

Number and per cent of population of selected ethnicities in total population

	1935		1989		2000	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
All population	1905936	100	2666567	100	2377383	100
Of which:						
Latvians	1467035	77.0	1387757	52.0	1370703	57.7
Russians	168266	8.8	905515	34.0	703243	29.6
Belarussians	26803	1.4	119702	4.5	97150	4.1
Ukrainians	1844	0.1	92101	3.5	63644	2.7
Poles	48637	2.5	60416	2.3	59505	2.5
Lithuanians	22843	1.2	34630	1.3	33430	1.4
Jews	93370	4.9	22897	0.9	10385	0.4
Roma	3839	0.2	7044	0.3	8205	0.3
Germans	62116	3.3	3783	0.1	3465	0.1
Estonians	6928	0.4	3312	0.1	2652	0.1
Other ethnicities	4255	0.2	29410	1.0	25001	1.1

In the population of Latvia, ethnic Russians are the second largest group in per cent. Compared with 1989, the proportion of ethnic Belarussians, Ukrainians, and Jews has fallen, too. The proportion of ethnic Poles now is the same as during the last pre-war population census - 2.5 %.

Several questions on language skills of the population were also included in the Programme of the 2000 Population Census. Here the questions on the mother tongue and skills of other languages should be mentioned. In contrast to the previous census when information was compiled only on the language skills of the former union, during the 2000 Population Census data on the knowledge of any widespread and existent language in the world were collected.

The Population census data show that 79 % of the population know Latvian now compared with 61.7 % in the previous Population Census 1989.

According to the 2000 Census data, one of the most widespread languages of Europe - English, German or French - is known by almost every fourth inhabitant of Latvia, who has indicated any skills of foreign languages. According to the absolute numbers, 340 000 of population of Latvia know English, 179 000 persons know German, almost 10 000 persons know French.

The Population Census Programme involved also questions on the country of birth and citizenship.

81.5 % of population are born in Latvia. 96.4 % of foreign-born population are European-born. Asia is another region where almost 15 000 persons are born (Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Uzbekistan).