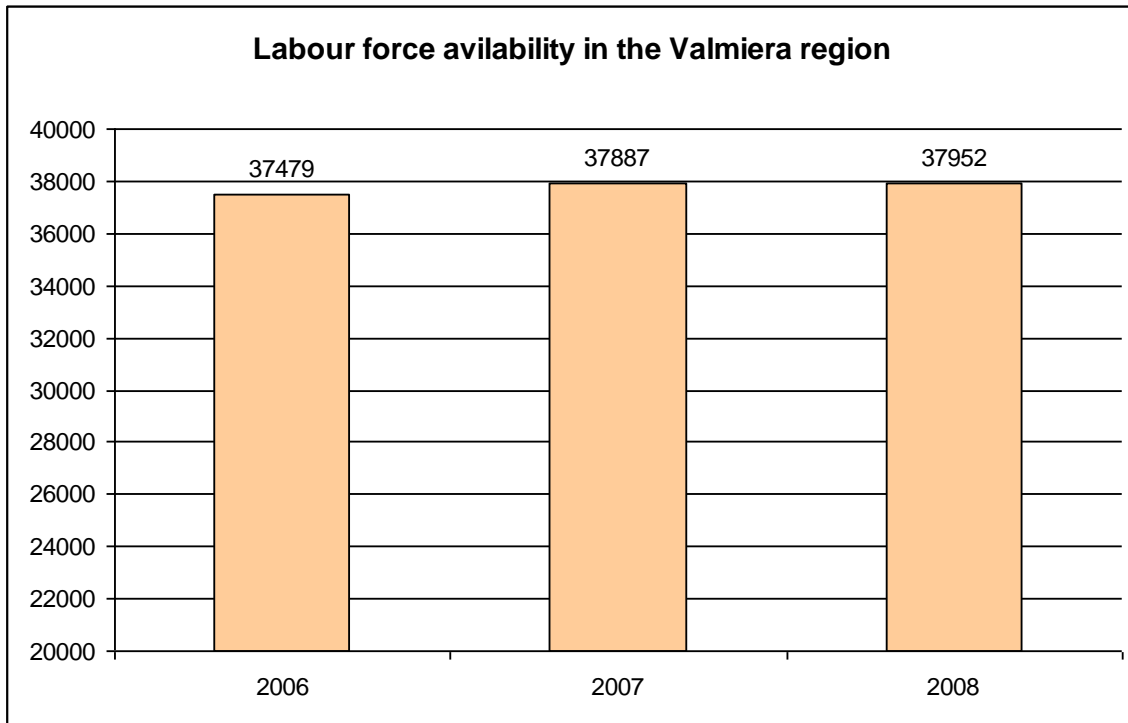
## 7. UNEMPLOYMENT RATE



Source: State Employment Agency ([www.nva.gov.lv](http://www.nva.gov.lv))

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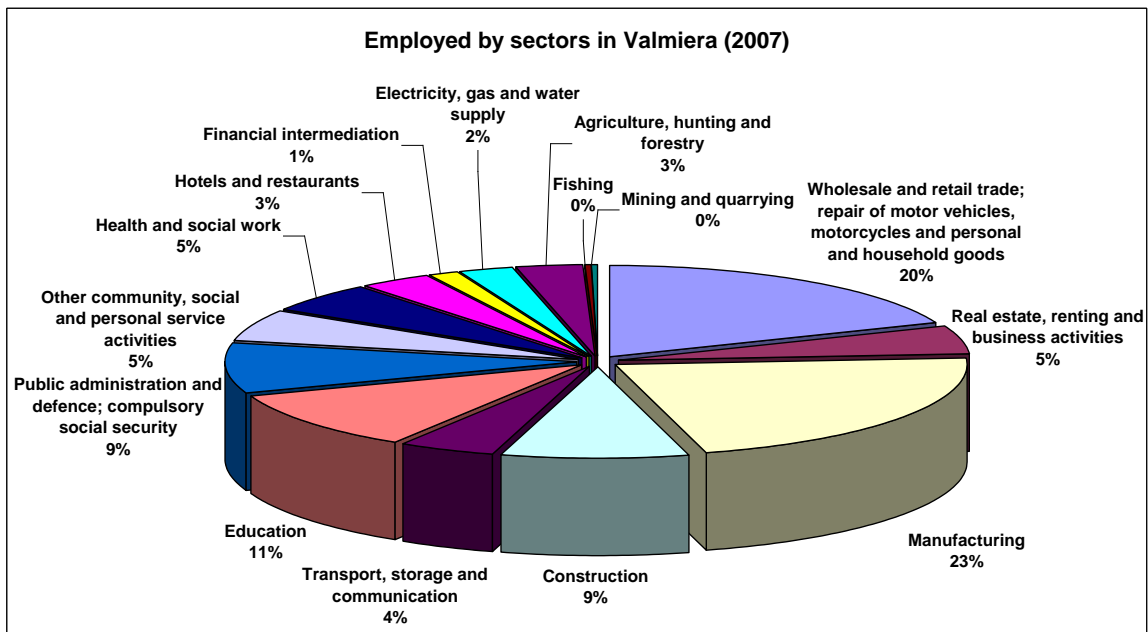
## 8. CHANGES IN LABOUR FORCE NUMBER IN THE VALMIERA REGION 2006. - 2008.



Source: Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia ([www.csb.gov.lv](http://www.csb.gov.lv))

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## 9. EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR



Source: Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia ([www.csb.gov.lv](http://www.csb.gov.lv))

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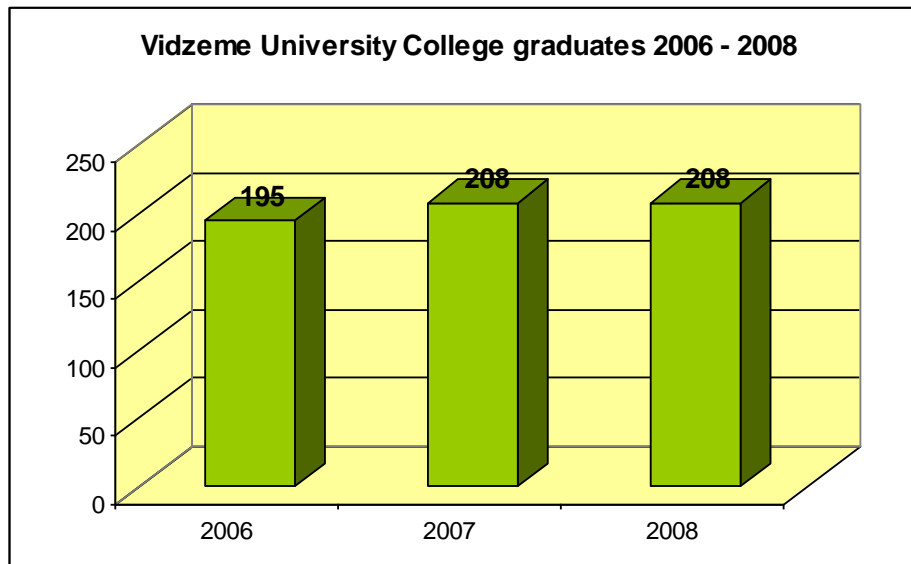
## 10. LABOUR FORCE COSTS (TABLE)

Job category	Net Salary (EUR)		Gross Salary (EUR)		Total Employment Costs (EUR)	
	From	To	From	To	From	To
Director of an enterprise	1423	2134	1907	2860	2366	3549
Technical director	711	1423	953	1907	1183	2366
Engineer	569	854	763	1144	946	1420
Shift foreman	569	854	763	1144	946	1420
Skilled operator	356	569	477	763	591	946
Unskilled workers	285	427	381	572	473	710

Source: CVO Recruitment Latvia ([www.evor.lv](http://www.evor.lv))

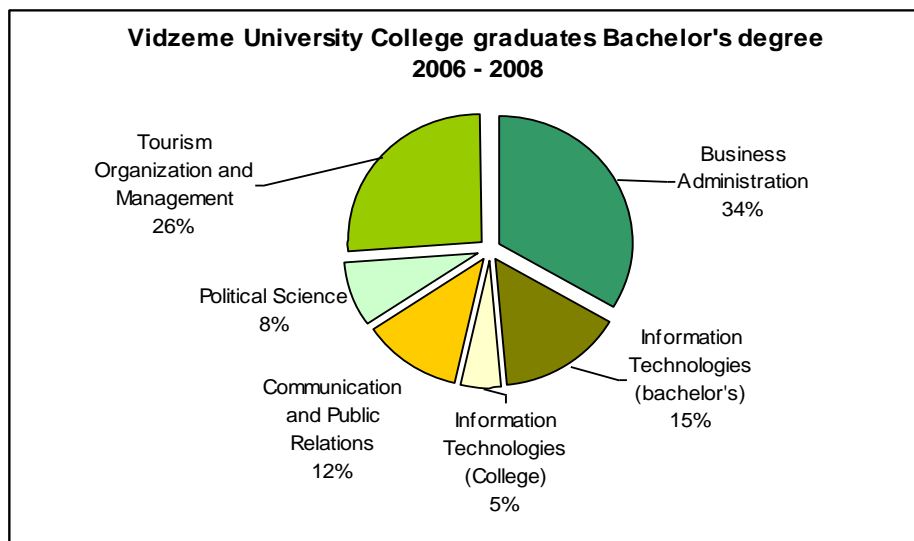
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## 11. VIDZEME UNIVERSITY COLLEGE GRADUATES 2006 - 2008



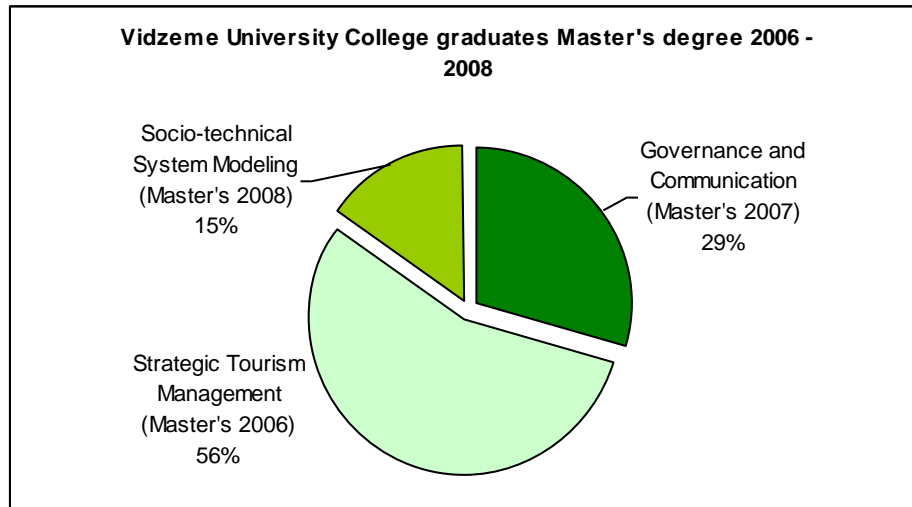
Source: Vidzeme University College ([www.va.lv](http://www.va.lv))

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Source: Vidzeme University College ([www.va.lv](http://www.va.lv))

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## 12. CULTURE (PHOTOS)

### St. Simon's church



Photo: Eduards Jegorovs

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Photo: Ugis Bralens

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## Vidzeme University College



Photo: Anda Kurzemiece

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Photo: Mihails Ignats

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Photo: Janis Dunkurs

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