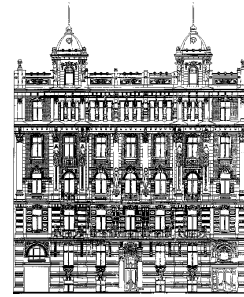




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Analysis of the Current Situation of Inbound Conference Tourism in Latvia and its Future Development Possibilities

Bachelor Thesis

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Abstract

Nowadays the tourism industry plays an important role in the world's economy, generating approximately 10% of the world's GDP. One of the tourism industry segments is conference tourism. As previously no studies of the conference tourism industry in Latvia have been made, in this thesis a current development level of the inbound conference tourism industry in Latvia is investigated. Moreover, a SWOT analysis is applied in order to identify strengths and opportunities, which can help to develop the conference tourism industry in Latvia in the future, as well as weaknesses and threats, which have to be eliminated and avoided.

Both primary and secondary data are used for the analysis of the conference tourism industry in Latvia. However, the analysis of the industry is based mainly on the primary data which was obtained from personal interviews with industry experts, employees of the leading conference tourism companies, and hotel representatives. In addition, specially designed questionnaires were distributed both to existing conference tourists who have been at conferences in Latvia and to potential conference visitors who have not been at conferences in Latvia yet. A model of six travel experience phases is applied to analyse the conference tourism industry.

The results of the analysis show that there is not enough information about conference tourism possibilities in Latvia abroad; safety is the most important factor influencing people's willingness to go to a certain country; many people would like to come to Latvia; and the majority of them travel by plane. Currently Riga is a conference centre, but there is potential to develop this industry also in other towns of Latvia. Conference visitors have evaluated different services such as transportation, accommodation, conference organisation, and one is able to see that the service level in Latvia is relatively high. Finally, the results show that people's image of Latvia improves when they visit this country. This demonstrates that Latvia's representatives have to work hard to inform foreign people about Latvia, and in order to do so, these representatives need financial support from the government and state. In general, the quality of the conference tourism provided by Latvian conference organisers to foreign visitors is satisfactory, and there are quite many possibilities for future development of the conference tourism industry in Latvia.

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We would like to express our gratitude to people who have contributed to development of this thesis. First of all, we appreciate that people working in the conference tourism industry in Latvia provided valuable information for our research. Secondly, we are grateful to 378 people who kindly agreed to participate in our survey, which helped us to evaluate the current situation of the conference tourism in Latvia and identify its drawbacks. Furthermore, we would like to thank our supervisor, Aivars Timofejevs, for his constructive comments and suggestions during the Bachelor thesis writing process.

Table of Contents

1	Introduction.....	1
1.1	Research Question.....	2
1.2	Studies that Have Addressed the Problem.....	2
1.3	Importance of the Study	3
1.4	Delimitations	3
1.5	Limitation.....	4
1.6	Thesis Outline	4
2	Review of Literature.....	4
3	Methodology.....	7
3.1	Primary Data.....	7
3.2	Secondary Data.....	10
4	Statistics on Business Tourism Development in Latvia	10
5	Results and Analysis.....	12
5.1	Theoretical Framework	12
5.2	Survey Background	13
5.3	Anticipation and Planning	14
5.4	Travel to Site and Travel Home	16
5.5	Participation.....	17
5.5.1	Riga – a Conference Tourism Centre in Latvia	18
5.5.2	Accommodation	19
5.5.3	Conference Venues	22
5.5.4	Conference Participation.....	24
5.5.5	Additional Services.....	26
5.5.6	Summary of the Participation Phase.....	29
5.6	Recollection	29
6	SWOT Analysis.....	30
6.1	Strengths.....	30
6.2	Weaknesses.....	32
6.3	Opportunities.....	33
6.4	Threats	34
7	Conclusions.....	35
8	Suggestions for Further Research.....	36
	References.....	38
	Appendices.....	40
	Appendix 1: Definition of Terms	40
	Appendix 2: List of Personal Contacts	41
	Appendix 3: Questions Asked to Tourism Industry Experts	42

Appendix 4: Questions Asked to Employees of Companies Related to the Conference Tourism.....	43
Appendix 5: Questions Asked to Employees of Hotels.....	45
Appendix 6: Questionnaire to Tourists Visiting a Conference/s in Latvia.....	47
Appendix 7: Questionnaire to Potential Conference Tourists	50
Appendix 8: Survey Respondents by Country of Residence	53
Appendix 9: Survey Answer Distribution	54
Appendix 10: Latvian Accommodation Characteristics in 2001.....	55
Appendix 11: Conference Venues in Riga.....	56

List of Peripherals

Chart 1. Travellers by country of residence.....	10
Graph 1. Number of international visitors staying in hotels and other accommodation establishments.....	11
Figure 1. The six travel experience phases.....	12
Chart 2. Sources of information about Latvia.....	14
Chart 3. Factors influencing a choice of a destination place.....	15
Chart 4. Reasons for not coming to Latvia.....	16
Chart 5. Transportation to a destination.....	16
Chart 6. Travelling habits.....	18
Table 1. Riga hotels typically chosen for accommodation of conference visitors.....	20
Chart 7. Accommodation.....	21
Chart 8. Accommodation expectations.....	21
Chart 9. Conference venue convenience.....	23
Chart 10. Venue correspondence to needs.....	23
Chart 11. Conference technical organisation.....	24
Chart 12. Conference timing.....	25
Chart 13. Transportation within Latvia.....	28
Table 2. Summary of the SWOT analysis.....	31

1 Introduction

The tourism industry is one of the largest industries in the world today, and in the last ten years it has been progressing with a great speed. As tourism¹ develops, more people become involved in this industry both directly and indirectly. According to the World Tourism Organisation (further in the text WTO) data, the tourism industry generates approximately 10% of the world's GDP (Ministry of Economics, Republic of Latvia web page). Moreover, tourism development creates a multiplication effect because it impacts on such related economy sectors as transportation, catering, and entertainment industries, and wherewith it facilitates the overall economic development of the world. In addition, growth of the tourism industry positively influences international social and cultural contacts, networking, and creation of new relations.

WTO has predicted that by the year 2020 tourism in the Baltic Sea region, comparing with that in other European states, will be one of the fastest developing and growing industries (Ministry of Economics, Republic of Latvia web page). In the Report of Economic Development of Latvia it is stated that the number of incoming travellers to Latvia "is steadily growing in the last three years: in 2002 in Latvia by 11%, world, respectively – 3%, countries of Central and Eastern Europe – average 4%," (Ministry of Economics, Republic of Latvia, 2003, 101). Another aspect is that Latvia situated between Estonia and Lithuania has its competitive advantage because of a favourable and convenient geographical location. Moreover, as Latvia is still a place that is unknown and less visited than other European countries, it has high potential for attraction of tourists from all over the world, especially from Europe. In addition, "Latvia with its sparsely populated area, moderate climate, rich natural and historical heritage and nature with little transformation, skilled specialists has all preconditions to become an attractive destination for tourists," (Ministry of Economics, Republic of Latvia, 2003, 101).

There are different reasons and purposes why tourists decide to come to Latvia. According to a statistical bulletin *Tourism in Latvia in 2002*, the second most important purpose of visit (20% of the total) is related to business, and these visitors have the highest expenditure per year in Latvia, which in total is LVL 40.3 millions² (Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia (further in the text CSBL), 2003, 35). One of the business tourism areas is conference tourism, which develops further each year because people working in this

¹ Here and further in the text see Appendix 1 for definition of terms.

² "This figure excludes the travel expenses, expenses incurred on instruction of the employer as well as capital investments."

industry become more educated and experienced, and financial resources are more available than before. If different conferences are organised in Latvia, it is a great possibility for Latvia's inhabitants to attend them and increase their knowledge and educational level, which is a very positive factor for development of people.

1.1 Research Question

The aim of the research is to answer the following questions:

- What is the quality³ of the conference tourism provided by Latvian conference organisers to foreign visitors?
- What are possibilities for future development of the conference tourism in Latvia?

For this purpose it is necessary to analyse what are the criteria for choosing a country of visit, what needs should be satisfied, and what service level is expected by conference tourists. Additionally, the current level of conferences organised by Latvian companies will be assessed, and the reasons why foreign potential conference attendants do not come to Latvia will be found out. Identification of opportunities, threats, drawbacks, and strong sides of the industry will allow to determine what possibilities exist for development of the conference tourism in the future.

1.2 Studies that Have Addressed the Problem

The tourism industry in Latvia is a new industry, as it started to develop only at the beginning of 1990's, when Latvia regained its independence. Looking back at that time one can see that it is a relatively short period of time for the industry to grow. Although there is quite much information about the tourism industry in Latvia in general, one has difficulties with finding studies related to business tourism and more specifically to conference tourism. The Latvian Tourism Development Agency is one of a few institutions that have made research in this field. The name of the project is "Strategy for Business Tourism Development in Latvia 2003-2006", and it discusses goals and vision of the business tourism in Latvia. During interviews with the major conference organising companies in Latvia (See Appendix 2) it was stated that none of them have made research related to the conference tourism industry in Latvia. In addition, representatives of these companies expressed the interest in having the results of this research.

Some Latvian universities, which have a Bachelor programme in a sphere of tourism, have made research in the tourism field, but at this point in time there are no conference tourism oriented studies. All in all, the field of the conference tourism in Latvia has not been

³ "Quality is the totality of the features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs" (Pallister and Isaacs, 1996, 415).

thoroughly investigated and analysed; therefore, the authors strongly consider that this study will contribute to the development of the conference tourism industry in Latvia.

1.3 Importance of the Study

This research will give a broad view of the current situation in the conference tourism field in Latvia, as the opinion of experts, employees from the leading conference organising companies, representatives of hotels, and conference visitors (existing and potential) will be taken into account. In addition, this study will identify conference tourism drawbacks, which currently may be overlooked. Thus, the thesis will contribute to the conference tourism industry by discovering certain problems, which could be eliminated, and therefore, development of the conference tourism in Latvia may be enhanced. As a consequence of well-developed conference tourism, conference visitors become more satisfied, local companies have possibilities of gaining larger profits and better reputation, and other economy sectors closely related to the tourism industry become more developed, which, furthermore, benefits the whole economy of Latvia.

1.4 Delimitations

Two delimitations were made in order to narrow down the scope of the research and concentrate on the issues which are considered by the authors to be more important for the analysis of the current situation of the inbound conference tourism industry in Latvia.

First, the research is mainly focused on the analysis of the conference tourism in Riga. However, due to the fact that currently the industry is highly concentrated in Riga, the results and conclusions made can be regarded as those for the whole conference tourism industry in Latvia. This proposition is supported by the following fact. During the interviews representatives of the local companies that work in the sphere of conference organisation for foreigners mentioned that approximately 95% of all conferences in Latvia visited by foreigners take place in Riga. Therefore, Riga can be considered a conference centre of Latvia, which will be further discussed in a subsequent part of the thesis 5.5 Participation.

Second, the research of the inbound conference tourism in Latvia will not include analysis of the content of conferences organised in Latvia for foreign travellers. It is not in the scope of the current research to make an investigation of the quality and quantity of information disclosed to visitors during conferences, effectiveness of lecturers presenting at conferences, the interest of the topic chosen, and other issues related to the content of a conference. This delimitation is made because the content of conferences and issues related to it are usually determined externally and not influenced by any player of the conference tourism industry in Latvia.

1.5 Limitation

The authors would be able to evaluate the current situation of the inbound conference tourism in Latvia more precisely, provided the statistical data of foreign conference travellers arriving to Latvia existed. However, the CSBL, which is the main supplier of the statistical data in Latvia, does not provide separate statistics for the conference tourism but gives aggregated data for the whole business tourism segment. Despite this limitation, available sources of information will allow to perform a proper analysis of the industry. In addition, conclusions made might be taken into consideration by the industry players; thus, contributing to the industry further development.

1.6 Thesis Outline

The structure of the thesis proceeds as follows. The next section provides a review of literature related to the tourism industry. Section 3 proceeds with the research methodology. In Section 4 statistics on business tourism in Latvia is discussed. Further, in Sections 5 and 6 results of the research are analysed. Section 7 gives an overview of the conclusions made in the thesis. Finally, suggestions for further research are provided in Section 8.

2 *Review of Literature*

Several literature sources were reviewed in order to pursue the following aims. First, the authors needed to get acquainted with specifics and economic implications of the tourism industry in general and business tourism in particular, which includes conference tourism analysed in this research. Second, the tourism industry of Latvia had to be studied.

“Tourism is the world’s largest industry, responsible for more than one in ten jobs globally” (International Trade Centre web page). “This trillion-dollar industry is booming around the world even in times of recession, military conflicts, natural disasters, and energy problems” (Nickerson, 1996, 2). Tourism can be considered to be a complex industry combining a set of interdependent businesses because “it focuses on travellers away from home and on all the services they utilize, including the means of transport, food and lodging services, travel expeditors such as travel agents, tour operators, and reception services” (Lundberg and Lundberg, 1993, v).

According to A. K. Bhatia, the major economic advantage of international tourism is reflected in terms of foreign exchange earnings for a destination country, which positively affects the balance of payment account (1991, 54). When analysing the economic impact of international travel D. E. Lundberg and C. B. Lundberg discuss “multipliers” effect of foreign tourist expenditures. “As soon as a tourist spends a dollar in a destination economy, it is received by someone, spent, and respent. Some of the dollar may soon leave the destination

[...]. Some goes for local and national taxes. The part that remains may be rapidly spent within the economy, invested, or saved. The spending that results within an economy “multiplies” its impact” (1993, 15-16).

N. P. Nickerson mentions that development of tourism provides a number of benefits to local people. Among them are increase in employment options and sales tax revenue; improvements in cultural preservations, entertainment, restaurant service, roads, airports, public transportation, area beautification, cultural understanding between host and guest, economic health and stability of suppliers to the tourism industry (1996, 40). These arguments indicate that development of conference tourism as a part of tourism in general positively contributes to a country’s economy, culture, and social life. However, A. K. Bhatia argues that in the countries, “where tourism is not yet fully developed or is beginning to develop as is the case in many developing countries, better results can be achieved if the industry is centralised and under direct government control. In such countries direct government intervention would seem to be not only desirable but indispensable” (1991, 83).

A. K. Bhatia provides a list of twelve factors influencing the growth of international tourism; three of them are related to business, thus, favouring business tourism development: “an enormous growth in international business, necessitating travel; conferences and business meetings are proliferating; ideological pressure groups (political, cultural, scientific, etc.) hold more and more annual conventions, etc.” (1991, 29-30). “Business tourism is a lucrative, fast-growing segment of the world’s largest industry sector. Good niches in business tourism exist for developing and transition economies. These countries can market themselves as cost-effective, yet exotic locales, where corporate objectives can be met in a rejuvenating setting” (International Trade Centre web page). This implies that Latvia can take an advantage of occupying a niche in the business tourism global market.

Attraction of international business travellers to a country is essential, as their expenses in a destination place appear to be quite high. Many scholars state that business travellers are less price-sensitive than leisure travellers (Go and Pine, 1995, 77; Bhatia, 1991, 35) “spending on average twice as much per day” (International Trade Centre web page). F. M. Go and R. Pine maintain that “meetings and conventions typically result in considerable sums spent on banquet and meeting rooms facilities, guest rooms and food service. In some cases conference traffic can be scheduled to occupy a hotel during off-peak periods” (1995, 78). Moreover, the amount of money spent by a business tourist is increased by expenses on pleasure and entertaining activities; results of the research conducted by the International

Trade Centre show that “two-thirds of business travellers extend their business trips for pleasure when they can” (International Trade Centre web page).

“Conventions represent the highest incidence of business travel, and both conventions and corporate meetings are on the rise as the pace of international business accelerates. [...] There is a tremendous opportunity for developing and transition economies to attract meeting and convention traffic through the promotion of “off-the-beaten track” locations, high-quality services and cost-effective options” (International Trade Centre web page). However, a country willing to position itself as a conference destination should consider factors that determine geographical distribution of international conferences described by A. K. Bhatia: “Location of main or subsidiary offices of convention organising associations; availability of sufficient facilities [...] for holding conventions; cost factors [...]; accessibility to the convention centre; location of convention venue in relation to potential participants; availability of tourist attractions [...]; importance of convention venue in relation to the convention field; congenial atmosphere for holding conventions; effective marketing and promotional functions of the organisers” (1991, 191-192).

For the analysis of the data N. P. Nickerson’s model of six travel experience phases is applied. The model is described in more details in the part 5.1 Theoretical Framework.

The study of the tourism industry in Latvia by the authors of the thesis was mainly made on the basis of a collection of articles from the international scientific conference devoted to sustainable tourism development. The authors of the articles approach a number of problems related to the tourism industry. For example, J. Bçrziða et al. come to the conclusion that information on many Internet sites about Latvia is imprecise and irrelevant; moreover, the most popular web sites about Latvia do not provide information in German, Finnish, Russian, Lithuanian, and Estonian, which are the languages spoken by the target group (2003, 30-33). I. Bruksle discusses specifics of price formation in tourism and states that attractive prices can stimulate development of tourism in Latvia (2003, 63-66). A. Medne makes an analysis of the state taxation policy impact on development of the tourism industry (2003, 206-210). M. Živitere et al. emphasise that co-operation of tourism enterprises and higher schools providing education in tourism related programmes is essential, as it will increase correspondence of the education to the actual requirements of the tourism industry. Thus, allowing to achieve higher standards in the tourism labour market (2003, 339-343).

3 Methodology

This research is based both on primary and secondary data, which was obtained by different methods. In this section of the thesis the main methods, which were applied when collecting the data, justification of these methods, and sample are discussed. Then, a discussion of reliability, validity, and quality of data follows.

3.1 Primary Data

The primary data for this study was collected by both qualitative and quantitative methods in order to gather opinions of different experts and obtain quantitative information to support experts' views and get deeper understanding of the research problem. According to P. Brunt, qualitative methods help to gather a great amount of information from few individuals and find out their opinion about certain issue (1997, 17).

At the beginning of the research the authors had personal communication with three experts in the tourism industry (See Appendix 2), and during this communication a semi-structured interview method was applied (See Appendix 3). By this method it was possible to obtain general information about the business tourism industry in Latvia and discover the experts' opinions about the given questions. Furthermore, the acquired information helped to define the focus of the study, namely the conference tourism, as this is one of the least developed fields in the tourism industry in Latvia. Afterwards, two questionnaires for semi-structured interviews were designed (See Appendices 4 and 5). One of them was applied when communicating with seven employees of the leading conference organising and destination management companies in Latvia (See Appendices 2 and 4). Whereas another questionnaire was used in interviews with representatives of four hotels providing accommodation to conference tourists (See Appendices 2 and 5). During these interviews more information about the conference tourism was gathered, which allowed to make initial conclusions and identify certain problems in the industry. Moreover, the authors observed behaviour of the interviewees during the conversation to see whether the information given by a person could be relied on.

Before conducting interviews one has to define a population to make it clearer how a sample for the study is chosen. According to P. Brunt, a population can be both finite and infinite (1997, 59). The population of this research method consists of all people who work in Latvia's organisations related to conference tourism (travel agencies, destination management companies, transportation, hotels, and others) and can be considered to be finite because the whole population is known and it is possible to count it. The sample consists of employees working in the leading conference tourism related companies in Latvia, and the majority of

them occupy the highest positions (director and manager) or positions directly related to conference tourism.

Reliability, according to N. K. Malhotra, is the extent to which results would be the same if the research were repeated at a later time or with a different sample (1999, 281). The results of this research are reliable because if the same questions were asked to people working in the conference tourism industry after a short period of time, the interviewees would probably give the same answers as the questions are clearly formulated and do not have hidden meanings. Moreover, as the conference tourism field in Latvia develops quite slowly, the answers of the interviewees will not change significantly if the same interview is conducted in the nearest future. However, the given answers could be influenced by important events in the tourism industry or economy of Latvia. The quality of the obtained data is relatively high, as experts, top companies' employees, and representatives of the leading hotels were interviewed.

In relation to validity, both internal and external validity exist. "Internal validity is the degree to which research measures what it is supposed to measure" (Lundahl and Skarvad, 1992, as cited in Cardelius and Lundborg, 1999, 27). Internal validity of this research was checked by pilot testing of the questions to be sure that respondents understood the questions correctly. Three respondents were asked to participate in the pilot test. If something was unclear, it was recommended to ask questions and make suggestions to increase clarity of these questions before going to interviews with sample representatives.

External validity measures if the results obtained during the interviews can be generalised to the whole population. In the case of this study external validity exists because the interviews were conducted with the employees from almost all Latvia's leading companies in conference tourism. Therefore, taking into account the abovementioned facts, one can see that internal and external validity applies in the case of this research method and its results.

Another way of gathering the primary information is quantitative methods, which, as stated by P. Brunt, "rely on numerical evidence" (1997, 16). Two different self-completion questionnaires (See Appendices 6 and 7) were created. A link to an electronic version of the questionnaires was sent via electronic mail to conference visitors who had visited conferences in Latvia and to people who had never been at conferences in Latvia (potential conference visitors), although they are active conference visitors in other countries. The responses of the second group will make it possible to find out the main reasons for not coming to Latvia.

Both questionnaires include close-ended questions, namely multiple choice, scale evaluation, and yes/no questions. According to P. Brunt, the major advantages of self-

completion questionnaires are that a “large number of questionnaires can be distributed quickly and cheaply, respondents can complete questionnaire at leisure, and it removes possibility of interviewer bias” (1997, 27). Therefore, in this case for collecting data from a large number of respondents this method is preferred to qualitative methods such as interviews and focus groups. Moreover, conference visitors are busy and do not have time for interviews. Furthermore, it is difficult to gather several experts or conference visitors for a focus group, as their time is already scheduled for their businesses. Besides the major advantages of a self-completion questionnaire discussed above, several negative aspects can be identified. As stated by P. Brunt, the response rate could be relatively low and the questionnaire could be filled in by the “wrong person” (1997, 28). Furthermore, the questions have to be simple and understandable, but this problem has been overcome by formulating the questions in a simple manner and avoiding ambiguous words and hidden meanings.

After examining appropriateness of the method chosen, the population and sample should be defined. The population consists of visitors who have been at conferences in Latvia and people who have not been at conferences in Latvia, but they are potential conference visitors. This population is infinite, as it is not feasible to count all existing and possible conference visitors. The sample includes 1,965 people who were sent the link to the questionnaires by electronic mail. Representatives of the population and sample are concentrated geographically in Europe and North America because according to the interviews, representatives of these locations usually visit conferences in Latvia. Tourists who had visited conferences in Latvia were contacted. In addition, representatives of educational, social, economic organisations, and employees of large companies abroad were asked to participate in the survey.

Concerning reliability of the self-completion questionnaire, the respondents would probably choose the same answers in multiple choice questions when asked to fill in the questionnaire again because these questions are related to persons’ travelling habits, which do not change significantly over a short period of time. However, as scale evaluation questions are included in the questionnaire, the answers may depend on the mood and other influencing factors at the moment when a person answers the questions. Furthermore, the fact that it is unknown who fills in the questionnaire in reality can influence the quality of the data.

Concerning internal validity of this research method, the self-completion questionnaire was pilot tested; seven people were asked to read and think aloud about the given questions, and their suggestions were taken into account when forming the final version of the questionnaire. In relation to external validity, as the response rate for the questionnaire

distributed via electronic mail is relatively high, 19.24%, the results are valid and can be generalised to existing and potential conference visitors living in Europe and North America.

3.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data supports the information which was obtained during the interviews and from the survey and helps to identify patterns or trends existing in the conference tourism industry. For the purpose of this thesis secondary data was taken from such sources as statistical bulletins, brochures about conference venues, materials provided by the tourism agencies in Latvia, and web pages from the Internet. These secondary data sources are of quite high quality and reliability, especially statistical bulletins and materials provided by the tourism agencies. In relation to the Internet sources, as government and recognised organisation web pages were used in the study, this information is considered reliable as well.

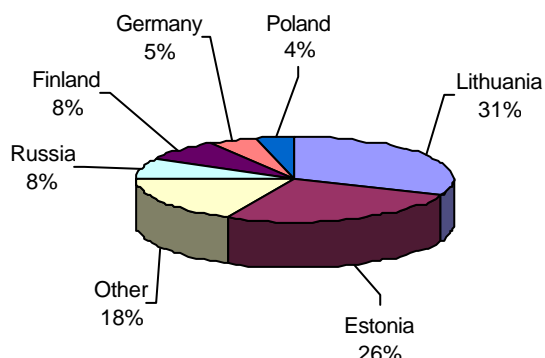
4 *Statistics on Business Tourism Development in Latvia*

Before proceeding with an analysis of the inbound conference tourism in Latvia, it is necessary to observe existing trends in this industry as well as development of the business tourism sector during the previous years. The CSBL does not provide separate data of the conference tourism but includes it into aggregated data of the business tourism in Latvia.

According to the CSBL, the amount of inbound travellers to Latvia increases each year starting from 1998, for example, it has increased from 2,039.3 thousand people in 2001 to 2,273.5 thousand people in 2002 (2001, 29; 2003, 29). One of the reasons why nowadays Latvia is more visited than before is that there is more tourism information available abroad, which, as stated by people working in the tourism industry in Latvia, is distributed through different information channels. Some examples of such channels are the Internet, exhibitions of tourism companies, and sometimes people who have been in Latvia.

A trend of travellers by a country of residence can be observed, there are certain countries people from which regularly visit Latvia. The largest proportion of people travelling to Latvia

Chart 1. Travellers by Country of Residence



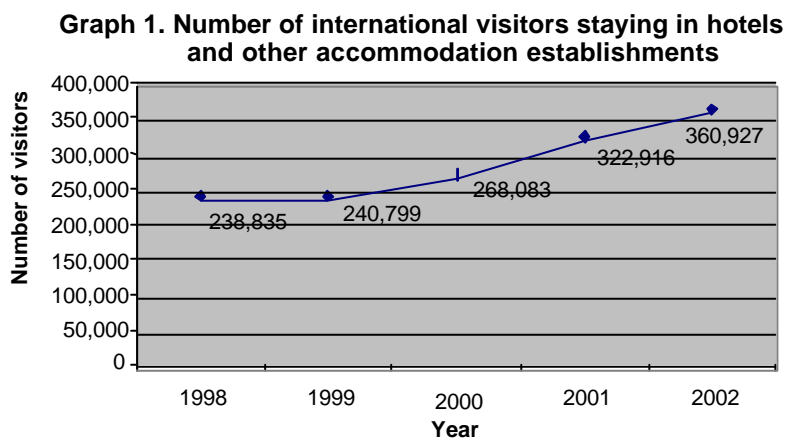
come from Lithuania and Estonia (See Chart 1), which is natural, as they are the neighbouring countries of Latvia. The next most represented countries residents of which visit Latvia are Russia and Finland, which is also not strange because Russia

Source: CSBL. 2003. 30.

is a neighbouring country and Finland is quite close to Latvia. In addition, a ferry regularly goes from Finland to Estonia, and afterwards it does not take much time to come to Latvia.

If to compare a proportion of visitors arriving to Latvia from different countries in 2003 with that of the previous years (2000-2002), one can observe that these proportions have not changed during these years dramatically (CSBL, 2001, 30; 2002, 30; 2003, 30). This fact means that approximately the same percentage of all Latvia's visitors comes from a certain country each year. At the same time, a percentage of visitors coming from a group of other countries increases each year, which, according to people working in the tourism industry in Latvia, implies that nowadays people who live not very close to Latvia have more possibilities to be informed about this country than before. Therefore, as it was stated in the personal communications, more attention has to be paid to how Latvia's representatives position and advertise Latvia as an interesting and good place to visit. There are still many potential visitors of Latvia all around the world, and one of the most crucial issues is to improve promotion and information distribution about Latvia abroad.

The tourism industry is strongly related to the hotel industry because, according to statistics, an average length of stay of travellers in Latvia was 2.1 visitor nights in 2002,



Source: CSBL, 2001, 54; 2002, 54; 2003, 54.

which is slightly longer than in the previous years, when it was 1.8 visitor nights (CSBL, 2003, 35). The number of international visitors staying in hotels and other accommodation establishments increases each year (See Graph 1).

Tourists have different purposes for travelling such as visits to relatives or friends, holidays, business, health treatment, sport, shopping, studies, and transit. In fact, the majority of all inbound travellers come to Latvia with a business purpose, which was 20% of all the visitors in 2002 or 455.3 thousand people (CSBL, 2003, 30). 38% of all travellers staying in hotels or other accommodation establishments in 2002 were tourists coming to Latvia with a business purpose, and this proportion has not changed during the last three years.

Taking into account the abovementioned information, one can observe that travellers who come to Latvia with a business purpose play an important role in the tourism industry of

Latvia. In addition, business people leave a large amount of money in Latvia paying for different goods and services. Their spending in Latvia amounted to LVL 40.3 millions⁴ in 2002, which was 50% of the total tourist expenditure, and this proportion was the same in the previous year as well (CSBL, 2003, 35; 2002, 35).

In order to have a broader look at the tourism industry in Latvia, the industry imports and exports should be taken into account. According to a Latvia's Balance of Payments Quarterly Bulletin 2, 2003, travel credit amounted to LVL 98,812 thousands in 2002, from which LVL 41,494 thousands were related to the business travel, and travel debit was LVL -141,406 thousands, from which only LVL -30,627 thousands were connected to the business travel. Altogether, it means that there was a negative balance of payments in the travel industry (LVL -42,594 thousands), but at the same time, considering only the business travel, it can be observed that there was a positive balance of payments (LVL 10,867 thousands) (Bank of Latvia, 2003, 43). Furthermore, the business segment in the tourism industry of Latvia, according to the interviews, can be developed even further, and there are still many potential visitors of Latvia in different countries, to which the information flow about Latvia has to be developed and improved, thus, increasing the positive balance of payments even more.

To conclude, the conference tourism is a part of the business segment in the tourism industry, and until now in relation to the conference tourism no statistical or other data has been summarized in one specific source of information. Therefore, the results and analysis, which follow in the next section, will contribute to the conference tourism industry in Latvia.

5 Results and Analysis

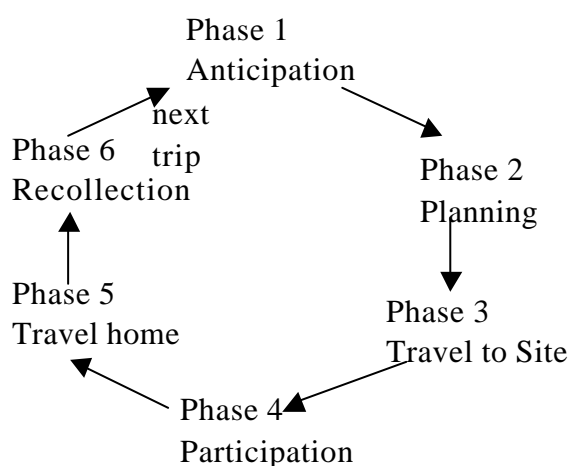


Figure 1. The six travel experience phases
Source: Nickerson, 1996, 36.

5.1 Theoretical Framework

N. P. Nickerson's model of the six travel experience phases (See Figure 1) is applied for the analysis of the obtained data. The current research mainly focuses on the phase *participation*, which is "generally the core of experience" (Nickerson, 1996, 36). However, the other phases are also briefly discussed in the thesis. The study would benefit if an extensive analysis of

⁴ "This figure excludes the travel expenses, expenses incurred on instruction of the employer as well as capital investments."

the travel experience phases *anticipation* and *planning* were made; however, it was omitted from the research due to the following reason. The interviews with employees of the local conference organising companies revealed that decisions concerning a destination country for a conference trip are usually made by convention managers, who are responsible for organisation of a conference, or people possessing similar responsibilities in companies or associations initiating a conference. However, to reach convention managers, in order to receive information about their decision-making process, occurred to be a problematic intent. These people usually do not arrive to a conference with conference tourists; moreover, although local conference organising companies possess contact information of some convention managers, they were reluctant to provide it to the authors due to professional confidentiality issues. Thus, making a detailed analysis of the decision-making process concerning a choice of a conference destination place unattainable.

5.2 Survey Background

The authors received 131 response from people who had already been to at least one conference in Latvia (further in the text this group of the respondents is indicated by the figure I). In addition, the authors received 247 responses from potential conference visitors, who had not been at conferences in Latvia yet, but there is a possibility that one day they may come to a conference (further in the text this group of the respondents is indicated by the figure II). Most of the obtained information is analysed separately for each respondent group (existing and potential visitors); in some cases the information is examined putting these two sample groups together, which in total amounts to 378 responses. When analysing the data, a valid percentage is taken (excluding missing values). Furthermore, all evaluations in the questions where the respondents had to assess certain factors are made on a six-value scale, where 1 corresponds to a very negative response, and 6 corresponds to a very positive one. The six-value scale was chosen in order to give a relatively wide range of answers and avoid a neutral evaluation of factors related to the conference tourism.

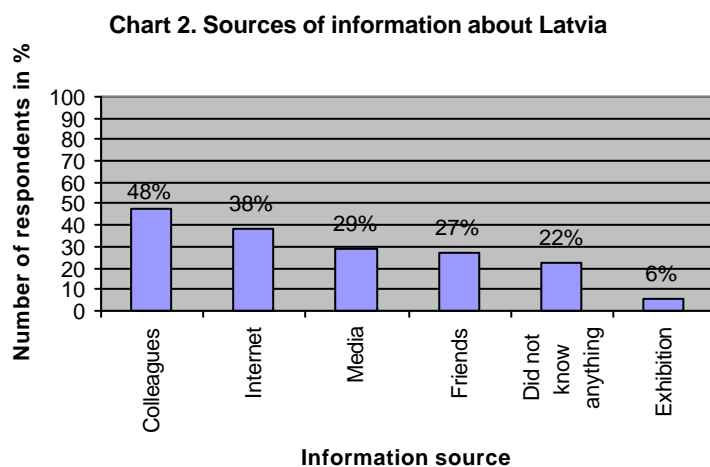
During the fieldwork the link to the questionnaire was sent via electronic mail to both existing and potential conference visitors. The respondents could access the questionnaire on the Internet, fill it in, and then submit it to the database. The results show that 46% of the conference visitors had been to more than one conference in Latvia and 54% of the visitors had been only to one conference. One can observe that quite a large number of people return to Latvia to visit conferences. In addition, it was examined that 63% (I) and 66% (II) were males, and 37% (I) and 34% (II) were females. These proportions are quite similar; men form a bigger part of the conference visitors, which can be supported by the information received

from the industry specialists as well. According to the survey data, the majority, 73% (I) and 78% (II), are 30-59 years old people. To continue, the most represented countries in the survey were USA, Denmark, Lithuania, the UK, Estonia, Sweden, Russia, Poland, and Finland (See Appendix 8). From the given data it is possible to observe and conclude that most of the international conference tourists came to conferences in Latvia from Sweden, the USA, Lithuania, Estonia, and Poland. In relation to the second group, the most responsive people were from Finland, Sweden, the USA, and Denmark.

The abovementioned information is important not only for the tourism industry to plan its supply of different services but also for an entertainment segment, as people of different gender, age, and a country of residence may have diverse perceptions of how to spend their free time in Latvia. Moreover, it is essential to whom and how to advertise Latvia as a good conference place, and therefore, it is good to know who the target audience is.

5.3 Anticipation and Planning

According to N. P. Nickerson, “the first phase is anticipating a trip, in which imagination and enthusiasm develop. [...] The studying of maps, brochures, or travel-related articles helps to build the anticipation” (1996, 35). Further, a tourist starts actual preparation for a trip, which is the *planning* phase of the travel experience. When anticipating and planning a trip to a certain place, it is important to have some information about it, in this case, about Latvia. Currently, as stated by the people working in the conference tourism industry in Latvia, the information flow to foreign countries about Latvia and services it can supply in the tourism industry is quite undeveloped. There are different sources from which travellers can obtain information about a place. According to the combined data from both survey groups, many

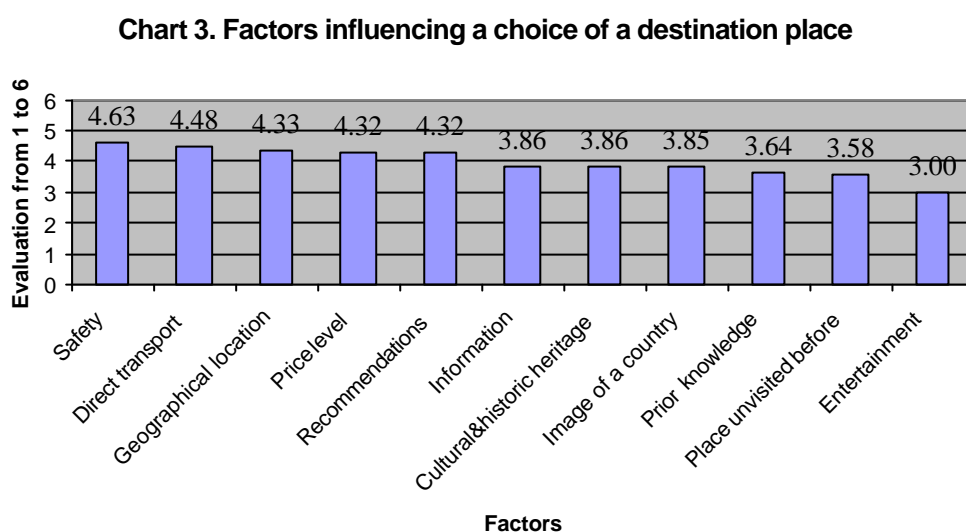


respondents received information about Latvia from colleagues and on the Internet (See Chart 2). In addition, the number of foreigners who did not know anything about Latvia is relatively large, and it is a problematic issue for Latvia and organisations that promote the country.

It is essential to know whether conference participants may choose to come to a certain country themselves or other people decide it. When this is known, one can identify several ways of how to advertise Latvia as a

conference place better and more efficiently. According to the data, 27% (I) and 50% (II) usually take part in choosing a destination place for a conference abroad, which indicates that in relatively many cases visitors have some influence on the decision made.

When a decision to visit a certain country is made, some factors may influence a person's choice on a different level of significance. Looking at the data received from both survey groups, the most significant influence have such factors as safety, 4.63 (on a six-value scale, where 1 corresponds to *does not influence at all*, and 6 corresponds to *strongly influences*) and availability of direct transport to a destination, 4.48 (See Chart 3). Then geographical location, price level, and recommendations about a country follow. At the same time,



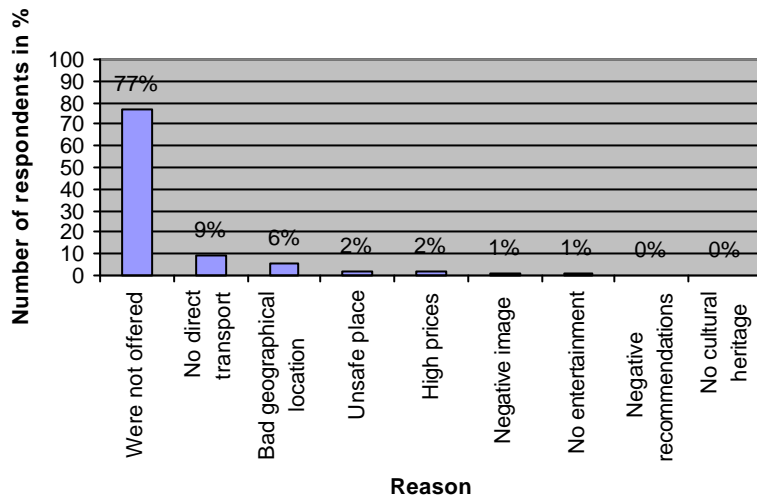
availability of information about a country, cultural and historic heritage, and image of a country have less significant influence than the previously

mentioned factors. Furthermore, the least significant factors are prior knowledge about a country, country as a place unvisited before, and entertainment possibilities.

As a country's image still has some influence on a visitor's decision, it is interesting to know what image of Latvia the conference visitors had before travelling to this country. According to the data, on average people had a *somewhat good* image of the country. When people were asked whether they would like to come to Latvia once more, 96% (I) gave a positive answer, which means that in general tourists like Latvia as a visiting place.

No respondents from the second group said that they had not visited Latvia because of negative recommendations and lack of cultural heritage. Moreover, such reasons as unavailability of direct transportation, bad geographical location, unsafe place, high prices, negative image of Latvia, and lack of entertainment possibilities were named only by some respondents. The reason mentioned by many potential conference visitors for not coming to Latvia, 77%, was that they had not been offered this possibility (See Chart 4). When the same group of people (II) were asked if they would like to come to Latvia, 94% expressed their

Chart 4. Reasons for not coming to Latvia



willingness to visit Latvia.

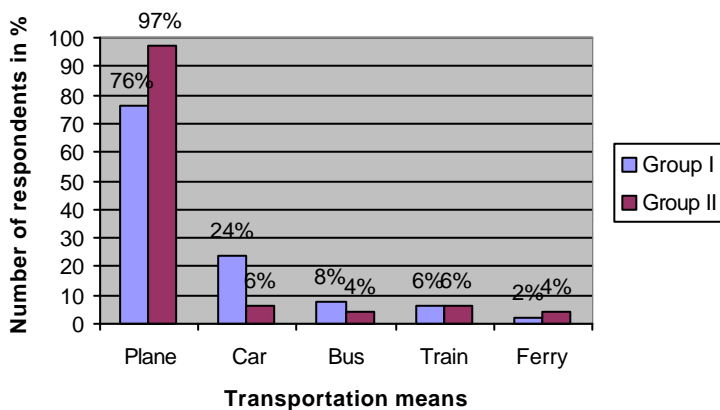
From this information it can be inferred that there is high potential for attracting these people. It is worth advertising Latvia as a good conference place because many people have not been here and have expressed their enthusiasm about coming to Latvia. Some respondents stated, “You have

to make more advertisements to get your country well-known among people,” or “the Baltic States altogether are almost unknown to the Central and Eastern Europe.”

5.4 Travel to Site and Travel Home

Two travel experience phases of the model, *travel to site* and *travel home*, are related to transportation. In addition, as one can see from the information above, transportation possibilities to a destination place influence a person’s willingness to travel to a certain country; therefore, this issue is discussed in more details. Given the data of the survey, only

Chart 5. Transportation to a destination



14% (I) and 8% (II) do not receive compensation for transport expenses. There are different transportation means by which people can arrive and depart from Latvia. According to the data, the majority of conference visitors travel by plane while only a small number of the respondents travel by car, bus, train, and ferry (See Chart

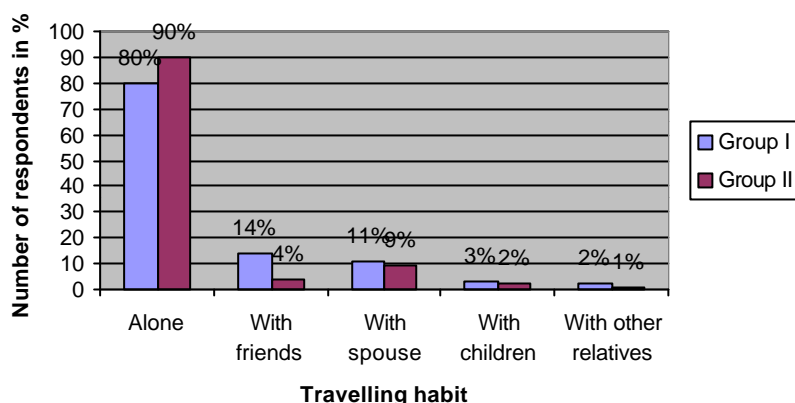
5). Although from this information it can be seen that air transportation plays a significant role, currently Latvia has direct flights only from such cities as Helsinki, Tallinn, Moscow, Kiev, Vilnius, Vienna, Warsaw, Prague, Berlin, Copenhagen, Minsk, Hamburg, Brussels, Amsterdam, Frankfurt, London, and Stockholm (RIX – Riga International Airport web page), which is not enough if Latvia wants to attract visitors also from other countries. Nowadays saving of time is important, and therefore, direct flights are preferred.

The survey participants who had visited conferences in Latvia were asked to evaluate transportation to Latvia, and participants who had not been at conferences in Latvia were asked to evaluate their expectations about transportation. The results show that on average transportation to Latvia is evaluated as 4.49; timetable, 4.28; and service during the trip, 4.33 (for the answer distribution of these and other evaluated factors see Appendix 9). It means that the first group of the respondents consider that these factors are *somewhat good*. However, the second group of the respondents evaluated their expectations about the same factors only as 3.76, 3.60, and 3.94 respectively, which is slightly worse than the first group stated. All in all, people who have been at conferences in Latvia have a more positive evaluation than those who have not been at conferences in Latvia. According to the interviews as well as the survey data, transportation to and from Latvia is still undeveloped, it costs much to come to Latvia, and the service level should be improved. Moreover, some respondents expressed their opinion about low availability of information about transportation to Latvia and its prices.

5.5 Participation

The travel experience phase *participation* includes all the activities in which visitors take part and services that they receive at the final destination, which in the given analysis is Latvia. *Participation* can be regarded as the main part of the travel experience because tourists undergo all other phases of travel in order to visit a destination place and participate in specific activities there, after which they return to their countries of origin possessing certain impressions and recollections about their visit. Therefore, issues related to this phase are discussed in greater details than issues related to other travel experience phases. This part concentrates on discussion of such issues as accommodation, conference venues, conference participation, and additional services required by conference visitors.

Such factor as whether conference visitors travel to conferences abroad alone or with relatives and friends has to be considered, as it can influence several elements of the phase *participation*, namely choice of accommodation, entertainment possibilities, and availability of cultural programmes. The hotel representatives stated that in the majority of cases conference visitors travel alone, which can be explained by the fact that they have quite tense conference schedules, and activities are planned for the whole day. The survey results support this argument and indicate that the majority of tourists travel to conferences alone (See Chart 6). Some visitors specified that they travel to conferences with friends; however, in many cases their friends are also conference participants. Therefore, only some of them influence the elements and conditions of the *participation* phase.

Chart 6. Travelling habits

Although a percentage of tourists who travel to conferences with spouses, children, and other relatives is relatively small, their presence should not be disregarded, and special entertainment and cultural programmes could be

arranged to make their visit to Latvia more interesting and enjoyable. As the percentage of visitors travelling with relatives for both groups is similar, it can be concluded that Latvia as a destination place does not discourage conference visitors from taking their relatives with them. However, the similarity in the percentage between both groups also implies that Latvia has managed to attract the possible amount of relatives who usually accompany conference visitors during their trips and most probably has no potential for further increase in it. In addition, the results of the survey show that conference visitors accompanied by relatives arrive to Latvia not only from the Baltic States but also from more remote countries of origin such as Germany, UK, Canada, and others. Therefore, it cannot be argued that relatives have accompanied visitors to conferences in Latvia because of the destination proximity, most likely they perceived Latvia as an interesting place to visit.

5.5.1 Riga – a Conference Tourism Centre in Latvia

Riga can be regarded as a conference tourism centre in Latvia, which, as it was mentioned in the part 1.4 Delimitations, hosts approximately 95% of all conferences in Latvia that are visited by foreigners. The representatives of the conference organising companies explained that this happens because conference travellers need conference venues equipped with modern technology, tend to require accommodation in four- and five-star hotels, and eat in the best restaurants, which are mainly located in Riga.

Statistics shows that currently there are 4 four-star hotels and 4 five-star hotels in Latvia, of which only one four-star hotel is situated outside of Riga. Moreover, in 2002 only 4,021 out of 103,636 foreign visitors staying in four- and five-star hotels stayed not in Riga (CSBL, 2003, 61). In addition, a proportion of foreign visitors staying in tourist accommodation establishments in other Latvian towns is very small in comparison to Riga (See Appendix 10).

Another factor that hinders development of the inbound conference tourism in other Latvian towns is availability of conference venues. A catalogue “Business Tourism in Latvia 2002/2003” presents an overview of conference venues in Latvia; the provided information allows to infer that there are almost no conference halls outside of Riga that can host large conferences of 250-300 people and can provide all the necessary technical equipment.

Currently there is only one international airport in Latvia providing regular flights, which is located close to Riga, and, according to a representative of a conference organising company, conference visitors are reluctant to travel within a destination country for longer than one hour if there is no necessity in it. Therefore, conferences which are organised in other Latvian towns such as Ventspils, Liepaja, Sigulda, Cesis, and others are rare and are hosted there due to a location of companies working in certain industries or relation of a conference theme to a specific place. Although the number of conferences occurring in other Latvian towns is small, according to the survey respondents who visited conferences in Cesis and Liepaja, people who work in the tourism industry in these towns are quite competent. However, some respondents who had visited conferences in other towns of Latvia evaluated such factors as transportation within Latvia, level of service in restaurants, convenience of a conference venue, and its correspondence to the needs of a conference lower in comparison to the average results for these factors as evaluated by all survey respondents.

From the abovementioned factors it can be concluded that there is a possibility to develop the conference tourism in other Latvian towns that are not remote from Riga and can offer good accommodation, high quality service in restaurants, convenient conference venues corresponding to the required standards and providing all the necessary equipment. Jurmala, which is close to the airport and is located on the seaside, can become one of such towns. Moreover, the survey respondents provided such comments as desire to visit a conference in a city located by the sea and opinion that good conferences can be organised at beach resorts.

5.5.2 Accommodation

The size of organised conferences is one of the determinants for the choice of a hotel for accommodation because visitors coming to a conference preferably should be accommodated in one hotel. According to the conference organising companies, an average size of conferences taking place in Latvia is 200-300 people. However, the local companies working in the conference tourism industry have experience in organisation of conferences and meetings of different size, from 10 to more than 1,000 participants.

Another determinant for the choice of a hotel is availability of a conference venue corresponding to the needs of a conference (in the hotel or close to it). The representatives of

the local conference organising companies mentioned six Riga hotels that are usually chosen for conference visitors; names of the hotels, capacity, and location are provided in the Table 1. From the table it is seen that only four Riga hotels that are suitable for conference visitors can provide accommodation for tourists visiting a conference of the average size in Latvia.

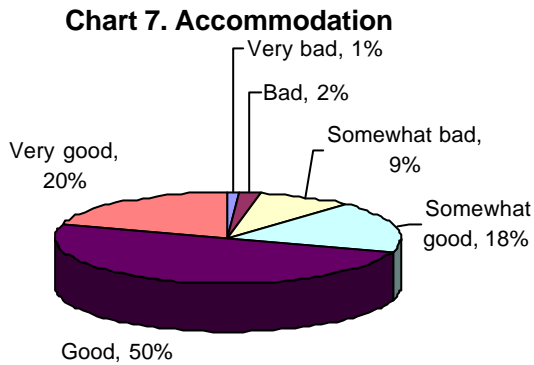
Name	# of Rooms	# of Beds	Location
<i>Reval Hotel Latvija</i>	382	725	Riga centre
<i>Radisson SAS Daugava Hotel</i>	361	605	Outside of Riga centre
<i>Maritim Park Hotel Riga</i>	239	469	Outside of Riga centre
<i>Hotel Konventa Seta</i>	141	276	Old Riga
<i>Park Hotel Ridzene</i>	95	177	Riga centre
<i>Hotel de Rome</i>	88	134	Old Riga

Table 1. Riga hotels typically chosen for accommodation of conference visitors. *Source:* Inspiration Riga, 2002, 24, 26-29; Latvian Tourism Development Agency, 2002, 8, 12-14.

According to the representatives of the hotels and conference organising companies, a type of rooms chosen for accommodation of conference visitors depends on the budget assigned to conference organisation. The results of the survey show that expenses for accommodation are usually reimbursed to conference visitors and only some visitors, 6% (I) and 8% (II), pay for accommodation themselves. Therefore, there is no tendency to reserve the most expensive rooms for conference visitors, as organisations that take the expenses try to achieve a high ratio of quality to price; thus, tending to decrease the expenses. Typically rooms of a similar type are reserved for visitors of the same conference; however, sometimes conference lecturers are provided with rooms of a higher class.

From the information obtained from the hotel representatives it can be concluded that none of the hotels specialises on providing accommodation only to conference tourists. Currently conference visitors represent only 20-30% of hotels' clients, and for smaller hotels the percentage is even lower. Conference visitors stay in a hotel from one to three days; in fact, the length of stay depends on a conference programme, entertainment and cultural activities, which usually occur after a conference. Although conference tourists sometimes are offered to stay longer in a hotel, as it was mentioned by the hotel representatives, they rarely use this opportunity because the date for leaving Latvia is often predetermined, and transport reservation is usually made beforehand.

The survey respondents who had visited conferences in Latvia evaluated accommodation by 4.72 on average. If to look at the answer distribution, only a small part of visitors

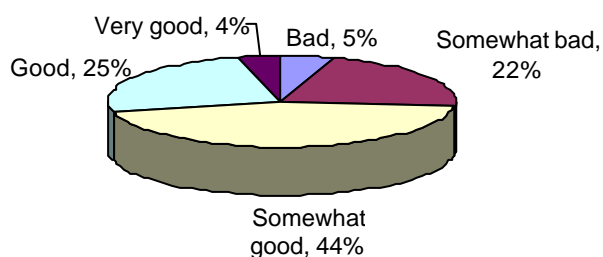


evaluated accommodation as *very bad* and *bad* (See Chart 7). Furthermore, a percentage of the respondents who evaluated accommodation in Latvia as *good* and *very good* is relatively high. The results show that the Latvian hotels manage to provide a satisfactory level of accommodation services.

Nevertheless, some survey respondents had negative experience in relation to accommodation in Latvia, which they revealed in the following comments, money was stolen from a guest's bag in a hotel room, air conditioning system did not work properly in a five-star hotel in summer, hotel room pricing was a disappointment in the price-quality aspect.

The results show that discrepancy exists between the real quality of accommodation provided in Latvia and how it is perceived by people who have not visited conferences in Latvia. The second group of the respondents evaluated the expected accommodation quality in Latvia as 4.01 on average, which is worse than the quality of accommodation provided in reality. In addition, for the expected accommodation quality in Latvia as well as for other factors in relation to which the respondents of the second group were asked to evaluate their expectations, a percentage of missing values is very high, around 25-30%. Such large percentage of missing values is explained by the fact that knowledge of many respondents about Latvia is limited, and they could not evaluate their expectations in relation to that, which was also expressed in their comments. However, as a valid percentage is used for the analysis, the missing values do not affect the results. Significantly lower amount of the potential conference visitors evaluated the expected quality of accommodation as *good* and

Chart 8. Accommodation expectations



very good; whereas the majority of the respondents evaluated the expected accommodation as *somewhat good* (See Chart 8). Although a gap exists between expectations and reality, it is good that only a few potential conference visitors perceive

accommodation in Latvia as *bad*, and none of them perceives it as *very bad*.

5.5.3 Conference Venues

From the interviews it was determined that the local conference organising companies do not have their own conference venues and usually offer those venues to conference visitors that are located in the same hotels where accommodation is provided. However, as there are not many big conference halls in the hotels, for conferences of a bigger size other conference venues such as the Riga Congress Centre, Riga Latvian Society House, and Small Guild are offered (See Appendix 11). Two of these conference venues are located in the Riga centre, and one is situated in Old Riga. Therefore, they are very close to the majority of the hotels in which conference tourists usually stay and can be reached on foot, thus, not causing inconveniences to conference tourists.

In 2003 the Riga Congress Centre has been accepted into the International Congress & Convention Association (ICCA); and at the moment the Riga Congress Centre is the only Latvian organisation that is a member of ICCA in the category of *Congress, Convention and Exhibition Centres* (ICCA web page). According to the interviews, the ICCA membership is awarded only to those organisations that can host different types of conferences on a very high professional level. This membership is important for development of the conference tourism because it can help to communicate a message to potential conference visitors and organisers abroad that Latvia is a place where a consistent level of conference services and facilities is provided. However, despite the ICCA membership, some local conference organising companies providing services to foreign visitors do not consider that the Riga Congress Centre is an appropriate and modern conference venue and avoid offering it to their customers, preferring other venues.

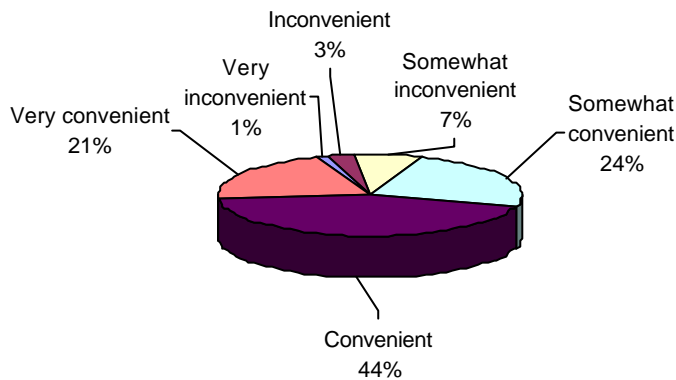
According to the hotel representatives, currently a sufficient quantity of conference venues is provided in Riga; however, several problems exist. First of all, there are not many conference venues where a high level of conference services is provided. Secondly, there are not many big conference halls in Latvia, so that conference organisers do not have much choice of venues for conferences of a bigger size. Consequently, the conference tourism in Latvia can benefit if more modern venues with a large capacity and high level of conference services is provided, which was also expressed in the following comment of a survey respondent who had visited a conference in Latvia, “more modern conference space”.

Almost all Riga’s conference venues in the hotels and other places that were mentioned above provide standard conference equipment, microphones, headsets, overhead projectors, VCRs, TV sets, flip charts, screens, and simultaneous translation facilities (Inspiration Riga,

2002, 22, 24, 26-29; Latvian Tourism Development Agency, 2002, 8-9, 12-14). The hotel representatives consider that the conference venues and services of their hotels correspond to the standards required by conference visitors and are not worse than those in many other European countries. Moreover, the hotels constantly follow technology development and enrich their equipment base; some hotels possess technology for videoconferences, wireless Internet, and wireless presentations.

In fact, the confidence of the hotel representatives in high standards of the conference venues in Riga is justified. The survey respondents who had visited conferences in Latvia evaluated convenience of conference venues quite high on average, 4.71. The largest part of

Chart 9. Conference venue convenience



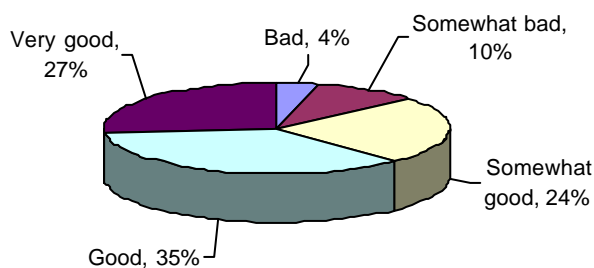
the respondents considers that conference venues in Latvia are *convenient* and *very convenient* (See Chart 9).

Although only a small part of the respondents gave a low evaluation of this factor, a large percentage of the respondents who chose a *somewhat convenient*

evaluation should be taken into consideration. Conference visitors spend much time of their visit at a conference venue, and if they are not completely satisfied with it, the overall impression about their visit can be spoiled.

Another criterion that the respondents were asked to evaluate is correspondence of a conference venue to the needs of a conference. The average result for this factor is also relatively high, 4.71. The distribution of answers is similar to that of the previous factor, a large number of the respondents consider that correspondence of a conference venue to the needs of a conference is *good* and *very good*; only some conference visitors evaluate it as

Chart 10. Venue correspondence to needs



bad; and approximately one fourth of the respondents consider that a conference venue only partly corresponds to the needs of a conference (See Chart 10).

Therefore, conference venue

providers should not stop at the standards that have been already achieved and aim at better satisfaction of needs of conference visitors in relation to conference venues.

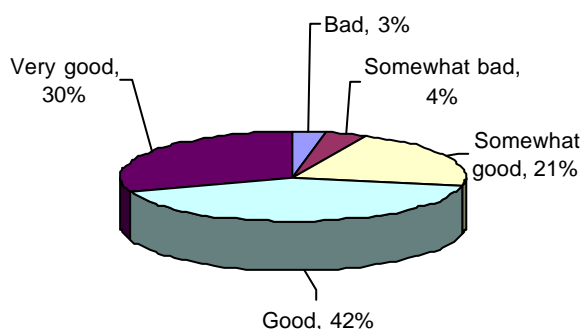
A perception gap is also observed in the evaluation of the factors discussed above. On average the expected convenience of conference venues in Latvia and their correspondence to the conference needs as evaluated by the second group of the respondents is lower than in reality, 3.97 and 3.96 respectively. In total 30% of this group respondents believe that conference venues in Latvia are *somewhat inconvenient* and worse. However, a cumulative percentage of conference tourists who had visited conferences in Latvia and evaluated this factor as *somewhat inconvenient* and worse is only 11%. Furthermore, correspondence of conference venues to the needs of conferences was evaluated by 32% of the potential conference visitors as *somewhat bad* and worse; however much fewer respondents who had been to conferences in Latvia, 14%, evaluated this factor on the same low level.

5.5.4 Conference Participation

The survey results indicate that expenses for conference participation are typically compensated to conference visitors, whereas only 6% (I) and 9% (II) of the respondents take a conference fee as a personal expense. Therefore, an assessment of practical organisation of a conference by its participants discussed below is unbiased, as they were not subconsciously influenced by the price-quality relation.

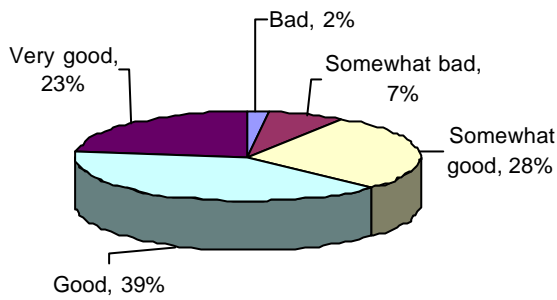
Technical organisation of conferences hosted in Latvia was positively evaluated by the survey respondents, 4.93. It is a good achievement of conference organisers that almost one third of the respondents assessed technical organisation of conferences in Latvia as *very good*; moreover, many conference visitors evaluated this aspect as *good* (See Chart 11). The

Chart 11. Conference technical organisation



fact that only a few conference visitors consider technical organisation of a conference *bad* and *somewhat bad* indicates that not many improvements need to be made in this aspect. However, expectations of the potential conference visitors concerning the discussed issue again appear to be

wrong. On average they evaluate the expected level of conference technical organisation as 4.06, which is worse than in reality.

Chart 12. Conference timing

The survey respondents were offered to assess timing as one of the aspects of technical organisation of a conference. On average it was evaluated a little bit worse than technical conference organisation in general, 4.74. The answers are concentrated on the positive side, where a cumulative percentage of values *somewhat good*, *good*, and *very good* amounts to 90% (See Chart 12). However, a large proportion of conference visitors evaluating timing as *somewhat good* implies that improvements in this aspect still need to be made. In addition, discrepancy between the reality and expectations, which were assessed as 4.02, is also present in the aspect of conference timing.

The survey results allow to conclude that in general practical aspects of conferences organised in Latvia correspond to requirements of incoming conference visitors. In total 87% of the respondents who have participated in conferences in Latvia admit that practical aspects were arranged as the conference visitors had expected and better.

Although the content of conferences is not aimed to be discussed in the thesis, some insights concerning this aspect are provided. According to the interviews, both conferences related to a certain sphere and corporate conferences are organised in Latvia. Currently the number of corporate conferences and meetings organised in Latvia exceeds that of conferences arranged by professional associations, political and economic organisations. Therefore, Latvian conference organisers have to aim for attraction of a larger number of sphere and industry specific conferences by improving communication with professional associations, political and economic organisations, especially in European countries.

Combined results of both survey groups, those who have visited conferences in Latvia and who have not done so, show that although both the content and technical organisation of a conference are important factors for participants, the importance of the content is still higher than that of technical aspects. On average the importance of the conference content was assessed by 5.49, and technical organisation of a conference was evaluated as 4.73. The conference content is considered to be *very important* by 64% of the respondents, whereas only 21% of the respondents consider technical organisation to be of the same high level of importance. Therefore, although the Latvian conference organising companies and

conference venue providers should deliver high standards of technical conference organisation, still much depends on the content of conferences, which is often not determined by any player of the conference tourism industry in Latvia. However, in cases when Latvian conference organisers are responsible for the conference content, special attention should be paid to selection of a conference theme, lecturers, and information presented.

5.5.5 Additional Services

Besides services directly related to conferences and their organisation, conference tourists also require additional services, which are standard services provided to other types of tourists as well. During the interviews the representatives of the hotels and conference organising companies mentioned that conference tourists typically ask for restaurant services, excursions, cultural and entertainment programmes, and transportation within Latvia.

According to the survey results, expenses for transportation within a destination country and food are typically reimbursed to conference participants. Only 22% (I) and 15% (II) of the respondents do not receive compensation for transportation within a destination country, and 27% (I) and 28% (II) of the conference tourists pay for food themselves. However, entertainment and excursions services are reimbursed only to some conference visitors. 54% (I) and 85% (II) of the respondents pay personally for entertainment; 41% (I) and 79% (II) of the conference tourists do not receive compensation for excursions. The results show that a percentage of those tourists who receive compensation for entertainment and excursions is significantly larger among the respondents who have visited conferences in Latvia than among those who have not done so. This fact can positively influence the number of conference tourists willing to get acquainted with the Latvian culture and historical heritage.

Restaurants provide day meal, cater at conferences and banquettes or cocktail parties, which are usually organised on the final conference day. A level of service in Latvian restaurants and quality of food in them were assessed on average as 4.49 and 4.66 respectively. Not many respondents were dissatisfied by these factors, as cumulatively 85% of the respondents consider that the level of service in restaurants is *somewhat high* and higher, and 88% assessed the quality of food as *somewhat good* and better. However, the results of a survey conducted by Patricia Ltd. reveal some negative aspects of customer service that were mentioned by tourists, “nobody smiles, service too slow, wait/beg to get “bill”, food served too cold, more English language menus”. Therefore, the service level provided in Latvian restaurants should be increased. Furthermore, expectations of the potential conference visitors concerning the level of service in Latvian restaurants and quality

of food appear to be lower than in reality; expectations of these aspects were evaluated as 3.98 and 3.96 respectively.

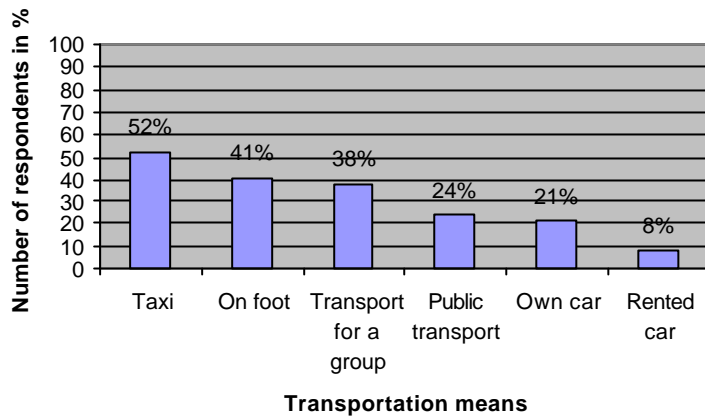
According to the conference organisers, at least one excursion is almost always provided to conference participants. In addition, cultural programmes such as concerts or theatre performance, or entertaining and sports activities are quite often offered to tourists visiting a conference. Many survey respondents in their comments expressed very positive attitudes towards Old Riga, Riga's architecture, especially the Art Nouveau style, and Latvian culture, which one of the respondents characterised as "living, interesting, and unique". In fact, Riga can be considered to be an interesting city for foreigners to visit, which is supported by the fact that in 1997 the centre of Riga was included "into the UNESCO World Heritage List as a city having: 1) a structure and architecture that vividly reflects past historical eras of the city; 2) one of the most diverse and best-preserved collections of Art Nouveau in the world; 3) a city with a large number of old wooden buildings in the centre" (Inspiration Riga & Riga This Week, 5). In addition, excursions to such places of interest as Cesis, Turaida, Rundale, and others can be offered to conference visitors.

The hotel representatives stated that the hotels provide tourist information in different ways. First, booklets containing the main tourist information are available in hotels' rooms. Second, tourists can ask for tourist information at the reception. Third, offices of travel agencies are located in some hotels. The respondents participating in the survey evaluated tourist information availability as 4.37 on average. The fact that 35% of the responses are missing for the evaluation of this factor indicates that tourist information is not necessary for all conference visitors because the respondents were asked to evaluate this factor only if it applied to them. In total 81% of the valid responses correspond to *somewhat good* and better availability of tourism information, which is quite a good result; however, it implies that improvements in this area are also required. Expectations about tourism information availability, similarly to expectations about all other factors of the phase *participation* discussed above, are worse than the reality and were evaluated as 3.88.

As many services require communication of conference tourists with service personnel, it is important that personnel have sufficient knowledge of foreign languages to understand what is asked from them. According to the survey, on average foreign language knowledge of service personnel was assessed as 4.41. A cumulative percentage of the respondents who consider that the assessed criterion is *somewhat bad* and worse is quite high, 23%. Service providers should take this issue into consideration and take actions in order to improve foreign language knowledge of service personnel. Furthermore, the potential conference

visitors believe that service personnel in Latvia have worse foreign language knowledge than it is in reality, and expectations concerning this aspect were evaluated as 3.69.

Chart 13. Transportation within Latvia



The survey results show that the most typical way of transport that was used by the conference tourists within Latvia is taxi and transport provided for the whole group by a conference organiser (See Chart 13). In addition, almost a half of conference tourists being in Latvia travel on foot because almost all

conference venues and hotels in which conference tourists usually stay are situated either in Old Riga or in the centre of Riga. Quite many tourists travelled within Latvia by public transport and own car. The majority of the conference participants who travelled within Latvia by own car came from the neighbouring countries Estonia and Lithuania. Only a small number of the conference visitors rented a car in order to travel within Latvia.

The survey respondents evaluated transportation within Latvia on average as 4.43. In addition, two factors related to it, namely possibility to find a destination place and availability of information about transport, were assessed as 4.59 and 3.97 respectively. The fact that around 40% of the answers related to the issues of transportation within Latvia are missing suggests that most probably respondents' trips within Latvia were quite short and they were unable to evaluate it. It is good for Latvia that none of the respondents evaluated transportation within Latvia as *very bad*. Moreover, cumulatively 84% of the conference visitors assessed this factor as *somewhat good* and better. The problem is observed in relation to the issue of transport information availability; in total approximately one third of the respondents, 34%, consider that information about transport is *somewhat unavailable*. Moreover, some survey respondents expressed negative comments concerning transportation within Latvia, direction signs on the roads are unclear or missing; therefore, making it difficult to find a destination place when travelling within Latvia by car; taxi drivers overcharge foreigners, condition of some roads is bad; the traffic culture is worse than in any western country. Furthermore, transportation within Latvia, possibility to find a destination place, and availability of information about transport are not exceptional in terms of expectations evaluated by the potential conference visitors and were assessed as 3.52, 3.73, and 3.47 respectively, which appears to be a wrong perception of the reality.

5.5.6 Summary of the Participation Phase

The majority of conference tourists travel to conferences alone; however, cultural and entertainment programmes should be offered when conference tourists are accompanied by their relatives and friends. Currently Riga is the Latvian conference centre, where the majority of conferences visited by foreigners take place. However, the conference tourism can be developed also in other towns of Latvia in the future. The analysis shows that the Latvian hotels provide a satisfactory level of accommodation services. Such problems as lack of big conference halls in Latvia and low quality of service provided in some conference venues have been identified. The survey respondents evaluated convenience of conference venues and their correspondence to the technical needs of conferences quite high. Moreover, in general practical aspects of conferences organised in Latvia correspond to requirements of incoming conference visitors. It has been identified that a service level in Latvian restaurants and quality of food in them are acceptable, and not many conference visitors were dissatisfied with these factors. Service providers should take actions in order to improve foreign language knowledge of service personnel. Furthermore, availability of information about transport should be improved. Finally, potential conference visitors who have not visited conferences in Latvia expect that the quality of all elements that are discussed in the *participation* phase of the travel experience is lower than it is in reality. Therefore, the image of Latvia as a good conference destination place should be more efficiently communicated abroad in order to decrease the currently existing gap between perceptions and actual situation.

5.6 Recollection

After leaving a country where a conference took place, conference participants evaluate and share their experience about the time spent in this country. Usually such kind of information is shared with family members, friends, and colleagues, who if have not been in Latvia yet, may be its potential visitors. Therefore, it is essential to be aware of what image of Latvia conference participants have. When people who had been at a conference in Latvia were asked about the overall impression about their visit to Latvia, it was evaluated as a *good* one. Moreover, it is important to observe how the image has changed, comparing what it was before coming to Latvia with what it has become after visiting a conference in Latvia. The results show that before coming to Latvia the travellers of both respondent groups had quite a good image of the country, 4.29 (I) and 4.33 (II) respectively. However, after they have visited Latvia, their image of Latvia has improved, 5.01. It is important that visitors do not keep this good experience just with themselves. If they share their impressions about Latvia, there will be more people willing to visit this country. According to the data, on average the

first respondent group will recommend Latvia to their friends and colleagues as a good conference place for *quite sure*. In addition, as it was stated in the part 5.3 Anticipation and Planning, 96% of them would like to come to Latvia once more. It means that currently one of the most critical issues for the conference tourism industry in Latvia is attraction of people who have not been in Latvia yet. The second group of the survey would *probably* recommend Latvia to their friends and colleagues as a good conference place. The reason for that may be the fact that these people have not been at conferences in Latvia, and therefore, they are not sure whether to recommend visiting conferences in Latvia or not.

To conclude, in general foreign people have quite a good image and impression about Latvia as a place for conference visiting. However, it is essential to recognise that the travellers' image of Latvia improves after they have visited the country. Therefore, people working in the conference tourism industry in Latvia as well as the Latvian government have to find new and effective ways of attracting more conference visitors from a larger diversity of countries. The Latvian government has an important role in financing different activities which contribute to the information distribution about Latvia as a good place for international conferences to be organised.

6 SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis is applied in order to identify “the key issues from an analysis of the business environment and the strategic capability” (Johnson and Scholes, 1999, 190) of the conference tourism industry in Latvia. For future development of the inbound conference tourism in Latvia the industry players have to capitalise on the strengths, eliminate weaknesses, exploit opportunities, and avoid threats (See Table 2 on the next page).

6.1 Strengths

The interviewees mentioned a *good geographical location* of Latvia as one of the strengths of the conference tourism industry. Latvia is situated in the centre of the Baltic States; therefore, when a conference is organised for representatives of the Baltic States, it is convenient to host a conference in Latvia. Moreover, as it has been already mentioned, direct air flights to Latvia are currently available from 18 cities abroad. Although the number of direct flights to other cities needs to be increased, already now it is convenient for people living in those 18 cities or close to them to visit a conference in Riga, as according to the survey, air transport is used by the majority of conference visitors. In addition, as it has been discussed, Riga is a good city for conferences because conference venues and hotels in which conference visitors typically stay are concentrated in the centre of Riga.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good geographical location • New and recently renovated facilities • Rich historical and cultural heritage • Experienced companies operating in the conference tourism industry • Safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large distance from Riga to other big cities in Latvia • High price level • No convention bureau • Transportation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ High prices ◦ Low capacity ◦ Not many direct flights • No large conference venues • Visa regulations • Unsatisfactory quality of education in tourism; no education in conference tourism
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latvia as an unvisited and unknown place • Transportation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Increase the number of direct flights ◦ Increase capacity ◦ Decrease ticket prices • Develop conference tourism in other cities of Latvia • More information abroad • Many potential visitors willing to visit a conference in Latvia • Entrance to the EU • Conferences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Attract a larger number of small and medium size conferences ◦ Develop conditions for large conferences • Joining WTO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of capital and investment • Increased VAT • Weak state and government support • Possible crisis situations in the world • Not many stable customers

Table 2. Summary of the SWOT analysis

Another strength of the industry mentioned during the interviews is that the best *restaurants, conference and accommodation facilities* in Riga have been either *recently built*

or renovated after Latvia regained its independence. Therefore, interior of many conference venues, hotels, and restaurants is modern, comfortable, and pleasant for conference visitors.

Furthermore, Latvia has *rich historical and cultural heritage* with many places of interest not only in Riga but also in other places of Latvia. Some respondents of the survey indicated that when visiting a conference they are more interested in traditions, history, and culture of a destination country rather than in resorts and recreation places.

During the research process the authors of the thesis observed that there are *quite many professional tourism companies* operating in Latvia that specialise and have *experience in the area of business tourism*. These companies provide all services related to organisation of a conference starting from delegate travel arrangements and finishing with organisation of entertainment programmes. Therefore, for foreign organisations that do not possess tourism information about Latvia and want to organise a conference here it is enough to contact one of the companies specialising in business tourism and order all the necessary services.

Finally, the interviewees stated that Latvia is a *safe place* to organise a conference, as it is not involved in any serious international political and military conflicts. While according to the survey results, safety is the most important factor that influences conference tourists' decision for a choice of a conference destination place.

6.2 Weaknesses

Big cities are dispersed over Latvia's territory, and therefore, it takes much time in order to reach other big cities of Latvia from Riga. The situation is worsened by the fact that many roads in Latvia are bad, and as it was mentioned by some survey respondents, there are not enough direction signs on the roads.

In addition, many survey respondents expressed their disappointment regarding a *high price level* in Latvia. The representatives of the conference organising companies and hotels also stated that Latvia is a relatively expensive country for organisation of a conference for foreign visitors, especially for those coming from Eastern and Central Europe.

According to the interviews, one of the most significant weaknesses of the conference tourism in Latvia is *lack of a convention bureau*, which is responsible for promotion of a country as a destination place abroad and provides the requested information about tourism possibilities in a certain country. In other countries convention bureaus are typically state organisations that provide reliable information, as they are not influenced by interests of industry players.

Some weaknesses in relation to *transportation* were mentioned during the interviews. Currently *no cheap airline* companies provide flights to Latvia. Moreover, *capacity* of planes

flying to Latvia *is not large*; therefore, if a foreign organisation or company plans to organise a big conference in Latvia, all the guests from one country cannot fly by one plane, which is very inconvenient. In addition, as it was mentioned above, the number of cities from which *direct flights* to Latvia are available *is not sufficient*.

It has been already discussed that one of the drawbacks of the conference tourism in Latvia is *insufficient number of large conference venues* providing high quality service.

Currently visitors from 39 world countries coming to Latvia do not need entry visas (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Latvia web page). However, according to the interviewees, there are quite *complicated visa regulations* with some countries from which more visitors could come to conferences, as these countries are located close to Latvia, for example, Russia and Belarus.

Finally, although some universities in Latvia provide higher education in the sphere of tourism, according to the representatives of the conference organising companies, the *quality of education* provided there *is not satisfactory*. In addition, *education in the sphere of conference tourism is not offered* in Latvia at all.

6.3 Opportunities

To start with, one of the opportunities for the conference tourism industry in Latvia is that currently *Latvia is an unvisited and unknown place* for many potential conference tourists. As stated by one of the interviewees, Latvia is still a mystical and attractive place for many people who have not been here, including people who make decisions about a destination place, and people's curiosity encourages them to think of visiting Latvia one day. In addition to that, more people choose to visit places where ecological safety is quite high and nature is unpolluted, which is the case in Latvia. Therefore, the conference tourism in Latvia has relatively high potential for attraction of conference tourists that have not been in Latvia yet.

Another opportunity is to *increase the number of direct flights* to other cities in the world, *increase capacity* of airplanes, and *decrease prices* of air tickets, which at present is one of the main reasons why many potential conference visitors do not come to Latvia, as it can be concluded from the obtained survey data.

Moreover, there is potential *to develop the conference tourism* in Latvia not only in Riga but also *in other cities* by providing necessary facilities and improving transportation within Latvia.

The next opportunity is to *provide more information* abroad about organisation of conferences in Latvia. It could be achieved by developing more direct and closer co-operation

with companies abroad, sending and distributing more brochures about conference possibilities in Latvia.

Furthermore, Latvia has quite high potential for attraction of people who have not been in Latvia yet, as according to the obtained survey data, *94% of potential conference visitors are willing to come to a conference in Latvia.*

There is potential to *use the EU funds* for development of infrastructure and marketing of the conference tourism in Latvia. In addition, the *entrance into the EU will make Latvia a better known and recognised country in Europe than it is currently.*

Another opportunity is *to attract a larger number of small and medium size conferences*, as according to the employees working in the conference tourism industry, many conference venues in Latvia have capacity for hosting small and medium size conferences. At the same time, there is a possibility to *develop conditions for hosting large size conferences* by building larger conference venues than are currently available.

Finally, according to the DELFI web page, in 2005 *Latvia will join the World Tourism Organization (WTO)*, and starting already from the next year representatives of the conference tourism industry in Latvia will have an opportunity to participate in different conferences, seminars, and courses related to tourism. In addition, conference tourism specialists from Latvia will be able to receive information about general trends, development, and changes in the world tourism industry. To conclude, there are quite many opportunities for the conference tourism industry in Latvia, which should be utilised by respective authorities and specialists working in the conference tourism industry.

6.4 Threats

Attention has to be paid not only to opportunities but also to potential threats, as they can influence the conference tourism as well. The authors have identified such threat as *lack of capital and investment* in the conference tourism industry, which in the future can decrease the industry's competitiveness in comparison with that in the neighbouring countries.

Second, *changes in the Value Added Tax* for services provided by tourism companies to foreign visitors, which increased from 0% to 18% in 2003, will decrease Latvia's price competitiveness in comparison to that of Estonia and Lithuania (Medne, 2003, 208). As a result, the number of foreign travellers coming to Latvia may decrease during the next years.

Another threat is *weak state and government support* to the conference tourism. Too few resources are provided to this industry, although currently support from the government is very important for the conference tourism, as it only begins to develop.

Next, *crisis situations in the entire world* influence overall tourism trends and people's willingness to travel. Therefore, it is a threat also for Latvia, although the conference tourism in Latvia has not been influenced by any crisis directly and significantly yet.

At last, there are *not many stable customers* in the conference tourism. Such a problem exists because most often conference tourists visit conferences in places where they have not been before or if a country can attract visitors by something unique. Therefore, conference tourism companies in Latvia have to work hard in order to present uniqueness of Latvia to people abroad who make decisions about a place for organisation of a conference.

7 Conclusions

In the thesis the authors have performed the analysis of the current situation of the inbound conference tourism in Latvia. Furthermore, drawbacks and factors that are beneficial for potential growth of the conference tourism in Latvia, which were identified during the research in combination with the results of the SWOT analysis, allowed to determine possibilities for conference tourism future development in Latvia.

First of all, the authors aimed to answer the question:

- What is the quality of the conference tourism provided by Latvian conference organisers to foreign visitors?

Such element of the conference tourism as transportation to Latvia with related to it factors, convenience of timetable and service during the trip, were positively evaluated by conference visitors. The analysis shows that currently Latvian hotels in which conference tourist stay provide a satisfactory service level to its customers. Although local companies working in the sphere of the conference tourism are aware of the fact that the quality of service in some conference venues is quite low, the foreign conference visitors indicated that conference venues in which conferences visited by them took place were convenient and well corresponded to the technical needs of conferences. The conference venues that are usually offered to foreign visitors are equipped with all the necessary technological devices, and a technological aspect of conference organisation was evaluated quite high. The research results allow to conclude that a practical side of conferences hosted in Latvia corresponds to requirements of the majority conference visitors coming from abroad. Furthermore, the respondents consider that tourist information is available, however, not to a very high extent. On average conference visitors were satisfied with the service and quality of food in restaurants. Although foreign language knowledge of service personnel was positively evaluated, still its level should be improved. Finally, transportation within Latvia and

possibility to find a destination place are considered to be satisfactory by conference visitors; however, they indicated that more information about transport should be available. In general, the results show that the quality of all factors of the conference tourism in Latvia is satisfactory for incoming conference tourists, but as no factor was evaluated as perfect, improvements in all aspects of the industry are possible.

The second question answered in the thesis is the following:

- What are possibilities for future development of the conference tourism in Latvia?

The analysis shows that it is possible to develop the conference tourism not only in Riga, where it is concentrated now but also in other cities of Latvia. In order to achieve that, it is necessary to build new conference venues and improve transportation to other Latvian cities. In addition, currently there are not many large conference venues in Latvia that provide a high level of services; therefore, the industry will benefit if large modern conference venues are built. The larger number of conferences can be attracted to Latvia if more information about Latvia is available abroad. Moreover, it is necessary to improve the image of Latvia as a good destination place because potential conference tourists believe that the quality of the conference tourism in Latvia is worse than it is in reality. Local conference organising companies should pay more attention to attraction of potential conference visitors to Latvia, as the majority of foreign conference tourists have not visited Latvia because they were not offered this opportunity but have admitted that they would like to come here. In fact, Latvia possesses many preconditions that will allow to make it a good destination place for organisation of conferences: good geographical location, place unvisited before, rich historical and cultural heritage, safety, and others. Furthermore, factors that make it easier and less expensive to visit Latvia can increase the number of incoming conference visitors. Therefore, the industry would benefit if the government reconsidered the current visa regulations and VAT policy; in addition, airlines providing cheaper flights can be attracted to the Latvian air transportation market. Finally, the entrance to the EU will give a possibility to attract more conferences organised by the EU institutions. To conclude, many possibilities exist which if exploited properly will stimulate future development of the conference tourism industry in Latvia.

8 *Suggestions for Further Research*

The authors of the thesis have some suggestions concerning further research possibilities related to the conference tourism industry in Latvia. First, as for this research the authors did not contact people who take decisions about a destination place for organisation of a

conference, other researchers could contact these people in order to find out what are the reasons for deciding to organise a conference in a certain country. Although the anticipation and planning phases have been analysed in this thesis, it would be necessary to find more information about reasons for choosing a specific country in order to know how to influence decision makers to organise more conferences in Latvia.

Another suggestion is to analyse the conference tourism industry from the economic point of view and discuss how the industry's development influences the Latvian economy as well as other closely related industries, for example, transportation and accommodation.

Moreover, it would be interesting to make economic forecasts.

The next suggestion for further research is to develop a strategy for attraction of a larger number of international conference visitors. In addition to that, one can also describe how this strategy could be implemented and what would be preconditions for the implementation.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Definition of Terms

“**Tourism** is the temporary short-term movement of people to destinations outside the places where they normally live and work and their activities during the stay at these destinations; it includes movement for all purposes, as well as day visits or excursions” (Bhatia, 1991, 38). N. P. Nickerson maintains that the term tourism includes business travel as well as travel for leisure; in addition, he considers that the terms tourism and travel can be used interchangeably (1996, 3).

“**Inbound tourism** is the tourism of non-resident visitors within the economic territory of the country of reference” (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific web page).

“**Traveller** – any person on a trip between two or more countries or between two or more places within his/her country of residence” (CSBL, 2002, 74). In some literature sources the term tourist is distinguished from the term traveller by the length of stay, so that a tourist is “a visitor whose visit is for at least one night” (Yonell, 1996, 225). However, in the frames of this research the words traveller and tourist will be used interchangeably with the meaning of the former.

“**Business tourism** is the category of the travel and tourism industry concerned with travel for business purposes, rather than travel for leisure purposes (leisure tourism). Business tourism includes travel for meetings, exhibitions, trade fairs, conferences, conventions and incentive travel” (Yonell, 1996, 33).

“**Conference**: a gathering of people for the purpose of information exchange, analysis and discussion. Conferences in general, across all sectors of industry, are an important element in business tourism” (Yonell, 1996, 49). Yonell provides identical definitions to the terms conference, congress, and convention (1996, 50, 52); these words will be used interchangeably in the text of the given research. In addition, for the purposes of this work the term conference includes both corporate and professional conferences.

Conference tourism is business travelling with the aim to visit a conference.

Appendix 2: List of Personal Contacts

Contacts with tourism industry experts:

- Latvian Tourism Development Agency, Head of Marketing Division, Liga Miesniece, personal communication on July 22, 2003.
- Patricia Ltd, General Manager, Michael Arthur Johnson, personal communication on September 10, 2003.
- Inspiration Riga, Managing Director, Igors Klapenkovs, personal communication on September 12, 2003.

Contacts with employees of companies related to the conference tourism:

- Via Riga Travel Agency, Marketing Manager, Pauls Gusts, personal communication on October 8, 2003.
- Riga Congress Centre, Director's assistant, Janis Kucenko, personal communication on October 8, 2003.
- Baltic Travel Group Ltd, Travel Consultant, Normunds Lams, personal communication on October 13, 2003.
- DMC Via Hansa Ltd, Director, Eva Korchagina, personal communication on October 16, 2003.
- Con-Ex, Latvia Tours group, Director, Gundega Zeltina, personal communication on October 27, 2003.
- BTI TAS, Manager of Inbound Tourism Division, Elga Grikite, personal communication on October 30, 2003.
- RMS Forum, Foreign Relations Manager, Oksana Nestere, personal communication on November 10, 2003.

Contacts with hotel representatives:

- Reval Hotel Latvija, Reservations and Sales Representative, Evelyn Drozd, personal communication on November 3, 2003.
- Park Hotel Ridzene, Sales and Marketing Manager, Anna Abele, personal communication on November 7, 2003.
- Hotel Konventa Seta, Conference Manager, Dace Gagaine, personal communication on November 11, 2003.
- Radisson SAS Daugava Hotel, Sales Assistant, Kaspars Lacis, personal communication on November 13, 2003.

Appendix 3: Questions Asked to Tourism Industry Experts

Questions in English:

1. Is business tourism well developed in Latvia? Why? If not, which factors hinder its development?
2. Into what segments business tourism can be divided? Which of them are the most problematic? Which of them have potential for development in the future?
3. Is business tourism developed only in Riga? Is it worth analysing business tourism in other cities of Latvia? If yes, in which?
4. What actions are done and/or planned to be done by your organisation for attraction of business tourists to Latvia?
5. Will business tourism be a beneficial industry for the Latvian economy in the future?
6. What are drawbacks of business tourism in Latvia?
7. Which factors business tourists evaluate more when searching for a destination country?
8. Work of which organisations in Latvia is related to business tourism?
9. With whom else would you recommend to communicate about business tourism?
10. Does your organisation have statistical data related to business tourism?
11. Have studies or research been done in the area of business tourism in Latvia?
12. Is it possible to distribute questionnaires to business tourists with the help of your organisation?

Questions in Latvian:

1. Vai biznesa tūrisms Latvijā ir labi attīstīts? Kāpēc? Ja nē, kādi faktori aizkavē tā attīstību?
2. Kādos segmentos var iedalīt biznesa tūrisma? Kuri no tiem ir visproblemātiskākie? Kuriem no tiem ir potenciāls nākotnē attīstīties?
3. Vai biznesa tūrisms ir attīstīts tikai Rīgā? Vai ir nepieciešams analizēt biznesa tūrisma citās Latvijas pilsētās? Ja jā, kurās?
4. Ko Jūsu organizācija dara un/vai plāno darīt, lai piesaistītu Latvijai biznesa tūristus?
5. Vai biznesa tūrisms nākotnē būs labvēlīga industrija Latvijas ekonomikā?
6. Kādi ir mīnusi biznesa tūrismam Latvijā?
7. Kādus faktorus biznesa tūristi novērtē vairāk, kad meklē valsti, uz kuru doties?
8. Kuru organizāciju darbs ir saistīts ar biznesa tūrisma?
9. Ar ko vēl Jūs ieteiktu kontaktēties attiecībā uz biznesa tūrisma?
10. Vai Jūsu organizācijai ir statistikas dati saistībā ar biznesa tūrisma?
11. Vai ir veikta izpēte biznesa tūrisma jomā Latvijā?
12. Vai ar Jūsu organizācijas palīdzību ir iespējams izdalīt anketas biznesa tūristiem?

Appendix 4: Questions Asked to Employees of Companies Related to the Conference Tourism

Before interviews it was told to the interviewees that all the questions are related only to those conferences in Latvia which are visited by foreign travellers.

Questions in English:

1. Is conference tourism developed in Latvia? Why? Can it be developed further? How?
2. What are the strengths of the conference tourism in Latvia?
3. What is the size of conferences you usually organise?
4. How many conferences per year do you organise?
5. From which countries people come to conferences?
6. By what transportation means conference tourists arrive?
7. Do you have your own conference halls? If not, which conference halls do you rent?
8. Do you organise conferences also outside Riga? If yes, then in which places or cities?
9. What is a proportion of conferences organised in Riga and other places?
10. In which hotels do you make reservations for your conference tourists?
11. What type of rooms do you reserve for them?
12. Do clients choose themselves which hotels and rooms to reserve or you do it?
13. What are the themes of conferences?
14. What are additional services required by conference tourists?
15. Do you have many stable customers who organise conferences with your help?
16. Do you search for new clients? If yes, then by which methods?
17. How foreign clients can find your organisation?
18. What conference tourists evaluate more when searching for a country, in which to organise a conference?
19. How often you organise excursion tours for your clients?
20. Are there regulations, which negatively affect the conference tourism in Latvia?
21. What are the factors that hinder conference tourism development in Latvia?
22. Have studies or research been done in the area of the conference tourism (or/and feedback from your clients)?
23. Is it possible to distribute questionnaires to conference visitors with the help of your organisation?
24. When in the nearest future will you organise a conference/conferences?

Questions in Latvian:

1. Vai konferenču tūrisms Latvijā ir attīstīts? Kāpēc? Vai to var attīstīt vēl vairāk? Kā?
2. Kādas ir stiprās puses konferenču tūrismam Latvijā?
3. Cik lielas konferences Jūs parasti organizējat?
4. Cik daudz konferenču gadā Jūs organizējat?
5. No kurām valstīm ierodas konferenču apmeklētāji?
6. Ar kādiem transporta veidiem ierodas konferenču tūristi?
7. Vai Jums ir savas konferenču telpas? Ja nē, kuras konferenču telpas Jūs īrējat?
8. Vai Jūs rīkojat konferences arī ārpus Rīgas? Ja jā, tad kurās vietās vai pilsētās?
9. Kāda ir proporcija starp konferenčiem, kas tiek rīkotas Rīgā un citās vietās?
10. Kurās viesnīcās Jūs rezervējat istabas Jūsu konferences tūristiem?
11. Kāda veida istabas Jūs vidēji rezervējat?
12. Vai klienti paši izvēlas, kuras viesnīcas un istabas rezervēt, vai to darīt Jūs?
13. Kādas ir konferenču tēmas?
14. Kādus vēl papildus servīsus konferenču tūristi pieprasa?
15. Vai Jums ir daudz pastāvīgo klientu, kas rīko konferences ar Jūsu palīdzību?

16. Vai Jūs meklējat jaunus klientus? Ja jā, tad ar kādām metodēm?
17. Kā ārzemju klienti var atrast Jūsu organizāciju?
18. Ko konferenču tūristi novērtē vairāk, kad meklē valsti, kur organizēt konferenci?
19. Cik bieži Jūs organizējat ekskursijas Jūsu klientiem?
20. Vai ir kāda reglamentācija, kas negatīvi ietekmē konferenču tūrismu Latvijā?
21. Kas ir tie faktori, kas aizkavē konferenču tūrisma attīstību Latvijā?
22. Vai ir veikta izpēte konferenču tūrisma jomā (vai/un atsauksmes no Jūsu klientiem)?
23. Vai ar Jūsu organizācijas palīdzību ir iespējams izdalīt anketas konferenču apmeklētājiem?
24. Kad tuvākajā laikā Jūs rīkosiet konferenci/es?

Appendix 5: Questions Asked to Employees of Hotels

Before interviews it was told to the interviewees that all the questions are related only to those conferences in Latvia which are visited by foreign travellers.

Questions in English:

1. Is conference tourism developed in Latvia? Why? Can it be developed further? How?
2. What are the strengths of the conference tourism in Latvia?
3. What proportion of all your clients do conference visitors represent?
4. What is the size of conferences that are usually organised in the hotel?
5. How many conferences per year are organised?
6. Are there enough conference venues in Riga, too many, too few?
7. From which countries people come to conferences?
8. By what transportation means conference tourists arrive?
9. What types of rooms are reserved by conference visitors?
10. Do conference tourists usually travel alone or with family, friends?
11. How long on average do conference tourists stay in the hotel?
12. Do associations/companies contact you themselves or do they do it through local travel and DMC? What is a proportion?
13. What are the themes of conferences?
14. What are additional services required by conference tourists?
15. Do conference tourists ask for tourist information, for example, entertainment, transportation possibilities, and excursions?
16. Does the hotel provide such information? How?
17. Do you have many stable customers who organise conferences in the hotel?
18. Do conference venues in the hotel correspond to the standards required by foreign conference visitors?
19. How would you evaluate the conference venues and the equipment in the hotel in comparison to those in other European countries?
20. Are there regulations, which negatively affect the conference tourism in Latvia?
21. What are the factors that hinder conference tourism development in Latvia?
22. Do you have statistics about conference visitors?
23. Is it possible to distribute questionnaires to conference visitors in the hotel or send e-mails with a questionnaire link to conference visitors who stayed in the hotel?
24. When in the nearest future will a conference/conferences be organised in the hotel?

Questions in Latvian:

1. Vai konferenču tūrisms Latvijā ir attīstīts? Kāpēc? Vai to var attīstīt vēl vairāk? Kā?
2. Kādas ir stiprās puses konferenču tūrismam Latvijā?
3. Kādu proporciju no visiem Jūsu klientiem veido konferenču apmeklētāji?
4. Cik lielas konferences parasti tiek rīkotas šajā viesnīcā?
5. Cik daudz konferenču gadā tiek organizētas?
6. Vai Rīgā ir pietiekami daudz konferenču telpas, pārāk daudz, pārāk maz?
7. No kurām valstīm ierodas konferenču apmeklētāji?
8. Ar kādiem transporta veidiem ierodas konferenču tūristi?
9. Kāda veida istabas konferences apmeklētāji rezervē?
10. Vai parasti konferenču apmeklētāji ceļo vieni vai kopā ar ģimeni, draugiem?
11. Cik ilgi parasti konferenču apmeklētāji dzīvo viesnīcā?
12. Vai asociācijas/ kompānijas kontaktē Jūs pašas vai tās to veic caur vietējam tūrisma un DM kompānijām? Kāda ir šī proporcija?
13. Kādas ir konferenču tēmas?
14. Kādus vēl papildus servīsus konferenču tūristi pieprasa?

15. Vai konferenču tūristi jautā pēc tūristu informācijas, piemēram, par izklaidu iespējām, transportu, ekskursijām?
16. Vai viesnīca piedāvā dažāda veida informāciju? Kā?
17. Vai Jums ir daudz pastāvīgo klientu, kas organizē konferences šajā viesnīcā?
18. Vai viesnīcas konferenču telpas atbilst ārzemju apmeklētāju prasībām?
19. Kā Jūs novērtētu viesnīcas konferenču telpas un ekipējumu, salīdzinājumā ar to, kādas tās ir citās Eiropas valstīs?
20. Vai ir kāda reglamentācija, kas negatīvi ietekmē konferenču tūrismu Latvijā?
21. Kas ir tie faktori, kas aizkavē konferenču tūrisma attīstību Latvijā?
22. Vai jums ir kāda statistika par konferenču apmeklētājiem?
23. Vai ir iespējams viesnīcā izdalīt anketas konferenču apmeklētājiem vai nosūtīt elektroniskas vēstules ar saiti uz anketu internētā konferenču apmeklētājiem, kas dzīvoja šīn viesnīcā?
24. Kad tuvākajā laikā viesnīcā tiks organizēta kāda konference/konferences?

Appendix 6: Questionnaire to Tourists Visiting a Conference/s in Latvia



Researchers from Stockholm School of Economics in Riga are currently conducting a study of the *conference tourism in Latvia*. Your participation in the survey is highly valuable because your individual opinion will allow to evaluate correctly the current situation of the conference tourism industry in Latvia and will contribute to its development. The results of the survey will help to improve the quality of services provided to conference tourists visiting Latvia and make your visit more enjoyable.

Your individual answers will be strictly confidential and will be presented only in an aggregated form.

If you would like to receive a copy of the research, please state your e-mail address

.....

In questions for which answers are provided, please, choose one or several answers by ticking a box. Some questions have an evaluation scale with points from 1 to 6, where you have to circle or cross the chosen number.

1. You travel to Latvia

- alone
- with spouse
- with children
- with other relatives
- with friends

2. Have you received information about Latvia before coming here from

- internet
- exhibition
- media
- friends
- colleagues
- did not know anything

3. You arrived to Latvia by

- plane
- bus
- ferry
- car
- train

4. When being in Latvia do you travel by

- own car
- public transport
- rented car
- taxi
- transport provided for the whole group by a conference organiser
- on foot

5. Please, evaluate from 1 to 6:

Transportation to Latvia:	<i>Very bad</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Very good</i>
• Timetable (if it applies to you)	<i>Very inconvenient</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Very convenient</i>
• service level during the trip	<i>Very low</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Very high</i>
Transportation within Latvia: (if it applies to you)	<i>Very bad</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Very good</i>
• possibility to find a destination place (if it applies to you)	<i>Very difficult</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Very easy</i>
• information about transport (if it applies to you)	<i>Completely unavailable</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Easily available</i>
Accommodation	<i>Very bad</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Very good</i>
Tourist information availability (if it applies to you)	<i>Very bad</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Very good</i>
Foreign language knowledge of service personnel	<i>Very bad</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Very good</i>
Level of service in restaurants/cafes	<i>Very low</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Very high</i>
Quality of food in restaurants/cafes	<i>Very bad</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Very good</i>
Technical organisation of the conference:	<i>Very bad</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Very good</i>
• timing	<i>Very bad</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Very good</i>
• convenience of the conference venue	<i>Very inconvenient</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Very convenient</i>
• correspondence of the conference venue to the needs of the conference	<i>Very bad</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Very good</i>

6. Please, indicate expenses for which you do not receive compensation visiting this conference

- conference participation
 accommodation
 transport to Latvia
 transport within Latvia
 food
 entertainment
 excursion

7. Did you take part in choosing Latvia as a place for the conference?

- yes
 no

8. If you could choose a place for a conference abroad, then which factors would influence your choice? Evaluate from 1 to 6.

Safety	<i>Does not influence at all</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Strongly influences</i>
Price level	<i>Does not influence at all</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Strongly influences</i>
Geographical location	<i>Does not influence at all</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Strongly influences</i>
Recommendations	<i>Does not influence at all</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Strongly influences</i>
Prior knowledge about a country	<i>Does not influence at all</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Strongly influences</i>
Availability of direct transport	<i>Does not influence at all</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Strongly influences</i>
Place unvisited before	<i>Does not influence at all</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Strongly influences</i>
Availability of information about a country	<i>Does not influence at all</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Strongly influences</i>
Image of a country	<i>Does not influence at all</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Strongly influences</i>
Cultural and historic heritage	<i>Does not influence at all</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Strongly influences</i>
Entertainment possibilities	<i>Does not influence at all</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Strongly influences</i>
Other (specify) _____ _____	<i>Does not influence at all</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Strongly influences</i>

9. Have you been to more than one conference in Latvia?

yes

no

10. Have the practical aspects of the conference been organised as you expected?
worse than expected 1 2 3 4 5 6 better than expected

11. For you the content of the conference is
very unimportant 1 2 3 4 5 6 very important

12. For you the technical organisation of the conference is
very unimportant 1 2 3 4 5 6 very important

13. What is your overall impression about your visit to Latvia?
very bad 1 2 3 4 5 6 very good

14. Will you recommend Latvia as a good conference place to your friends/colleagues?
never 1 2 3 4 5 6 certainly

15. What image of Latvia did you have before coming here?
very negative 1 2 3 4 5 6 very positive

16. What image of Latvia do you have now?
very negative 1 2 3 4 5 6 very positive

17. Would you like to come to Latvia once more?

yes

no

Personal Information

Sex

male

female

Age

<20

20-29

30-39

40-49

50-59

>60

Which country and city/village are you from?

Your opinion or/and suggestions concerning tourism in Latvia are highly appreciated _____

Thank you for your co-operation!

Appendix 7: Questionnaire to Potential Conference Tourists



Researchers from Stockholm School of Economics in Riga are currently conducting a study of the *conference tourism in Latvia*. Your participation in the survey is highly valuable because your individual opinion will allow to evaluate correctly the current situation of the conference tourism industry in Latvia and will contribute to its development. The results of the survey will help to improve the quality of services provided to conference tourists visiting Latvia.

Your individual answers will be strictly confidential and will be presented only in an aggregated form.

If you would like to receive a copy of the research, please state your e-mail address

In questions for which answers are provided, please, choose one or several answers by ticking a box. Some questions have an evaluation scale with points from 1 to 6, where you have to circle or cross the chosen number.

1. You usually travel to conferences that take place abroad

- alone
- with spouse
- with children
- with other relatives
- with friends

2. Have you ever received information about Latvia from

- internet
- exhibition
- media
- friends
- colleagues
- did not know anything

3. You usually travel to conferences that take place abroad by

- plane
- bus
- ferry
- car
- train

4. Please, evaluate from 1 to 6 your **expectations** about the following items related to **Latvia**:

Transportation to Latvia:	<i>Very bad</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Very good</i>
• Timetable	<i>Very inconvenient</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Very convenient</i>
• service level during the trip	<i>Very low</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Very high</i>
Transportation within Latvia:	<i>Very bad</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Very good</i>
• possibility to find a destination place	<i>Very difficult</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Very easy</i>
• information about transport	<i>Completely unavailable</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Easily available</i>
Accommodation	<i>Very bad</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Very good</i>
Tourist information availability	<i>Very bad</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Very good</i>
Foreign language knowledge of service personnel	<i>Very bad</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Very good</i>

Level of service in restaurants/cafes	<i>Very low</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Very high</i>
Quality of food in restaurants/cafes	<i>Very bad</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Very good</i>
Technical organisation of the conference:	<i>Very bad</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Very good</i>
• timing	<i>Very bad</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Very good</i>
• convenience of the conference venue	<i>Very inconvenient</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Very convenient</i>
• correspondence of the conference venue to the needs of the conference	<i>Very bad</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Very good</i>

5. Please, indicate expenses for which you usually do not receive compensation visiting a conference abroad

- conference participation
 accommodation
 transport to a destination country
 transport within a destination country
 food
 entertainment
 excursion

6. Do you usually take part in choosing a destination country for a conference abroad?

- yes
 no

7. If you could choose a place for a conference abroad, then which factors would influence your choice? Evaluate from 1 to 6.

Safety	<i>Does not influence at all</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Strongly influences</i>
Price level	<i>Does not influence at all</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Strongly influences</i>
Geographical location	<i>Does not influence at all</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Strongly influences</i>
Recommendations	<i>Does not influence at all</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Strongly influences</i>
Prior knowledge about a country	<i>Does not influence at all</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Strongly influences</i>
Availability of direct transport	<i>Does not influence at all</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Strongly influences</i>
Place unvisited before	<i>Does not influence at all</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Strongly influences</i>
Availability of information about a country	<i>Does not influence at all</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Strongly influences</i>
Image of a country	<i>Does not influence at all</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Strongly influences</i>
Cultural and historic heritage	<i>Does not influence at all</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Strongly influences</i>
Entertainment possibilities	<i>Does not influence at all</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Strongly influences</i>
Other (specify) _____	<i>Does not influence at all</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Strongly influences</i>

8. For you the content of a conference is

very unimportant 1 2 3 4 5 6 *very important*

9. For you the technical organisation of a conference is

very unimportant 1 2 3 4 5 6 *very important*

10. Would you recommend Latvia as a good conference place to your friends/colleagues?

never 1 2 3 4 5 6 *certainly*

11. What image of Latvia do you have?

very negative 1 2 3 4 5 6 *very positive*

12. You have not visited conferences in Latvia before because in relation to Latvia you think that

- prices are high
- bad geographical location
- unsafe place
- direct transport is not available
- negative recommendations
- negative image of Latvia
- no cultural heritage
- no entertainment possibilities
- you were not offered to visit a conference in Latvia
- other (specify) _____

13. Would you like to come to Latvia?

- yes
- no

Personal Information

Sex

- male
- female

Age

- <20
- 20-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- >60

Which country and city/village are you from?

Your opinion or/and suggestions concerning tourism in Latvia are highly appreciated _____

Thank you for your co-operation!

Appendix 8: Survey Respondents by Country of Residence

Representation of countries from both groups of the respondents, where I corresponds to visitors who have been to conferences in Latvia, and II corresponds to potential conference visitors to Latvia.

Country	I	II
USA	8.40%	10.12%
Denmark	6.11%	5.26%
Lithuania	8.40%	3.24%
UK	7.63%	4.05%
Estonia	9.16%	2.83%
Sweden	15.27%	17.81%
Russia	5.34%	0.81%
Poland	7.63%	4.05%
Finland	9.92%	10.93%
Other	22.14%	40.90%

Appendix 9: Survey Answer Distribution

All the values are given in percents. I corresponds to visitors who have been to conferences in Latvia, and II corresponds to potential conference visitors to Latvia.

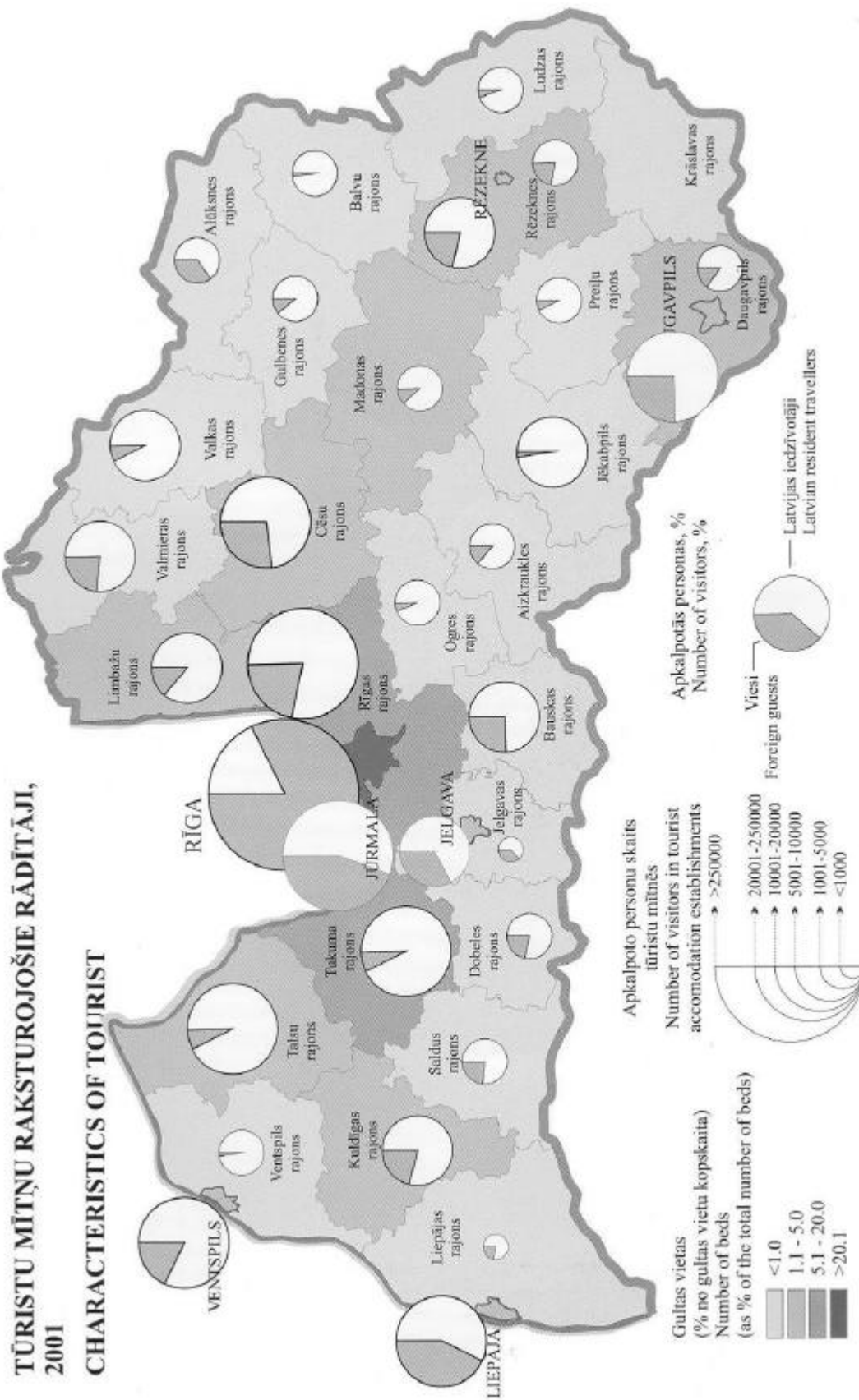
	Transport to Latvia		Timetable		Service level during the trip		Transport within Latvia		Possibility to find a destination	
	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II
1	0.0	2.1	0.9	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.7	1.3	1.6
2	1.8	9.1	4.6	11.7	3.8	5.7	1.2	11.4	1.3	10.6
3	12.7	26.7	18.3	32.4	13.2	27.4	14.6	36.9	11.8	29.3
4	30.9	39.6	24.8	34.6	35.8	38.3	35.4	32.2	25.0	35.6
5	43.6	17.6	45.0	16.0	40.6	24.0	37.8	14.1	43.4	17.0
6	10.9	4.8	6.4	3.2	6.6	4.6	11.0	2.7	17.1	5.9

	Information about transport		Accommodation		Tourist information		Foreign language knowledge		Service in restaurants	
	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II
1	1.4	0.5	0.8	0.0	1.2	1.1	0.8	1.1	0.8	0.5
2	7.0	14.4	2.4	5.3	2.4	4.8	7.0	12.2	1.5	4.7
3	25.4	38.0	9.8	21.8	15.3	30.5	15.6	32.8	13.1	26.3
4	32.4	35.3	17.9	44.1	27.1	36.4	20.3	29.1	30.0	36.8
5	26.8	8.6	49.6	24.5	48.2	23.0	39.1	20.1	41.5	27.4
6	7.0	3.2	19.5	4.3	5.9	4.3	17.2	4.8	13.1	4.2

	Quality of food in restaurants		Conference technical organisation		Conference timing		Conference venue convenience		Venue correspondence to the needs	
	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II
1	0.0	1.1	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.6	0.8	0.6	0.0	0.6
2	0.8	5.3	2.6	3.0	2.4	4.2	3.1	4.2	4.1	4.2
3	11.7	26.8	4.3	24.8	7.2	22.2	7.1	25.1	9.8	26.7
4	25.0	36.3	20.7	37.6	28.0	41.9	23.6	40.7	24.4	40.6
5	45.3	24.7	42.2	29.7	39.2	27.5	44.1	26.3	35.0	23.0
6	17.2	5.8	30.2	4.2	23.2	3.6	21.3	3.0	26.8	4.8

	Importance of the conference content		Importance of the conference technical organisation		Willingness to recommend Latvia as a place to visit		Image of Latvia before coming to Latvia		Image of Latvia after visiting Latvia
	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I
1	0.0	1.6	0.0	1.6	0.0	0.5	0.8	0.0	0.0
2	0.0	0.8	2.3	2.0	1.6	3.8	3.8	1.7	0.8
3	3.1	0.4	9.2	9.0	7.8	23.0	14.6	18.6	3.8
4	15.3	2.0	19.2	18.8	22.5	33.9	40.0	33.3	18.3
5	33.6	23.2	56.2	44.1	31.0	24.6	28.5	37.2	48.1
6	48.1	72.0	13.1	24.5	37.2	14.2	12.3	9.1	29.0

Appendix 10: Latvian Accommodation Characteristics in 2001



Source: Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, 2002, 77.

Appendix 11: Conference Venues in Riga

Name	Size (sq. m)	Capacity (people)			
		Theatre	Classroom	U-style	Round table
Reval Hotel Latvija:					
Alfa	395	386	232	46	
Beta	288				180
Beta 1	155				100
Beta 2	130				90
Zeta	65	60	34	26	
Omega	64	60	34	26	
Zeta+Omega	165	150	76		
Sigma	71	79	46	26	
Lambda	43	37	44	16	
Tau	44	42	24	16	
Epsilon	44	42	24	16	
Tau+Epsilon	88	94	50	30	
Gamma 1	43	37	22	16	
Gamma 2	52				
Delta	130				
Radisson SAS Daugava Hotel					
Daugava 1	160	180	100	50	60
Daugava 2	160	180	100	50	65
Daugava 1+2	320	360	200		
Lielupe	138	120	80	40	52
Gauja	69	60	30	20	25
Venta	69	60	30	20	25
Abava	69	60	30	20	25
Amata	69	60	30	20	25
Parlour 1	42.3				10
Parlour 2	42.3				10
Parlour 3	42.3				10
Igaunija	49.3	25	15	20	
Latvija	96	80	60	30	
Lietuva	262.5	100	100	40	
Maritim Park Hotel Riga					
Maritim I+II	600	740	470	120	450
Maritim I	305	380	240	70	210
Maritim II	295	360	230	60	240
Tallinn	45	40	20	20	32
Riga	70	60	50	30	40
Vilnius	28	25	14	12	16

Horel Konventa Seta					
Peteris	21	12		10	10
Konvents	34	20	20	15	20
Janis	40	30	25	20	25
Kampenhauzens	119	100	70	40	45
Georgs	120	90	70	40	45
Park Hotel Ridzene					
Bastejs I	34	20	12	14	12
Bastejs II	44	25	18	18	12
Bastejs III	31	20	12	14	12
Bastejs I, II, III	108	90	50	50	48
Kronvalds	94	85	70	48	56
Viesturs	54	42	22	25	24
Arkadijs	35				12
Vermanis	24		8	14	12
Hotel de Rome					
Bulvaris I+II	105	70	38	35	16
Bulvaris I	45	36	26	14	16
Bulvaris II	40	30	20	14	16
Atrium Gallery	250	40			
Fireplace Room	71	45	25	30	16
De Rome	86	60	30	30	16
Riga Congress Centre					
Big Hall	864	1141			10
Small Hall	215	280			
New Hall	340	350	160		70
Room for Seminars	24		15	10	
Room for Seminars	76		70	40	
Riga Latvian Society House					
Big Hall	350	700			
Gold Hall	249	200			
White Hall	249	250			
Ligo Hall	120	120			
Club Hall	93	70			
Small Guild					
Great Hall	312.5	400	90	60	50
Small Hall	135	80	40	40	

Source: Inspiration Riga, 2002, 22, 24, 26-29;
Inspiration Riga & Riga This Week, 22;
Latvian Tourism Development Agency, 2002, 8-9, 12-14;
Riga Congress Centre, 2003, 6-7.

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