

Chemical, Pharmaceutical and Biotechnological Industry

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Due to historical traditions, Latvia has a strong manufacturing base in fine chemicals and pharmaceuticals, making a wide range of products, ranging from petrochemicals and man-made fibres to paints and household chemicals. Latvia was the principal location for these sectors in the former Soviet Union, with 25 % of all new Soviet drug technology designed here. One out of every four medical preparations manufactured in the former USSR and intended for the USSR market was actually made in Latvia.

Existing and extensive R&D bases and a good cooperation between industry and scientific sectors currently covers the following spheres of research: microbiological synthesis, wood chemistry, virology, synthesis of physiologically active substances, bioorganic chemistry, molecular biology, genetics, biotechnology, biomechanics, magneto-biology, and others.

Manufacturing and design of biotechnological equipment is also prevalent. Furthermore, Latvia is becoming recognized internationally for its CRO (Contract Research Organization) activities.

The chemical and pharmaceutical sector places 4th position according to turnover among manufacturing industries (8.3 % in 2018), 5th place among other industries by number of employees (7.2 % in 2018), and 5th place by share of export in sector sales (76.8 % in 2018). According to data from the Central Statistical Bureau, the sector included approximately 500 companies in 2018.

Foreign trade

In 2018, pharmaceutical products and plastics took up the lion's share of the industry's export (34 % and 25 %, respectively). Currently the country produces and exports a diverse array of pharmaceuticals and chemical goods, from unique anti-influenza medicine to petrochemicals, household chemicals, and paints.

Companies in the chemical, rubber, and plastics industries are well-supplied with raw materials and reagents by well-known European and global companies via representative offices and major logistics centres that ensure optimum proximity to customers. Brenntag, Algol, Bang Bonsomer, Telko, Azelis (formerly Broste), Kemetyl, Elme Messer, AGA, as well as local companies (Ksan, Himlat) and many others have representative offices and warehouses in Latvia.

The core export markets are Baltic neighbours – Lithuania and Estonia – as well as Russia, Sweden and Germany.

[Latvian companies in industry](#)

[Database of Latvian exporters](#)

Additional information

Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia: www.csb.gov.lv

The Association of Latvian Chemical and Pharmaceutical Industry: www.lakifa.lv

Latvian Biotechnology association: en.latbiotech.lv

Life Science Cluster of Latvia: www.lifescience.lv

<https://www.liaa.gov.lv/en/trade/industries/chemical-pharmaceutical-and-biotechnological>