PRIVATE LANDOWNERS ADJACENT TO WATER BODIES: RIGHTS, DUTIES, AND WATER MANAGEMENT

18-19 February 2026

EU LIFE Programme integrated project

"Implementation of River Basin Management Plans of Latvia towards good surface water status"

Good water status: EU water policy goal

- The deadline set by the Water Framework Directive (WFD) for European rivers, lakes, transitional, coastal and groundwaters to meet good status was 2015.
- That was not met and there has been little improvement since 2010.
- In 2021, only 37% of Europe's surface water bodies achieved a good or high ecological status. 29% achieved a good chemical status.
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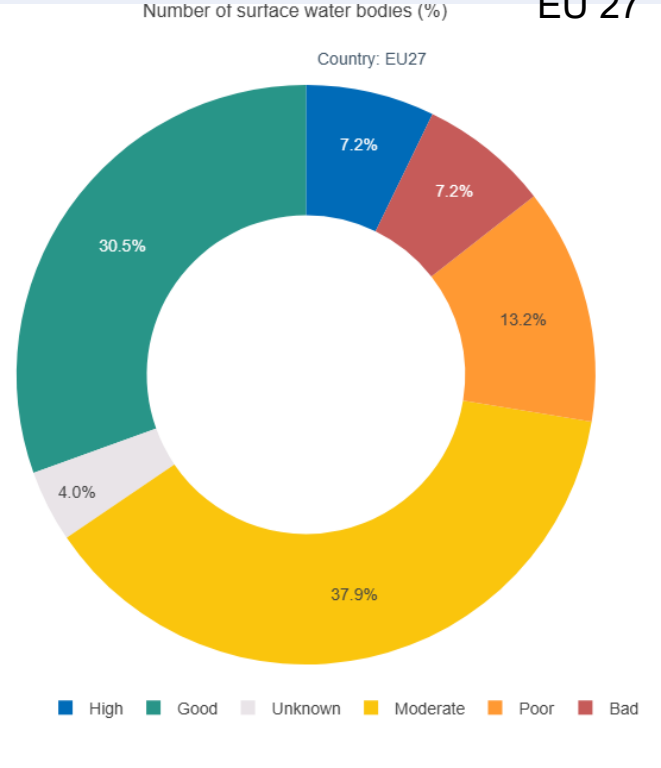
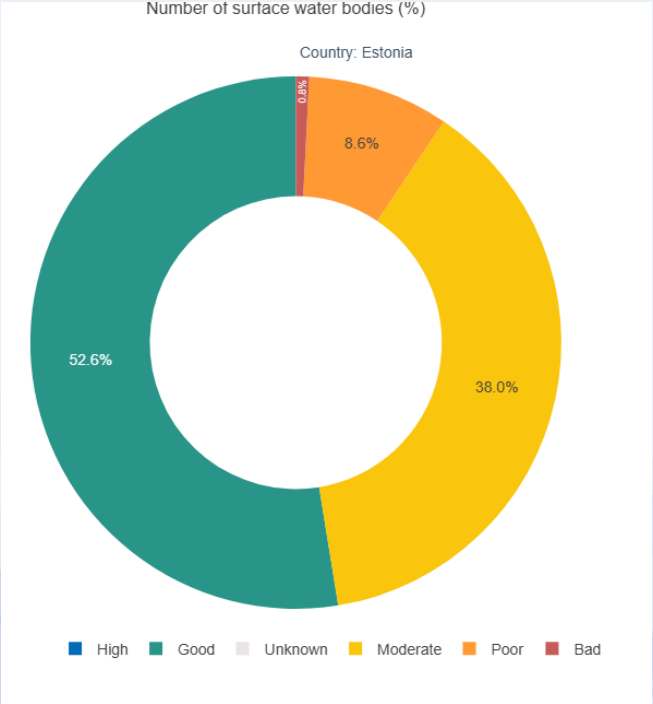
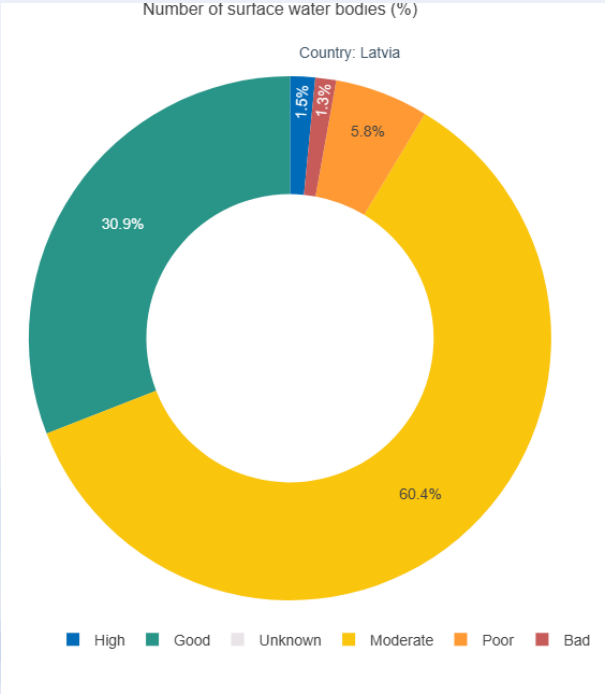
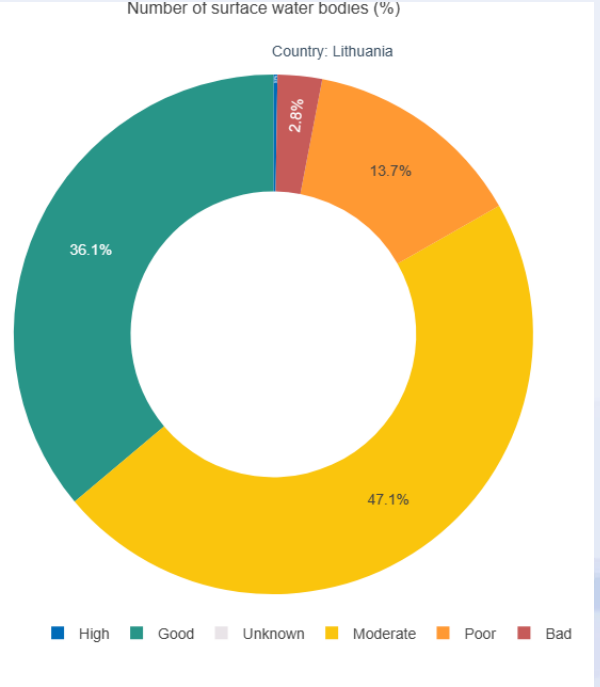
EU 27



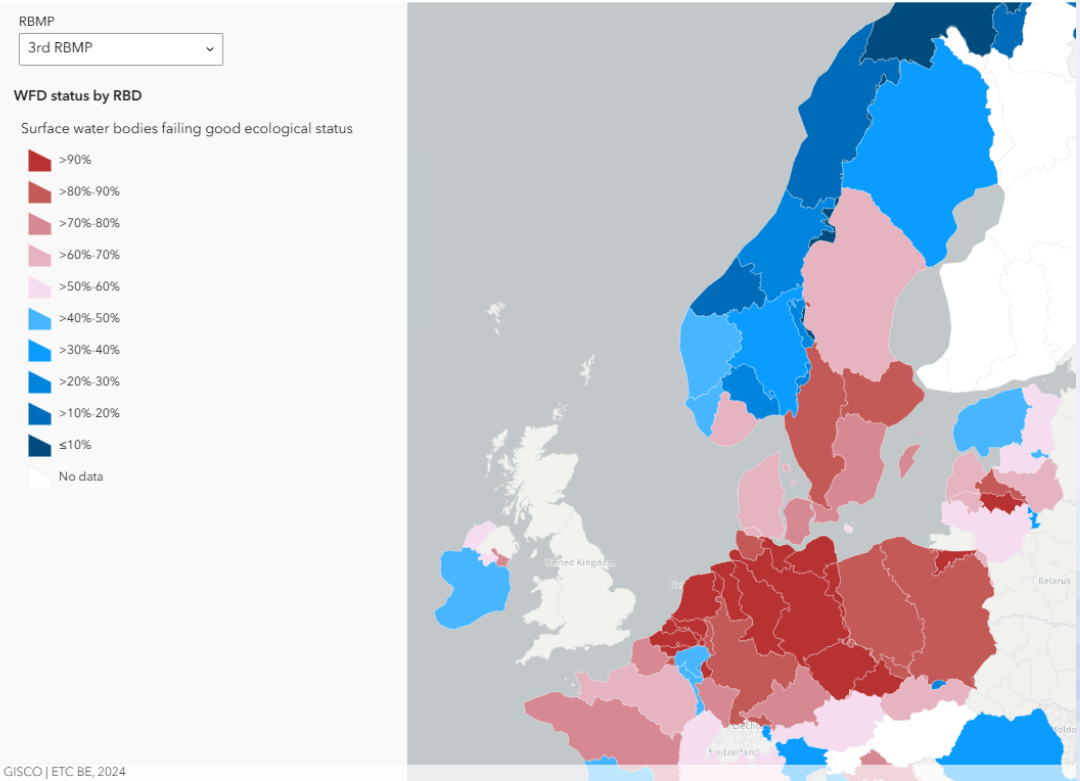
Baltics in 3rd RBMP





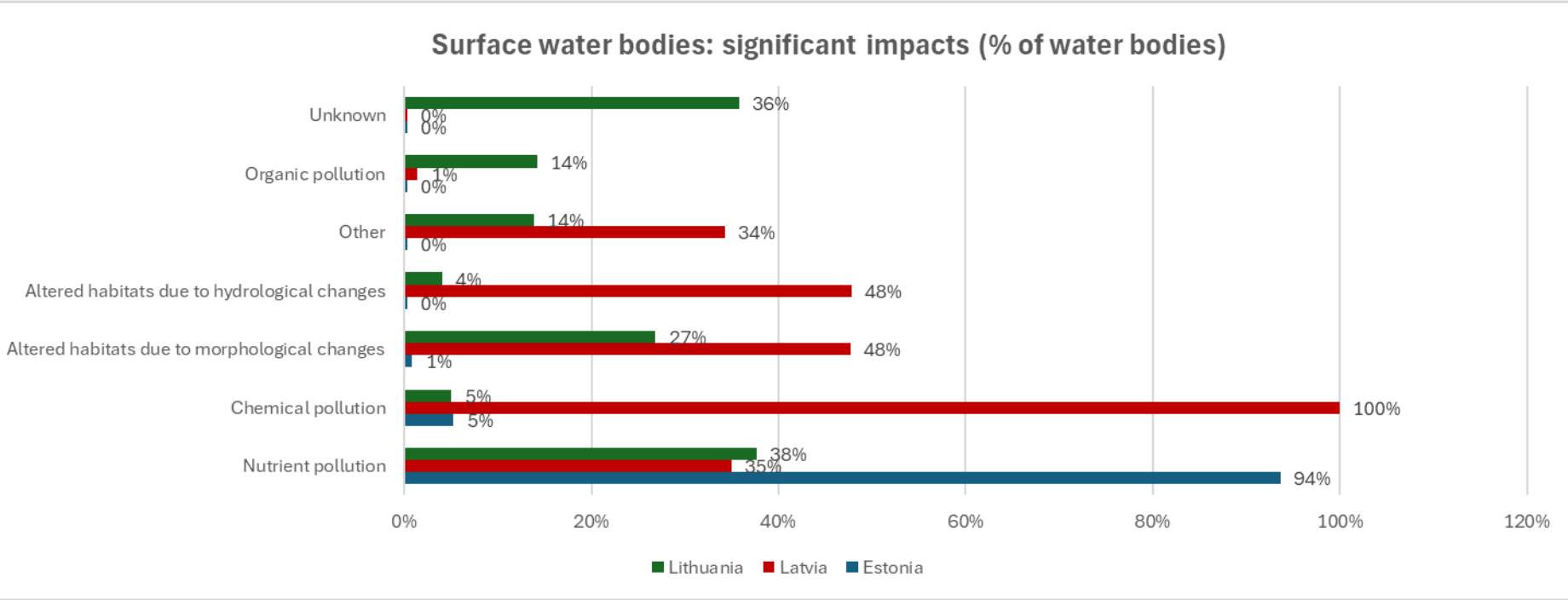


Surface water bodies failing good ecological status



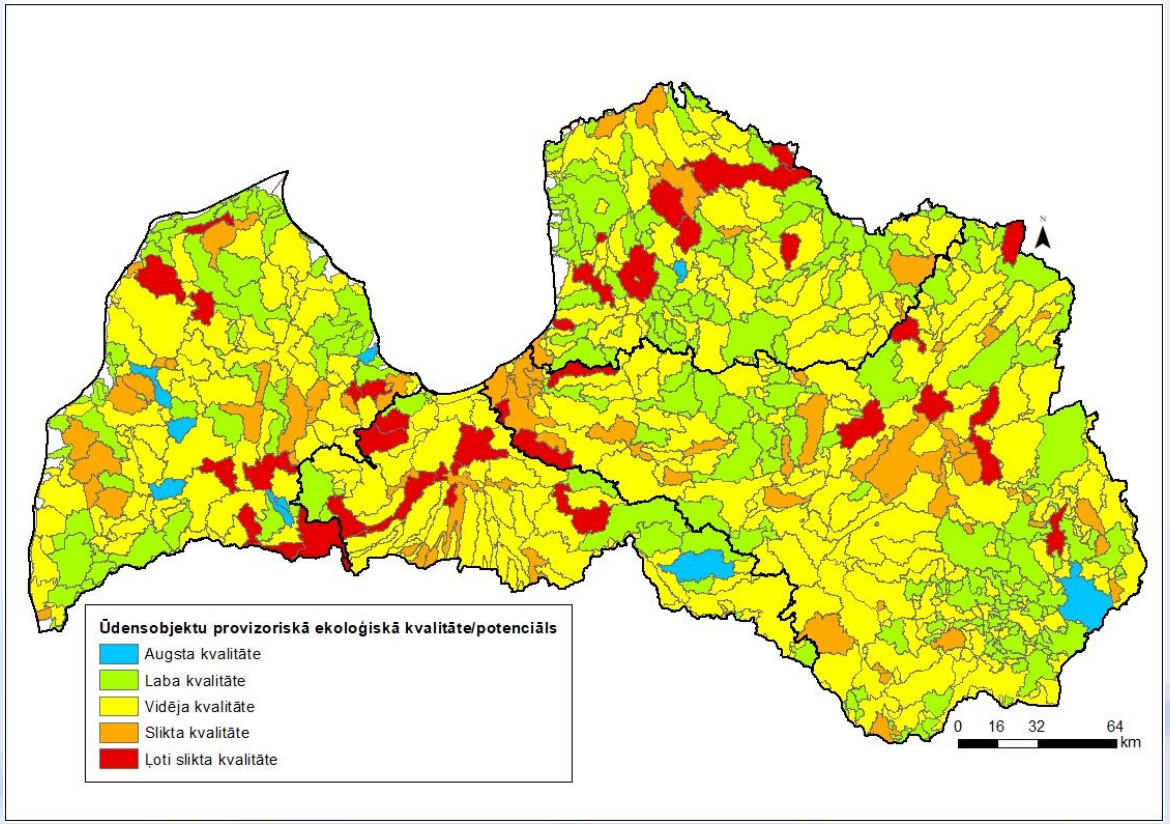
Why are EU Member States not successful?

What is the reason for not having a good status? Who is in charge?

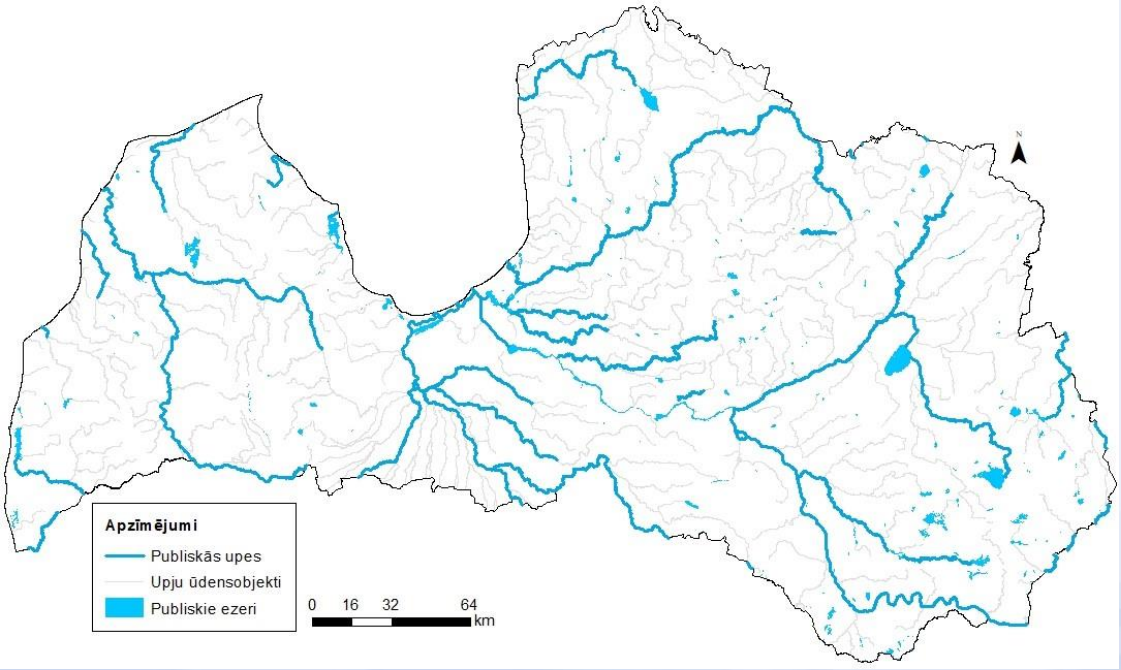


Latvia

- 2020-2024 – good and high status for 36% of WB



Public waters



There are ~ 12,500 rivers, streams in Latvia with a total length of approximately 42,500 km; 3,880 rivers are 10 km long, and 17 rivers are longer than 100 km.
Of all the rivers in Latvia, **42 are included in the list of public rivers** (the entire length with or without branches or purpose-built river sections).

2256 lakes larger than 1 ha; public lakes- 216

Objectives of the workshop

- To share, examine, and compare approaches to the definition and practical implementation of legal responsibilities of private landowners adjacent to water bodies, with a view to ensuring good ecological status of waters in line with the Water Framework Directive.
- To identify gaps and challenges in existing legal frameworks and to formulate recommendations for improving the regulation and guidance of private water management responsibilities.

Guiding questions:

- How are the goals and other obligations of the water management determined into rights and duties of private landowners in Baltic countries?
- What responsibilities do private landowners have regarding active measures (e.g. maintenance, vegetation management, removal of obstructions) versus restrictions on harmful activities?
- To what extent are landowners legally responsible for inaction that leads to deterioration of water status?
- What instruments (legislation, guidance, voluntary, incentives or others) are used to regulate and incentivize individual activities (natural persons) affecting water bodies?

LET THE CLEAN WATERS FLOW!

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