

# Printing and Packaging Industry

Published: 30.12.2020.

## Printing Sector

After the regaining of Latvian independence in 1991, the field of printing started to develop very quickly. Several printing houses from the Soviet times were privatized and lots of new printing houses were established. During the last few years, graphic companies have prepared for the increasing level of competition in the media market.

Today, there are approx. 380 printing companies in Latvia, however only TOP 10 of them contribute approximately 64 % of the industry's turnover. The total output of the sector reached EUR 420 million in 2019, which is 5 % of the total output of Latvia's manufacturing industry.

The fastest growing segments are books, packaging materials and label printing.

The long-term increase in printing production volumes has provided export potential for the sector, which is what the sector's further development depends on. That development is strongly dependent on the economic situation in global export markets, as the domestic market is developing relatively slowly.

Latvia joining the EU in May 2004 encouraged and simplified foreign trade and communications. Exports from the Latvian printing industry have increased, and this trend is still continuing. After the global economic crisis, pre-crisis export levels were regained and even exceeded by 2010, bringing positive signals to the sector.

In 2019, export volumes reached 77 % of the sector's total output. Currently, the proportion of exports is continuing to grow. The key factors influencing the sector's competitiveness in foreign markets are high quality, short delivery times and cost effectiveness.

Today, the largest export markets are Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Russia, Finland and Poland. The main export products, such as books and magazines, go to Western Europe and Scandinavia, while labels and packaging tend to be for eastern markets. Prestige and printed materials with added value include art books, illustrated magazines, guidebooks, and packaging for foods, perfumery and medicines. Latvia ranks second in Europe in the export share of books, with export value being 80 %.

## Packaging Sector

The packaging industry in Latvia has witnessed rapid development over the last 20 years. Latvian companies manufacture various types of packaging – plastic jars and containers, blister packs, labels, cardboard boxes, laminated bags and sacks, egg cartons, paper bags, PET bottles, polymer boxes, and tubes.

Great attention is paid to packaging from ecological materials, and there is a growing demand for exclusive, personalized packages for advertising purposes. Latvian companies can provide a wide range of technological facilities, manual work and unique design.

Commonly used type of packaging in Latvia is paper and cardboard, polymers and glass. Of packaging that is recycled, the most commonly recycled materials in Latvia are paper and cardboard, wood and glass in similar amounts, followed by polymers, leaving metal the smallest amount of recycled materials.

The principal packaging materials exported are products from wood, with manufacturing volumes of EUR 97.3 million or 47 % of total packaging exports. More than 170 companies manufacture wood packaging. Most of wooden packaging is exported to Germany, Netherlands and France.

The second most important product group is packaging from paper, comprising almost 25 % of total packaging export. Most of the paper products are exported to Lithuania, Estonia and Poland. Around 100 companies manufacture products from paper and cardboard. Another 21 % of exported packaging is contributed by polymers. For the sector overall, the main export destinations are Germany, Estonia, Lithuania, Sweden, Denmark and Poland.

The management of packaging waste in Latvia is strictly regulated by the Law on Packaging (in force since 1 July 2002). The Law and related regulations issued by the government and the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development place stringent requirements on packaging producers and processors, covering liabilities and environmental protection, requirements for the management of packaging waste, packaging recycling, re-use of packaging, etc.

## Additional information

[Latvian companies in industry](#)

[Database of Latvian exporters](#)

Latvian Printers' Association: [www.lpu.lv](http://www.lpu.lv)

Packaging Association of Latvia: [www.packaging.lv](http://www.packaging.lv)

<https://www.liaa.gov.lv/en/trade/industries/printing-and-packaging>