



Latvian Geospatial Information Agency

# National Report of Latvia

(Topicalities in geographical names standardization 2023-2024)

The 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Baltic Division of UNGEGN  
Vilnius 2-3 October 2024

**Vita Strautniece**

Department of Cartography, Laboratory of Toponymy





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# Authorities

Controlling and advisory

## State Language Centre

Place Names Sub-commission of the  
Latvian Language Expert Commission

## Livonian Language Experts Board

since January 15, 2024!

Decision making

Parliament and Government

Distinct ministries

All municipalities



Consulting and scientific

Latvian Language Institute of  
the University of Latvia

Livonian Institute of  
the University of Latvia

Latvian Language Agency

Latvian Geospatial Information Agency



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**Legislation basis – no changes since 2021**



## Official names approving

**The conclusion of the State Language Centre is obligatory for approving official names for all kinds of geographical features**

The State Language Centre continued working on conclusions regarding the official name proposals for natural features submitted by the Latvian Geospatial Agency:

13 conclusions about **914** natural features – in 2023;

1 conclusion about **62** natural features in 2024.

Regarding other official names proposals submitted by responsible place-names authorities:

902 conclusions about **2780** official names proposals in 2023;

593 conclusions about **1133** official names proposals in 2024.

Total:

conclusions on **up to 5 000 official name proposals in period January 2023 – september 2024**



## Office treatment, names on maps, in addresses and documents

Some of the main principles  
we try to recommend and  
to follow:

- standardization based on local use of names,
- preservation of place names heritage,
- promotion of minority group and indigenous geographical names

Stopānu pors	85679		apvidus	
Odiņa pors	85374		apvidus	
Dižpurs	84282	Dižpurs [LĢIA lēmums]	purvs	
Lūžpurs	84231	Lūžpurs [LĢIA lēmums]	purvs	
Bānīts				
Rūjas pors	90682	Rūjas pors [LĢIA lēmums]	purvs	
Vasnie				
Dzērves pors	90647		purvs	
Kauce				
Purmuižas pors	90644	Purmuižas pors [LĢIA lēmums]	purvs	
Vārve				
Saklaurā	Briežu sala	55092	Briežu sala [AR]	viensēta
Platen	Brīžusola	1290	Briežusola [AR]	mazciems
Klāņp	Brīžuciems	1282	Briežuciems [AR]	ciems
	Brīdeits	123		ezers



## Names in state cartography

The richest in geographical names is the **Topographic Map of Latvia, scale 1:10 000** (2792 sheets).

The 4th edition is going to be completed in 2024/2025.

Digital version only.

Contains all kinds of place names except names of orographic features (since orography is being prepared as a separate data layer).

On basis of this map the Topographic map, scale 1:50 000 is being prepared.

**Names on all maps, prepared by the Latvian Geospatial Information Agency must be written and attached to the topographic features (if appropriate) in accordance with the Place Names Database of Latvia and State Address Register information.**



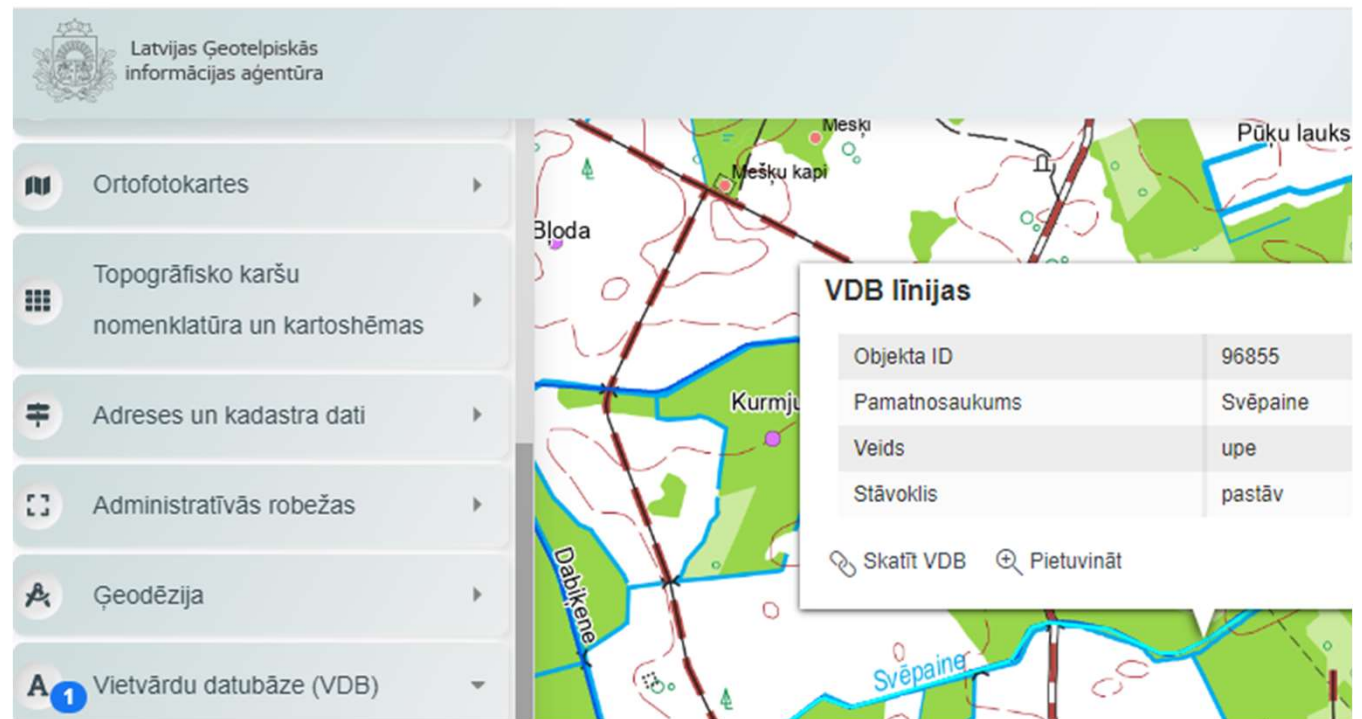
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## Map Browser “LĢIA Karšu Pārlūks”

Map Browser “LĢIA Karšu Pārlūks” (<https://kartes.lgia.gov.lv>) – search and viewing geographical names on maps of Latvia, prepared by the Latvian Geospatial Information Agency (scales 1: 1 000 000 - 1:10 000, the central part of Riga 1: 2 000):

- names and rough geometries from the Place Names database;
- address feature names, administrative and territorial unit names and borders from the State Address Register.

The version for mobile phones:  
<https://kartes.lgia.gov.lv/mobile>



## Development of toponymic databases, registers, catalogues

**The Place Names Database of Latvia** (Latvian Geospatial Information Agency) has a new public version (the special presentation will be on it).

*The external database system needs elaboration and supplementing data with attributes required by the INSPIRE data specification is necessary. (e.g. pronunciation, grammatical gender and number, leastDetailedViewingResolution, Nativeness etc.)*

**The State Address Register** (State Land Service) - maintains names and data on address features, administrative territories and territorial units of Latvia. On the Register will be given a special presentation.

**The Latvian Place Names Card Index**, maintained by the Latvian Language Institute, University of Latvia, is continued to serve for scientific research and place names standardization purposes and as the most important source for compiling the **linguistic Latvian Place names dictionary**.

A new volume «Sgajevski-Složovka» of the Latvian Place-Name Dictionary (comprises almost 21 000 place names) and a collection of onomastic articles «Onomastica Lettica» are going to be published in November 2024. Four articles of Onomastica Lettica are devoted to place names (place names with the component "dižs" (big), names of railway stations, issues on rendering and motivation of place names).



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## Toponymic data files and gazetteers

### Place names dictionary "Lakes of Latvia. Līvāni and Preiļi counties"

comprising names of lakes and reservoirs is published by LGIA on 2023 as a .pdf file.

Free download at:

[https://www.lgia.gov.lv/sites/lgia/files/document/VARDNICA\\_Preili-Livani%20-%20gatavs\\_0.pdf](https://www.lgia.gov.lv/sites/lgia/files/document/VARDNICA_Preili-Livani%20-%20gatavs_0.pdf)

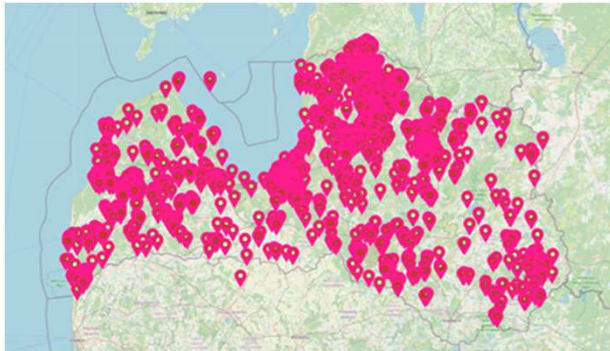
Each entry contains information on the water body and its names from the Place Names database as well as data from topographic maps.

***Stūponu ezers*** [uo], *Stuponu ezers* [uo], *Stupānu ezers*, *Stuponka* [o], latg. *Stūpuonu azars* – Rušonas pag., 4,5 km Z no Kastīres, pie Stūponiem. Pl. 31,1 ha. 1 sala.  
VVC ieteikums 2023 Stūponu ezers [uo], vietējā forma Stūpuonu azars; ŪTK 2023 Stūponu ezers; LŪ V 35 Stupānu, Stupāna, Stupankas, Stupanku, Kavčara, Kavčaru ez.; Inv. 1784 Ступаны на бер. оз. Ступана; Karte 1785 озе: Ступанъ; Karte 1866 оз. Луддо; Karte 1915 оз. Худдо; Spis. 1906 Ступаны при оз. Кавчаре; LT75 Kaučaru ez.; LME I 554 Stupānu ez.; T25 оз. Каучер; T10 оз. Кавчар (Ступану); Pag.k. 1990 Stupānu ez.; Ld V 165 Stupānu ezers; S50 Stūponu ezers; Lpag II 295 Stūponu ezers; Sar. 2009 Stūponu ezers; Eksped. 1996 Stūponu ezers [uo], Stuponka [o], latg. Stūpuonu azars.





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Map of the collected place  
names in the crowdsourcing  
tool <https://vietvardi.lu.lv>.

## Names collecting – crowdsourcing

**New platform of crowdsourcing tool** for collaborative collecting Latvian place names (<https://vietvardi.lu.lv>) was opened for everyone in February 22, 2023. The platform enables to register a place name, its spelling and pronunciation, localization (in the parish and on the map), cultural, historical and linguistic data of the place name, and even photos. More than 8 000 names have been collected so far. Everyone can search for the registered place names via the map as well.

The platform is used not only for collecting/updating place name information, but also for organizing various regional competitions etc., even without involving the database maintainers. For example, the Jeri municipality, near the Estonian border, has launched such a competition, when they found out how easily the collected data can be retrieved.



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## Promotion of minority group and indigenous geographical names

As the Law on Latvian Historical Lands stipulates, erection of **road signs featuring place names in Livonian and Latgalian Written Language** has been started in the respective regions (Livonian Coast and Latgale) in 2023 and continued in 2024.

Work with **Livonian place names** is developed: standardization, database, catalogue etc.  
(More detailed Information on this will be given in special presentation).





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## To involve society: Place Names Days



### **Regional Place Names Days**

organized by the Latvian Language Institute of the University of Latvia in collaboration with Latvian Geospatial Information Agency, local governments etc. continued in 2023 with a Language Days 2023 in Vidzeme, Kauguri parish (north-west of Latvia).

Success of the fieldwork inspired the idea of creation a Kauguri county place names dictionary.



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## Exonyms

In 2023, the Latvian Language Experts Board at the **State Language Centre**:

- standardized the official Latvian forms of 23 place names from the USA and Australia, available at [download \(vvc.gov.lv\)](https://vvc.gov.lv) (in Latvian),
- recommended to change the official form of the Russian place name **Kaliningrad in Latvian to Karaļauči or Kēnigsberga.**

Latvian Language Agency has issued **guidelines on rendering Byelorussian and Ukrainian proper names in Latvian**. Both contains recommendations of rendering geographical names, too:

1. Kopoloveca, Nadežda. Baltkrievu īpašvārdu atveide latviešu valodā. *Valodas prakse: vērojumi un ieteikumi*. Populārzinātnisku rakstu krājums. Nr. 18. Rīga : Latviešu valodas aģentūra, 2023. 124.-144. lpp.
2. Hansons, Arturs, Poļaka, Māra. *Ukraiņu īpašvārdu atveide latviešu valodā: ieteikumi*. Rīga : Latviešu valodas aģentūra, 2023. 192 lpp.



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## Exonyms. Geographical names rendering tool «Burtnieks»



**BURTNIEKS**

**Burtnieks – Latvijā pirmais vietvārdu  
atveidošanas risinājums!**

Vairāk nekā 100 000 vietvārdu no visas pasaules ar  
meklēšanu abos virzienos:

In 2023, the company «Jāņa Sēta, Ltd» introduced the "Burtnieks" solution (<https://burtnieks.kartes.lv/>), which enables rendering («translation») of place names from their original languages into Latvian and vice versa.

Part of geographical names can also be translated into Estonian and Lithuanian.

This solution includes over 100,000 place names in Latvian, all stored in the company's database. “



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# Latvian Geographical Names data dissemination

## Useful links: Geographical names and maps of Latvia

- 1) Place Names Database of Latvia (new public version): <https://vietvardi.lgia.gov.lv/>
- 2) Database and Map of Livonian Place Names: <https://livonian.tech/en/> Standardized Names of Countries and Territories in Latvian (including capital cities): <https://www.vvc.gov.lv/lv/media/152/download?attachment>
- 3) Data distribution portal of State Land Service of the Republic of Latvia (National Real Estate Cadastre information system and State (National) Address Register): <https://www.kadastrs.lv/>
- 4) Latvian Geospatial Information Agency Map Browser (LĢIA Karšu Pārlūks) <https://kartes.lgia.gov.lv/karte/>; version for mobile phones: <https://kartes.lgia.gov.lv/mobile>
- 5) Crowdsourcing platform of Institute of Latvian Language: <https://vietvardi.lu.lv>
- 6) Geoportal of Latvia: <https://geolatvija.lv/geo/mapviewer>
- 7) Cadastre of Amelioration: <https://melioracija.lv/> (with search of watercourse names from Place Names Database of Latvia )
- 8) Digital map collection of the Latvian National Library with Georeferenced map viewer (maps from 17th century to contemporary): <https://kartes.lndb.lv/>
- 9) Dodies.lv historical map portal: <https://vesture.dodies.lv/> (with search of place names from Place Names Database of Latvia ))
- 10) "Jāņa Sēta, Ltd" Map Browser Balticmaps: <https://balticmaps.eu/> (the Livonian place names layer is added);
- 11) Tool for place names rendering "Burtnieks« by "Jāņa Sēta, Ltd" <https://burtnieks.kartes.lv/>
- 12) JSC Latvia's State Forests (LVM) Map Browser: <https://www.lvmgeo.lv/en/maps>



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# Data dissemination

## Useful links

### Open data and INSPIRE data sets on territory of Latvia - geographical names

#### Database of geonames



- <https://www.lgia.gov.lv/en/place-name-data-open-data>
- <https://www.lgia.gov.lv/en/inspire> - place names data is going to be updated
- <https://geolatvija.lv/geo/search> (open data on place names, administrative territories, cadastral units, addresses)
- <https://inspire-geoportal.ec.europa.eu/> - place names data is going to be updated



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follow

<https://www.lgia.gov.lv/en>



contact

[vita.strautniece@lgia.gov.lv](mailto:vita.strautniece@lgia.gov.lv)

[amanda.kalneniece@lgia.gov.lv](mailto:amanda.kalneniece@lgia.gov.lv)

[vdb.info@lgia.gov.lv](mailto:vdb.info@lgia.gov.lv)