
Update on Alcohol Policy in Latvia

What has happened since the amendments to the Law on the Circulation of Alcoholic Beverages entered into force on 1 August 2025

Why alcohol policy remained a public health priority

The reform responds to a high public health burden and a need for population-level measures.

11.3 litres

registered absolute alcohol
consumption per inhabitant
aged 15+ in 2024

Policy rationale

High consumption
Preventable harm
Need for population-level
measures

- The 2025 amendments were designed as part of a broader public health response to reduce alcohol availability, exposure to marketing and impulse purchasing.
- It reflects the logic of WHO “best buys” and the SAFER approach: reducing availability, reducing exposure to marketing and supporting healthier environments.

What entered into force on 1 August 2025

Sales hours

Retail alcohol sales limited to 10:00–20:00 Mon–Sat and 10:00–18:00 Sun.

Price & discount advertising

Price-based and discount advertising ban.

Sales promotion practices

Promotional practices that stimulate impulse.

Retail warnings

Visible health warning signs and sales prohibitions to minors are required.

In one sentence:

Latvia tightened the alcohol environment through shorter availability windows, less price-based marketing, fewer promotional cues and stronger consumer-facing warnings.

Industry response and emerging loopholes

Early implementation shows where the current framework still leaves room for alcohol visibility and indirect promotion.

1 Brand advertising remains allowed

Even with restrictions on price-based promotion, brand advertising can still preserve recognition, visibility and appeal.

2 Different interpretations from the hospitality sector.

Some bars and restaurants consider that several of the new restrictions do not apply to them in the same way as to retail trade, “happy hours” may therefore continue.

3 Digital channels create grey zones

Websites, apps, social media content and influencer-style communication can blur the line between brand visibility and promotion.

4 Resistance informs next steps

These early signals help identify where stronger legal clarity, supervision or future amendments may still be needed.

Key point

Partial restrictions can trigger adaptation — one reason to consider stronger next-step limits on brand advertising and other indirect promotion.

Why we are not yet presenting impact results

At this stage, the priority is responsible interpretation rather than early claims about impact.

Too early for impact conclusions

Outcome evaluation needs more time, more comparable data and a longer post-implementation period.

Short post-reform period

The amendments entered into force only on 1 August 2025, so the observation window remains limited.

Indicators accumulate with delay

Consumption, hospitalisation and mortality trends require time before meaningful patterns can be interpreted. Mortality data available only in June

Planned follow-up population survey

A repeated population survey is planned in June to support early assessment of public awareness, attitudes and perceived changes after the amendments entered into force.

Comparable data are still in preparation

Early administrative and market signals help understand implementation, but measurable public health impact requires more time and comparable data.

Responsible evaluation means not over-claiming before the evidence is ready.

What exactly will be evaluated

Public health evaluation will be complemented by a separate assessment of economic impact by the Ministry of Economics and Ministry of Finance.

Evaluation scope

- 1 Implementation and supervision**
Whether the amendments were implemented in practice as intended by the legislator, and how supervision has functioned.
- 2 Availability environment and early indicators**
Whether early changes can be observed in the alcohol availability environment and alcohol-related indicators.
- 3 Early public health signals**
Whether initial signals of public health impact can be identified, including for sensitive groups such as minors.
- 4 Context and data limitations**
Which external factors and data limitations affect interpretation of observed trends.
- 5 Future monitoring and improvements**
What conclusions can be drawn for further monitoring and for improving the evaluation approach.



Economic impact assessment

**Ministry of Economics +
Ministry of Finance**

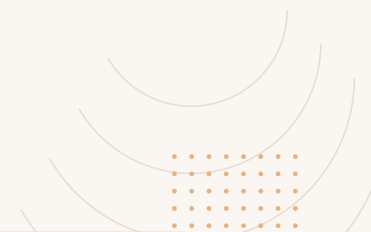
A complementary assessment of the amendments' impact on the national economy.

Health impact ≠ economic impact

Key principle: early findings should be interpreted together with implementation evidence, data limitations and wider economic context.

Potential next legislative steps

Planned directions for the next package of alcohol policy restrictions



1

1. Minimum age to 20

Raise the minimum age for purchasing and consuming alcohol to 20, delaying initiation and reducing early risky drinking.

2

2. Full advertising ban

Cover brand advertising, sponsorship, digital marketing and other indirect promotion that maintain alcohol visibility and appeal.

3

3. Health warnings on packaging

Introduce mandatory warning and labelling requirements, including cancer risk, pregnancy, driving and other health-risk messages.

4

4. Minimum price / price policy

Assess minimum pricing or other price policy tools to limit access to very cheap alcohol, especially high-risk products.

5

5. Ban sales at petrol stations

Prohibit alcohol sales in fuel stations to align availability rules with traffic safety and public health objectives.

6

6. Sponsorship restrictions

Further restrict alcohol sponsorship in sport, culture and youth-related events to avoid links with healthy lifestyles and young audiences.



Policy direction: move from partial measures towards stronger controls on age, marketing, labelling, price and availability.



Thank you!