

COUNTRY FACTSHEET* – Smuggling of migrants

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LEGAL AND JUDICIAL INFORMATION ON MIGRANT SMUGGLING

LATVIA

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GENERAL INFORMATION ON MIGRATION



MAIN FIGURES AND TRENDS

On June 22, 2023, the law “Amendment to the Law on the State Border of the Republic of Latvia” was adopted, supplementing the aforementioned law with Section 35.¹. In accordance with this section, in the event of a disproportionately high number of cases of illegal crossing of the State border or attempts thereof, the Cabinet of Ministers may declare an enhanced border guarding regime to ensure the inviolability of the State border and prevent threats to the State. Based on the above-mentioned section, on August 10, 2023, the Cabinet of Ministers issued Order No. 514 “On the Declaration of an Enhanced Border Guarding Regime” (in force until February 10, 2024), and on March 12, 2024, Order No. 184 “On the Declaration of an Enhanced Border Guarding Regime” was issued (in force until June 30, 2026). In accordance with this order, an enhanced border guarding regime has been declared in certain administrative territories along the external State border. Within this framework, the State Border Guard, the National Armed Forces, and the State Police, in most cases, upon detecting that a person has attempted to illegally cross or has illegally crossed the State border between the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Belarus, order the person to immediately cease the attempt or to immediately return to the country from which the person crossed the border. Consequently, in most cases, criminal proceedings have not been initiated for the illegal crossing of the Latvia–Belarus State border within the specified administrative territories.

Russia–Latvia border. The situation on the border between the Republic of Latvia and the Russian Federation remains stable and under control; however, it should be assessed in a broader context, namely in connection with increased security risks at the eastern external border of the European Union. Currently, the main pressure of irregular migration on Latvia is concentrated on the Belarusian section of the border rather than the Russian section. Nevertheless, Latvia still considers the risk that migration flows could be redirected to the Russian Federation–Republic of Latvia border to be real, particularly in the context of hybrid activities carried out by Russia and Belarus against EU Member States. At the same time, Latvia has further strengthened control measures at the eastern border. Since March 19, 2025, crossing the State border at the Pāternieki, the Terehova and the Grebņeva Border Crossing Points has been permitted only by motorised vehicles, in order to reduce hybrid threats and migration risks. Since September 1, 2025, certain third-country nationals entering Latvia without a visa or residence permit issued by Latvia are required to submit advance information via the Information System for the Prevention of Threats to the State, and since October 12, 2025, Latvia has implemented the European Union Entry/Exit System at all border crossing points.

COUNTRY FACTSHEET* – Smuggling of migrants

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Belarus–Latvia border. The diversion of migrants from Belarus to European Union Member States, including Latvia, continues and remains the main source of irregular migration pressure on Latvia. Although the State Border Guard described 2024 as somewhat less intense than previous years, Latvia still prevented 5388 attempts to illegally cross the Belarus–Latvia border in 2024, while 26 persons were admitted on humanitarian grounds. In 2025, the pressure increased sharply again, and the number of persons stopped from illegally crossing the State border reached 12046, that is, 6658 persons more (or 2.2 times higher). In 2026, the pressure has so far been lower in seasonal terms, but it has not disappeared: according to the latest update as of March 20, 2026, 110 attempts of illegal border crossing have been prevented since the beginning of the year.

➤ MIGRATORY ROUTES

Available information indicates that the eastern route through Belarus remains active. Migrants continue to reach Belarus primarily via Russia and Latvia, Lithuania and Poland remain the main destination countries along this route. It has been assessed that although the number of detected cases along the eastern border route decreased overall in 2025, the hybrid aggression carried out by Belarus continued throughout the year. Latvia also continues to assess the pressure of irregular migration on the Belarusian border as part of a broader hybrid threat environment created by Belarus and supported by Russia.

With regard to criminal offences related to facilitating the unauthorised stay of persons in the Republic of Latvia and the illegal transportation of persons across the State border, it should be noted that the authorities of Russia and Belarus continued in 2025 to implement the migrant instrumentalisation process that began in 2021. In order to ensure the inviolability of the State border and prevent threats to the State, throughout the reporting period an enhanced border guarding regime—declared by Cabinet of Ministers Order No. 184 of March 12, 2024, “On the Declaration of an Enhanced Border Guarding Regime”—remained in force in certain administrative territories along the external border. To ensure the deterrence of persons from illegally crossing the external border of the Republic of Latvia, the State Police and the National Armed Forces were also involved in border surveillance. Based on the above, the illegal transportation of persons across the Latvia–Belarus State border continued to carry a very high risk of apprehension; therefore, the level of involvement in such activities remained relatively low. Instead, organisers of illegal transportation continued to actively focus on moving migrants, who had already entered Latvia unlawfully, onward to other European Union Member States. In most cases, this transportation was organised using social networking platforms. Initial information about transporting persons was posted on the Telegram (more rarely WhatsApp) application in the form of job advertisements, indicating that drivers with their own vehicles are being recruited to transport persons for payment. Persons, who agreed to carry out such transportation received further instructions (such as the location and time for picking up the persons) via messaging on Telegram (or, as applicable, WhatsApp). Meanwhile, migrants in Belarus, using the same social networking platforms, received information about where in Latvia a vehicle would be waiting to transport them onward to another EU Member State. In most cases, the illegal crossing of the State border itself had to be planned and carried out by the migrants themselves. The nationality of the persons being transported, as in previous reporting periods, has remained relatively unchanged: they are mainly persons from Africa and the Middle Eastern countries (for example, Somalia and Afghanistan).



INSTITUTIONAL ORGANISATION

According to Section 15(1) of the State Border Guard Law, State Border Guard officers are obliged to "prevent a person from entering the country at a place and time not intended for that purpose (if necessary, by providing the person with primary security, as far as possible), unless there are objectively justified circumstances which make immediate entry necessary". Section 387(8) of the Criminal Procedure Law provides that "Officers authorised by the State Border Guard shall investigate criminal offences related to illegal crossing of the state border, illegal movement of a person across the state border or illegal stay in the state".



LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Migrant smuggling issues are covered by Chapter XXII Criminal Offences against Administrative Order of the Criminal law. Currently Section 285, section 285.¹ and section 285.² of the Criminal law was amended and the new wording of articles entered into force on 20 October 2023.

Section 284. Illegal Crossing of the State Border

(1) For the intentional illegal crossing of the external State border, the applicable punishment is the temporary deprivation of liberty or probationary supervision, or community service, or fine.

(1¹) For the intentional illegal crossing of the State border, if such has been committed by a person on whom the prohibition to exit the Republic of Latvia has been imposed, the applicable punishment is the deprivation of liberty for a period of up to one year or temporary deprivation of liberty, or probationary supervision, or community service, or fine.

(2) For a person who commits the acts provided for in Paragraph one, if they have been committed by a group of persons or using a vehicle, or violating the specified prohibition to enter the Republic of Latvia, the applicable punishment is the deprivation of liberty for a period of up to two years or temporary deprivation of liberty, or probationary supervision, or community service, or fine.

Section 285. Illegal Movement of a Person Across the State Border

(1) For illegal movement of a person across the State border, the applicable punishment is the deprivation of liberty for a term not exceeding three years or by probation supervision or by a fine.

(2) For the commission of the same acts, if they have been committed by a public official, using its official position, or a group of persons according to a prior agreement, or for illegal movement of several person across the State border in one time, the applicable punishment is the deprivation of liberty for a term of up to six years, with or without confiscation of property, and by probation supervision for a term of up to three years, with or without confiscation of property.

(3) For the commission of the same acts, if they have been committed by an organised group or they have resulted in serious consequences, or also who commits illegal movement of a large number of persons, that is, more than five persons at one time, across the State border, the applicable punishment is the deprivation of liberty for a period of two years and up to eight years, with or without confiscation of property and with or without probationary supervision for a period of up to three years.

(3¹) For the same acts, if committed during a period of reinforced border security regime or during a state of emergency declared due to a threat to the inviolability of the State border, regardless of the place of commission of the offence in the territory of Latvia shall be punishable by deprivation of liberty for a term of two to ten years, with or without confiscation of property, and by probation supervision for a term of up to three years, with or without confiscation of property.

(4) For the commission of the same acts, if they have resulted in death of two or several human beings,
the applicable punishment is the deprivation of liberty for a period of three years and up to fifteen years, with probationary supervision for a period of up to three years.

Section 285.¹ Ensuring the Possibility to Residing Illegally in the Republic of Latvia

(1) For knowingly ensuring persons the possibility to reside illegally in the Republic of Latvia, if it has been committed by a group of persons or by a public official using his or her official position,
the applicable punishment is the deprivation of liberty for up to three years or by probation supervision or a fine.

(2) For knowingly ensuring persons the possibility to reside illegally in the Republic of Latvia, if it has been committed for the purpose of acquiring property or if such possibility is ensured for two or several persons, the applicable punishment is the deprivation of liberty for a term of up to six years, with or without confiscation of property, and probation supervision for a term of up to three years, with or without confiscation of property.

(3) For knowingly providing a person with an opportunity to stay illegally in the Republic of Latvia, if committed by an organised group or if serious consequences have been caused thereby, or for providing a large number of persons, i.e. in one case more than five persons, with an opportunity to stay illegally in the Republic of Latvia the applicable punishment is the deprivation of liberty for a term of two to eight years, with or without confiscation of property, and by probation supervision for a term of up to three years, with or without confiscation of property.

Section 285.² Ensuring, in Bad Faith, a Possibility to Acquire the Right to Stay in the Republic of Latvia Legally, other Member State of the European Union, Member State of the European Economic Area or Swiss Confederation

(1) For ensuring, in bad faith, a possibility to acquire the right to stay in the Republic of Latvia legally, other Member State of the European Union, Member State of the European Economic Area or Swiss Confederation, the applicable punishment is the deprivation of liberty for up to three years or by probation supervision or a fine.

COUNTRY FACTSHEET* – Smuggling of migrants

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(2) For ensuring, in bad faith, a possibility to acquire the right to stay in the Republic of Latvia legally, other Member State of the European Union, Member State of the European Economic Area or Swiss Confederation, if it has been committed for the purpose of acquiring property or if such a possibility is ensured for two or several persons, or if it has been committed by a group of persons,

the applicable punishment is the deprivation of liberty for a term of up to six years, with or without confiscation of property, and probation supervision for a term of up to three years, with or without confiscation of property.

(3) For abusively providing a person with an opportunity to lawfully acquire the right to reside in the Republic of Latvia, another Member State of the European Union, a State of the European Economic Area or the Swiss Confederation, if committed by an organised group or if serious consequences have been caused thereby, or for providing a large number of persons, that is, in one case more than five persons, with an opportunity to lawfully acquire the right to reside in the Republic of Latvia, another Member State of the European Union, a State of the European Economic Area or the Swiss Confederation the applicable punishment is the deprivation of liberty for a term of two to eight years, with or without confiscation of property, and by probation supervision for a term of up to three years, with or without confiscation of property.



JUDICIAL FRAMEWORK

As regards the Criminal Procedure law, there is no specific regulation on migration smuggling because criminal proceedings are conducted in the same general way as for any other criminal offence.



INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The State Border Guard is a participant in certain Operational Activities included in the EMPACT (European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats) priority “migrant smuggling” Operational Action Plan:

- During the 2026–2027 EMPACT cycle, the State Border Guard participated in a total of 7 Operational Activities;
- During the 2024–2025 EMPACT cycle, the State Border Guard participated in 8 Operational Activities.

The State Border Guard also continues annual participation in several JAD (Joint Action Days) events: JAD ARKTOS (hereinafter - JAD FINESTRA); JAD MOBILE; JAD GLOBAL CHAIN and JAD TRIDENT.

In 2024 and 2025, the State Border Guard also took part in international operations organised by INTERPOL: LIBERTERRA II and LIBERTERRA III, as part of the regional operation WEKA III, aimed at identifying and combating international organised criminal groups involved in migrant smuggling and human trafficking.



RELEVANT CASES

COUNTRY FACTSHEET* – Smuggling of migrants

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Criminal Proceeding Nr. 13180000725

Episode 1 – Persons involved: Person D, Person S (these persons are the subjects of this criminal proceeding), Person H, Person K, Person No. 1, Person No. 2 and Person No. 3 (separate proceedings have been initiated against these persons; they were not tried in this criminal proceeding) – as part of an organised group, knowingly provided 24 illegal immigrants with the opportunity to stay unlawfully in the Republic of Latvia under the following circumstances.

Person H, according to assigned duties, took responsibility to receive in Poland and transport to the Republic of Latvia materials for imitating State Police vehicles – including forged State registration number plates, stickers for covering a Renault Master vehicle, beacon lights, shipments containing Polish Police uniform jackets and reflective vests – and hand them over to Person D and Person S. Person H also purchased fuel for the vehicle used to transport the illegal immigrants from the Latvia–Belarus border area to the place of unlawful stay in Latvia, arranged accommodation and food for members of the organised group, ensured transport for perpetrators to necessary locations before and after committing the criminal offense, and helped conceal traces of the criminal offence.

Person K took responsibility for transporting Person D and Person S to the necessary locations before and after the criminal offense, as well as for concealing traces of the criminal offence.

Person D undertook the role of driver, transporting the illegal immigrants by vehicle from the Latvia border area to locations within the country.

Person S affixed previously fabricated forged State registration number plates to the Renault Master vehicle, accompanied Person D to pick up the illegal immigrants, and assisted with route guidance, loading and unloading the immigrants into and from the vehicle, and ensuring their successful transportation from the border area of the Republic of Latvia to locations within the country.

Another member of the organised group – a person against whom a separate criminal proceeding has been initiated (hereinafter - Person No. 2) – applied stickers to the Renault Master vehicle, installed beacon lights, and fitted previously fabricated forged State registration plates, so that the vehicle visually resembled an official State Police marked vehicle.

Another member of the organised group – a person against whom a separate criminal proceeding has been initiated (hereinafter - Person No. 3) – accompanied and assisted the illegal immigrants in unlawfully crossing the Latvia–Belarus State border in order to avoid detection by State Border Guard officials, coordinated the reception location and time of the illegal immigrants with Person No. 1, sent him the coordinates of the illegal immigrants' location, and coordinated the arrival time of a "carrier" of the illegal immigrants.

In August 2024, Person H, following the instructions of Person No. 1, received in Poland a shipment containing forged State registration plates, beacon light, and rolls of blue, yellow and grey stickers for imitating a State Police vehicle and, together with Person K, transported these items to the Republic of Latvia in a Mazda Premacy vehicle with Polish registration plates. Subsequently, on September 18, 2024, Person H, again following the instructions of Person

COUNTRY FACTSHEET* – Smuggling of migrants

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No. 1, received a shipment containing Polish Police uniform jackets and reflective vests, which were handed over to Person D and Person S.

On September 24, 2024, Person H and Person K, following the instructions of Person No. 1, transported Person D and Person S to Riga in a VW Golf vehicle with Polish registration plates, to a location not precisely established during the pre-trial proceeding, where the Renault Master vehicle was located. Person D and Person S got into the Renault Master vehicle and, following the instructions of Person No. 1, drove it to Līksna Parish, Augšdaugava Municipality, where they left the vehicle in a forest so that Person No. 2 could apply the stickers to it, install the beacon light, and affix the previously fabricated State registration plates, making the vehicle visually resemble a marked State Police vehicle. Person H drove the VW Golf with Polish registration plates to the forest, **left in the Renault Master vehicle the stickers intended for creating a forged State Police marking**, the forged Latvian registration plates, the beacon light, and fuel for the vehicle, and then left together with Person D and Person S. Approximately four hours later, Person H returned Person D and Person S to the forest, where the Renault Master vehicle had already been fitted with stickers, beacon light, and forged State registration plates, visually imitating a marked State Police vehicle. Following instructions from Person No. 1, Person D and Person S, in the Renault Master vehicle imitating a State Police vehicle, drove to the designated to them location at the Latvia–Belarus border near the communication tower at the Krāslava Municipality Border Crossing Point, where they picked up 24 illegal immigrants without valid visas or residence permits, who had previously crossed the Belarus–Latvia State border unlawfully, and began driving with the intent to illegally transport them to the Riga area. Upon entering the road, State Border Guard officials spotted the Renault Master vehicle driven by Person D and ordered him to stop the vehicle at the roadside. Ignoring the order from the State Border Guard officials, Person D continued driving until a second State Border Guard shift attempted to stop them on the road. Ignoring the order to stop issued by the second State Border Guard patrol as well, Person D increased speed, activated the installed beacon light, and drove away together with Person S and the illegal immigrants. Following instructions from Person No. 1, Person D and Person S transported the illegal immigrants to a certain populated area, where they were dropped off in a forested area.

Episode 2 – Persons involved: Person S, Person D, and persons against whom separate criminal proceedings have been initiated (hereinafter - Person H and Person K) – as part of an organised group – knowingly provided a large number of persons with the opportunity to stay unlawfully in the Republic of Latvia, in at least one case enabling more than five persons to do so under the following circumstances.

In 2024, at a time not precisely established during the pre-trial criminal proceeding, a person against whom a separate criminal proceeding has been initiated (hereinafter - Person No. 1), motivated by financial gain, for the purpose of organising the provision of unlawful stay in the Republic of Latvia, formed an association of persons (hereinafter - the organised group), dividing responsibilities so that the actions of each group member would contribute to achieving the common objective.

For the purpose of implementing the criminal intent, Person No. 1, through the involvement of other persons encouraged and recruited additional persons in the commitment of the criminal offence. In September 2024, at a time not precisely established during the pre-trial criminal proceeding, Person No. 1 contacted Person S, Person H, Person K, and Person D via the mobile file-sharing application Telegram (hereinafter – Telegram) and offered them payment

COUNTRY FACTSHEET* – Smuggling of migrants

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for transporting illegal immigrants from the external border of the European Union to the vicinity of the city of Riga.

Person H undertook to receive in Poland and transport to the Republic of Latvia items intended for imitating a State Police Service vehicle – including forged registration plates, stickers for a VW Crafter vehicle, and beacon light; to receive shipments containing Polish Police uniform jackets and reflective vests and hand them over to Person D and Person S; to purchase fuel for the vehicle used to transport illegal immigrants from the Latvia–Belarus border area to locations of unlawful stay in the Republic of Latvia; as well as to arrange accommodation and food for members of the organised group, ensure the transportation of perpetrators to the necessary locations before and after the commitment of the criminal offence, and conceal traces of the criminal offence.

Person K undertook to transport Person D and Person S to the necessary locations before and after the commitment of the criminal offence, as well as to conceal traces of the criminal offence.

Person D assumed the role of driver, transporting illegal immigrants by vehicle from the border area of the Republic of Latvia to locations within the country.

Person S affixed previously fabricated forged registration plates to the VW Crafter vehicle, accompanied Person D to pick up the illegal immigrants, and assisted with route guidance, as well as with loading and unloading the illegal immigrants into and from the vehicle, ensuring their successful transportation from the border area of the Republic of Latvia to locations within the country.

Another member of the organised group – a person against whom a separate criminal proceeding has been initiated (hereinafter - Person No. 2) – applied stickers to the VW Crafter vehicle, installed beacon light, and fitted previously fabricated registration plates so that the vehicle visually resembled a marked State Police vehicle.

Another member of the organized group – a person against whom a different criminal proceeding has been initiated (hereinafter – Person No. 3), accompanied and helped illegal immigrants to illegally cross the Latvia-Belarus border so that they would not be noticed by the State Border Guard officials, coordinated the place and time of reception of illegal immigrants with Person No. 1 and sent him the coordinates of the location of the illegal immigrants and coordinated the time of arrival of the “carrier” of said illegal immigrants.

In August 2024, Person H, according to the instructions of Person No. 1, received a shipment with forged State registration plates in Poland, a beacon and rolls with blue, yellow and grey stickers to imitate a State Police vehicle, and, driving along with Person K in a Mazda Premacy vehicle, brought it to the Republic of Latvia. In turn, on September 18, 2024, Person H, according to the instructions of Person No. 1 received a shipment of Polish Police uniform jackets and reflective vests, which were handed over to Person D and Person S.

On October 1, 2024, Person D and Person S, in accordance with the instructions from Person No. 1, arrived in the Līksna Parish of Augšdaugava Municipality in a VW Crafter vehicle, which had previously been driven away from Poland by Person D, where they left the car in the forest so that Person No. 2 could cover it with stickers, install beacon light and the previously made registration plates on it, so that it visually resembled the stenciled State Police vehicle. Person

COUNTRY FACTSHEET* – Smuggling of migrants

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H arrived in the VW Golf vehicle, to the forest and left stickers for creating a fake State Police stencil, fake registration plates of the Republic of Latvia, beacons and fuel for the car in the VW Crafter vehicle and left together with Person D and Person S. On the evening of October 1, 2024, Person No. 1 announced in a joint Telegram chat of the organized group that the car with the fake State Police stencil was ready. On October 2, 2024, Person H and Person K in the Mazda Premacy vehicle took Person D and Person S back to the forest, where the VW Crafter vehicle was already covered with stickers, a beacon light and forged registration plates installed on it, visually resembling the vehicle with the State Police stencils. Person D drove the car prepared for the execution of the criminal offense to Riga, where it was left in a place not specified in the pre-trial criminal proceeding.

On October 8, 2024, Persons H and K, in accordance with the instructions of Person No. 1, in the VW Golf vehicle, took Persons D and S to Riga in a place not specified in the pre-trial criminal proceeding, where the VW Crafter vehicle was located. Having received instructions from Person No. 1, Person D and Person S, in the VW Crafter vehicle imitated as a State Police vehicle, with a forged State registration number, arrived at the place indicated to them on the Latvia-Belarus border, where they picked up 46 illegal immigrants without valid visas and residence permits in the car, who had previously illegally crossed the State Latvia-Belarus border, and started driving with the intention of illegally transporting them to the vicinity of Riga. While driving on the highway, State Police officers noticed the VW Crafter vehicle imitated as a State Police vehicle, with a forged State registration number, driven by Person D, and ordered him to stop the car on the side of the road. Ignoring the order of the State Police officials to stop the car, Persons D and S continued to drive on until the moment when, on October 8, 2024, on the highway, after using service weapons, State Police officials stopped the car with illegal immigrants and detained Person D. Person S, who fled when the car was stopped, was detained as a result of search measures on October 8, 2024.

Episode 3 – Those involved in the crime: Person M, Person V and two persons against whom the criminal proceedings have been separated into separate proceedings (hereinafter Person H and Person K) in an organized group knowingly provided the opportunity to illegally reside in the Republic of Latvia for a large number of persons, that is, in one case more than five persons under the following circumstances.

In 2024, at an unspecified time in the pre-trial criminal proceeding, the person against whom a different criminal proceeding was initiated (hereinafter – Person No. 1), acting with the intent of financial gain, with the aim to provide persons with the opportunity to illegally reside in the Republic of Latvia, formed an association of persons (hereinafter – organized group), dividing responsibilities so that the actions of each group member would achieve the common goal.

In order to implement his criminal intent through the mediation of other persons, Person No. 1 encouraged and involved other persons in the criminal offense. In October 2024, at an unspecified time in the pre-trial criminal proceeding, Person No. 1 contacted Person H, Person K, Person V and Person M on the mobile phone file exchange software Telegram (hereinafter – Telegram) and offered them to transport illegal immigrants from the external border of the European Union to the vicinity of the city of Riga for a fee.

Person H undertook to transport Persons V and M to the Republic of Latvia, equip the vehicle with beacon light, remove stickers from the body so that it visually looked similar to a State Border Guard stenciled car, purchase fuel for the vehicle to transport illegal migrants from the Latvia-Belarus border to the place of illegal residence in the Republic of Latvia, as well as provide members of an organized group with accommodation, food and transport of

COUNTRY FACTSHEET* – Smuggling of migrants

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perpetrators of a criminal offense to the necessary place before and after the execution of the criminal offense, and hide the traces of the criminal offense.

Person K undertook to receive in Poland for use in the Republic of Latvia forged registration plates of a State Border Guard Service vehicle, a beacon light for their installation on the counterfeit State Border Guard vehicle, to transport a Renault Master vehicle with a Polish registration plate from Poland to the Republic of Latvia, after which he handed it over to Persons V and M, to equip a counterfeit State Border Guard vehicle with a forged registration plate, to stick a counterfeit coat of arms of the Republic of Latvia on the body of the car so that it visually resembled a stenciled State Border Guard vehicle.

Person V undertook to perform the duties of a driver, transporting illegal immigrants by car from the border of the Republic of Latvia to the interior of the country.

Person M drove along with Person V after the illegal immigrants, helping with the entry of the driving route, loading and unloading illegal immigrants into the car, and their successful transportation from the border of the Republic of Latvia to the interior of the country.

Other members of the organized group – persons against whom other criminal proceedings have been initiated (hereinafter – Persons No. 2 and No. 3), accompanied and helped illegal immigrants to illegally cross the Latvia-Belarus border so that they would not be noticed by State Border Guard officials, coordinated the place and time of reception of illegal immigrants with Person No. 1 and sent him the coordinates of the location of the illegal immigrants, and coordinated the time of arrival of the transporter of illegal immigrants.

On October 31, 2024, at an unspecified time during the pre-trial investigation, Person H, Person V, Person M and Person K, who had with him forged vehicle registration plates and a beacon light, drove from the city of Warsaw, Poland, to a settlement in Poland in a Mazda Premacy vehicle Polish State registration number. Upon arriving at a parking lot in this settlement, where a green Renault Master vehicle with a Polish State registration number was located, Person H opened the car with the key he had with him. The fake stencil of the State Border Guard Service car was hidden with green adhesive tape. In the parking lot, Person H drilled holes in the roof so that the beacon could be attached later. Continuing to follow the instructions of Person No. 1, Person H and Person V, driving the Mazda Premacy vehicle, Polish State registration number, while Person M and Person K, driving the Renault Master vehicle with a Polish State registration number, all went together to the Republic of Latvia. Upon arrival in the Republic of Latvia, Person H, Person V, Person M and Person K, in accordance with the instructions of Person No. 1, went to a forest in the Rēzekne Municipality, where they prepared the Renault Master vehicle for the execution of a criminal offense. Person H, Person V and Person K removed green adhesive tape from the side of the car, under which there was a yellow line, thus visually imitating a State Border Guard service car, Person H and Person K attached beacons to the roof of the car, Person K changed the Polish State registration number to a fake Latvian State registration number and stuck the national coat of arms of the Republic of Latvia on the front doors of the car on both sides, which was located on the car "Renault Master", so that it visually looked similar to the State Border Guard stenciled car. After preparing the Renault Master car, Person M and Person V went to the border of the Republic of Latvia - the Republic of Belarus in the Renault Master car after the illegal immigrants, while Person H and Person K went to Madona in a Mazda Premacy car with a Polish State registration number, where they waited for Person M and Person V and followed in Telegram chat how they met and received the illegal immigrants in the car.

On November 1, 2024, at an unspecified time during the pre-trial investigation, in the Krāslava Municipality, on the road, approximately 100 meters from the state border, Person M and

COUNTRY FACTSHEET* – Smuggling of migrants

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Person V in the Renault Master car with a forged Latvian State registration plate received 11 illegal immigrants without travel documents, valid visas or residence permits, who had previously illegally crossed the Latvia-Belarus border. Then, Person M and Person V, in accordance with the instructions given by Person No. 1 in the Telegram chat, took the aforementioned 11 illegal immigrants further from the border and dropped them off in the vicinity of the village, after which they went back to pick up the remaining 14 illegal immigrants in the car. However, on November 1, 2024, approximately 100 meters from the State border, State Border Guard officials stopped a fake State Border Guard Renault Master vehicle with a forged State registration plate, in which Person M and Person V were present.

Person S was convicted of committing a crime provided for in Section 285.¹(3) of the Criminal Law and sentenced to imprisonment for four years and two months, deportation from the Republic of Latvia with a ban on entering the country for six years.

Person D was convicted of committing a crime provided for in Section 285.¹(3) of the Criminal Law and sentenced to imprisonment for four years and two months, deportation from the Republic of Latvia with a ban on entering the country for six years.

Person M was convicted of committing a crime provided for in Section 285.¹(3) of the Criminal Law and sentenced to imprisonment for two years and two months, deportation from the Republic of Latvia with a ban on entering the country for four years.

Person V was convicted of committing a crime provided for in Section 285.¹(3) of the Criminal Law and sentenced to imprisonment for two years and six months, deportation from the Republic of Latvia with a ban on entering the country for five years.

Criminal Proceeding No. 18240008223

During the period from May 22, 2023, to May 25, 2023, at a time not precisely established during the pre-trial proceeding, Person B, with the intention of illegally crossing the territory of the Republic of Latvia to the Republic of Belarus without valid travel documents, from where he planned to further illegally transfer illegal immigrants to the Republic of Latvia, deliberately crossed the border of the Republic of Latvia on foot and entered the territory of the Republic of Belarus. In the Republic of Belarus, Person B met with twelve Indian citizens and seven Afghan citizens in order to illegally transfer them from the Republic of Belarus to the Republic of Latvia for a certain fee. Being aware that the above-mentioned nineteen persons wanted to illegally enter the territory of the European Union, but were not familiar with the area and did not know where they could illegally cross the border of the Republic of Latvia from the Republic of Belarus, Person B, on June 6, 2023, showing them the direction of movement, took the above-mentioned nineteen persons to the border of the Republic of Latvia with the Republic of Belarus on foot and, deliberately bypassing the established border crossing points, illegally crossed the border of the Republic of Latvia with them.

The person was convicted of a criminal offence provided for in Section 284(2) and Section 285(3) of the Criminal Law and sentenced to six years and one month in prison, with deportation from the Republic of Latvia, with a seven-year entry ban imposed on him.

Criminal Proceeding No. 18240018323

COUNTRY FACTSHEET* – Smuggling of migrants

*The responsibility for the content lies exclusively with every responding State and does not constitute the official position of the Council of Europe.



In September 2023, at an unspecified time, Person K received an offer from a person who was not identified during the investigation, a user of the mobile application Telegram – the organizer, against whom the criminal proceedings have been separated into separate proceedings (hereinafter – Person No. 1) to use a vehicle to transport a group of illegal immigrants from the Latvian border to the interior of the Republic of Latvia, for a fee of 100 USD for each illegal immigrant transported. Person K agreed to the offer.

On October 2, 2023, Person K rented an Iveco Daily vehicle in Poland and on October 3, 2023, arrived in the Republic of Latvia, in Jēkabpils, where he stayed for two weeks and waited for further instructions from Person No. 1. Further, on October 17, 2023, having received instructions from Person No. 1, he went to the border, where, following the instructions of Person No. 1, Person K allowed 19 illegal immigrants to get into the car at an unknown place on the border of the Republic of Latvia and drove away according to the instructions of Person No. 1 to a populated area in Latvia, where the said 19 illegal immigrants would be provided with an illegal place of residence. However, as a result, on October 17, 2023, State Border Guard officers stopped the Iveco Daily (registered in Poland) driven by Person K, but Person K did not obey the lawful demands of the border guard to stop the car and continued to drive further. During the pursuit of the car, the car driven by Person K was stopped. In the cargo compartment of the said car were 19 illegal immigrants (5 Somali and 14 Yemeni citizens), who illegally crossed the Latvia-Belarus state border.

Person K was convicted of committing a criminal offence under Section 285.¹(2) of the Criminal Law and sentenced to 4 years and 6 months in prison, deportation from Latvia after serving the sentence, and a ban on entering Latvia for 5 years.

Criminal Proceeding No. 18240006724

In 2024, an organized group illegally transported eleven (nine citizens of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and two citizens of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan) illegal immigrants from the Republic of Belarus to the Republic of Latvia to a previously prepared place in the territory of the Republic of Latvia, where they were locked in a basement. The illegal immigrants were locked in the basement for almost 24 hours. While the illegal immigrants were in the basement, according to the instructions of the members of the organized group, the illegal immigrants were robbed, stealing six touch-sensitive mobile phones and about 2,000 United States dollars from them. During the robbery, one person threatened the illegal immigrants with a pneumatic semi-automatic pistol and two unidentified persons used physical force - beat the illegal immigrants, while another person stole money and mobile phones from the illegal immigrants. After committing the robbery, the illegal immigrants were again locked in the basement, where they were held illegally until the next day, when they were discovered by the officers of the Criminal Investigation Service of the Daugavpils Department of the State Border Guard.

In 2024, this organized group repeatedly organized the illegal movement of sixteen (two citizens of the Republic of Afghanistan and thirteen citizens of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan) illegal migrants across the state border, namely, the members of this organized group ensured the illegal movement of these illegal immigrants across the Belarus-Latvia border, after which they were moved closer to the interior of the Republic of Latvia by vehicle with the intention of further transporting them to the same property where the previously moved illegal immigrants were already locked. On the way to this property, the vehicle carrying 16 illegal immigrants was detained.

COUNTRY FACTSHEET* – Smuggling of migrants



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One person was recognized as a suspect under Section 20(2) and Section 285(3) (for two episodes) of the Criminal Law, the second and third person - under Section 20(2) and Section 285(3) (for two episodes) and Section 176(3) of the Criminal Law, but the fourth person under Section 20(4) and Section 285(3) (for two episodes) and Section 176(3), Section 152(2) of the Criminal Law. At present, there is still no court ruling in this criminal proceeding.