

# ENERGY POLICY OF LATVIA FROM PERSPECTIVE OF ITS IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

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## **Abstract**

One of major sectors of economy is energy production, at the same time a source of major waste streams with significant impact on the environment and especially climate. The aim of the study is to analyse the energy sector in Latvia in relation to best international practice from perspective of environmental and climate policy. Historically in Latvia a significant part of the energy production take place using renewable resources: at first hydropower plants as well as biomass – wood and the impact of the environmental policy on energy production was low, considering institutional barriers as well as “green” energy production pattern. Political parties and stakeholders did have major influence on energy policy and in case of Latvia also a wish to achieve energy independence dominated. A significant factor influencing activities in energy production sector for long time was reliance on cheap energy carriers (gas, oil, coal) imported from Russia, fully covering national needs especially during period of transition from centrally planned economy to free market economy (1990 – 1995) with a later integration in European energy system. Conflicting interests of major stakeholders and actors, failures of several initiatives and lack of ambitions, significantly influenced progress of energy production system in Latvia during last 20 years and environmental aspects, especially impacts on climate largely was neglected. Climate change problems, Green Deal now is putting a major pressure to achieve ambitious targets of climate neutrality and achieve significant changes in energy policy, considering environmental aspects. Possible development scenarios and challenges are discussed and suggestions are made in respect to possible changes in energy sector of Latvia, considering recent trends.

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