



LATVIJAS PROFESIONĀLO GIDU ASOCIĀCIJA
ASSOCIATION OF LATVIAN PROFESSIONAL GUIDES

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Report by LPGGA 2019

Currently LPGGA unites 84 tourist guides from Latvia. There has been some fluctuation in the structure of our association – some members have left but we have now several new ones from regions. We are very delighted to join more and more guides from outside Riga and spread our mission throughout whole country. That is very important especially regarding the attempts of local authorities to decentralize tourism in Latvia in the nearest future.

We continue to work hard on further education and training of our guides by organizing seminars, lessons and study visits from October till early May. All events are very well visited and we see that our members are really committed to be the best ambassadors of Latvia. All events are advertised through our website and you can see brief reports on them there as well.

To promote our profession LPGGA organized tours for the International Tourist Guides Day. This year we provided tours for schoolchildren from a little town in Latvia. We saw it as an opportunity to educate future tourists by showing them the benefits of qualified TGs and are looking forward to continue it next year.

The tourism season has been fine in 2019. Although compared to other European countries the increase of visitors has been extremely low (just about 1%) our members had a lot to do. One of the reasons of low numbers is the change in collecting statistics – e.g. before 2019 all participants of military missions that stayed in hotels were counted as tourists. Another reason is that Latvia as a country has not really defined target groups we want to attract and therefor marketing is very weak. Most tourists don't see Latvia as their main destination but visit us as part of Baltics. Respectively the average number of nights spent are two nights. As a positive development we see that foreign tourists want to visit Latvian regions more and more and are amazed by variety of activities provided there (like: picking mushrooms, participating in harvesting, going to Latvian sauna etc.). In order to raise some money Riga city plans to introduce tourist tax starting from 1st January 2021. It is planned that tax will be 1€/per night but not more than 10€ per one visit.

On 12th November 2019 the Latvian Tourism Forum was held in Riga. It was dedicated to matters of cooperation in order to increase better results. Several speakers ended their talks with an African proverb: If you want to go quickly go alone, if you want to go far go together. In this sense LPGGA wishes us all great networking in FEG and we are looking forward to meet you all in Faro soon!

On behalf of LPGGA sincerely yours
Gita Vigule