

REPUBLIC OF LATVIA
MINISTRY OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT
AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Social Housing in Latvia

DEFINITION

Social house

is house which belongs to municipality. The status of social house is assigned by official decision of municipality council.

In social house municipality rent out apartments only to low-income people.

According to the Law, social apartments and social houses cannot be privatised

LEGISLATION

In 1997 Latvian Parliament adopted Law on Social Apartments and Social Dwelling houses.

This law has been the first legislative act that defined what is social house and social apartment and how these houses should be financed and who has the rights to live in these social houses and apartments.

Municipalities are responsible for implementation of the law.

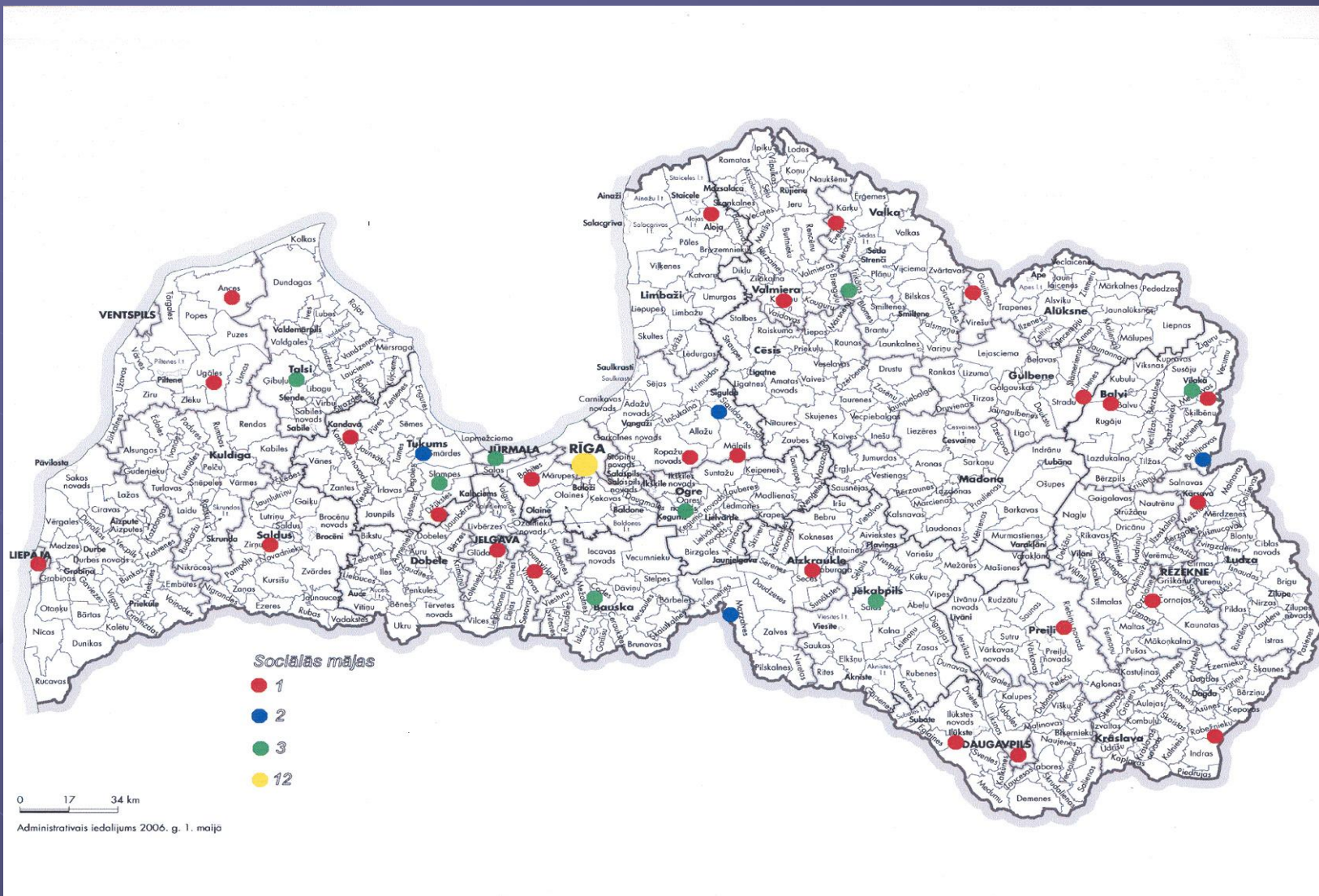
Legislation regarding social assistance for low-income people has been adjusted and several laws and regulations have been adopted and amended. The main legislative acts in this field are:

- **Law on Social Utilities and Social Assistance (19 November 2002);**
- **Law on Assistance In Solving Apartment Matters (1 January 2002)**
- **Regulation on Order in which are allocated, calculated and paid benefits for to secure guaranteed minimum income level (9 December 2003);**

Each municipality assigns the renting fee separately, but it shall be at least 3 times smaller than that renting fee which is allocated to the same category municipal flats.

Municipally can partly cover as well expenses for public utilities.

The distribution of 73 social houses in Latvia



- 18, of 73 social houses are situated in “big” cities, in capital of Latvia – Riga in year 2006 have been established 12 social houses; 29 social houses are created in regions and 26 social houses in different districts.
- Comparing with the data in 2001, the number of social houses has increased by 30% (in 1 January 2001 there were 56 social houses)

Identified problems

Legal (affordability):

- only 10% of housing stock will belong to municipality after denationalisation and privatisation process (disbalance between demand and supply)
- Due to that the municipalities cannot meet the demand for social housing. That results in the problem that there is not enough space where to house low income and socially unprotected people who cannot pay existing housing bills and who are without housing.

Financial:

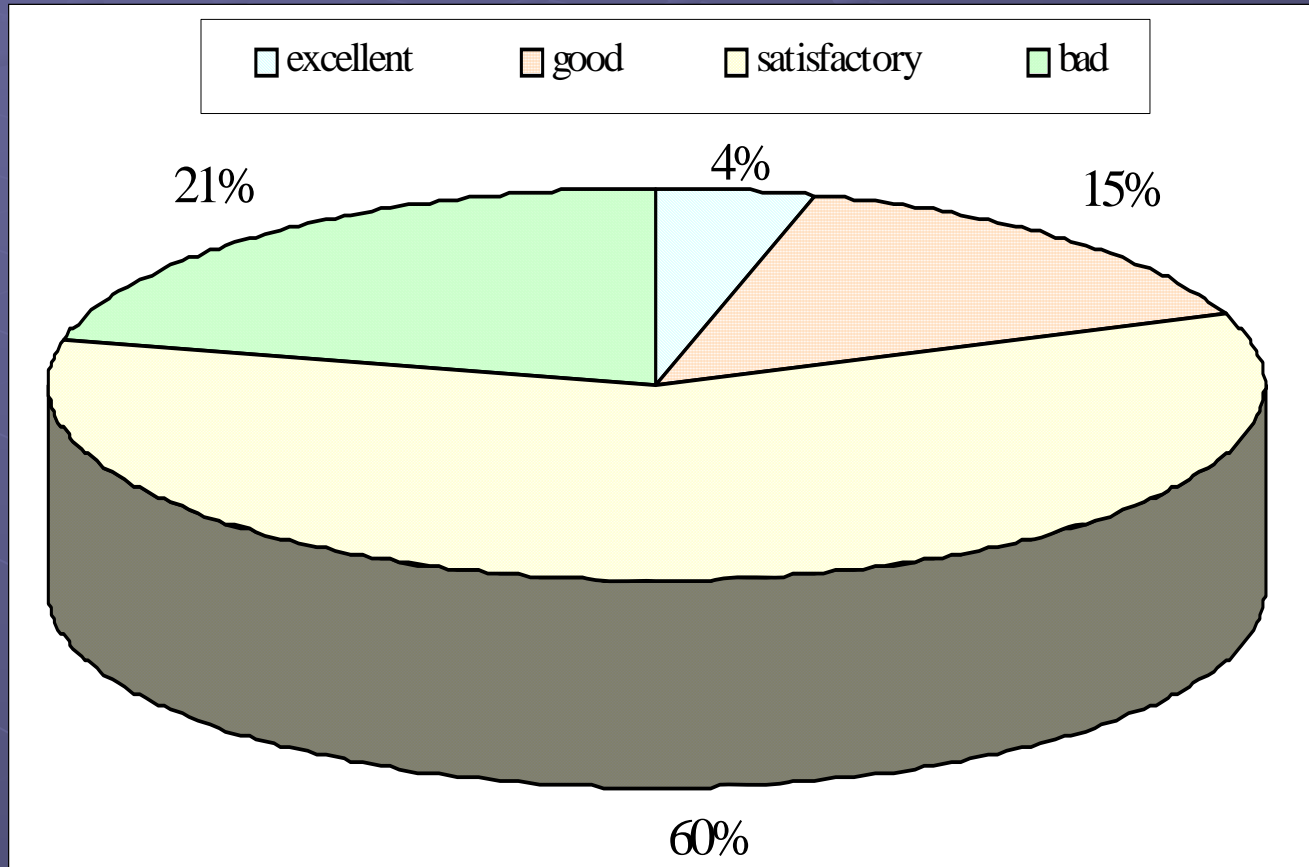
- At the moment municipalities do not have enough financial resources; the money that is allocated for social assistance is not used in efficient way by paying benefits – allowances.

- Municipalities do not have enough investments for insulation measures to reduce energy consumption;

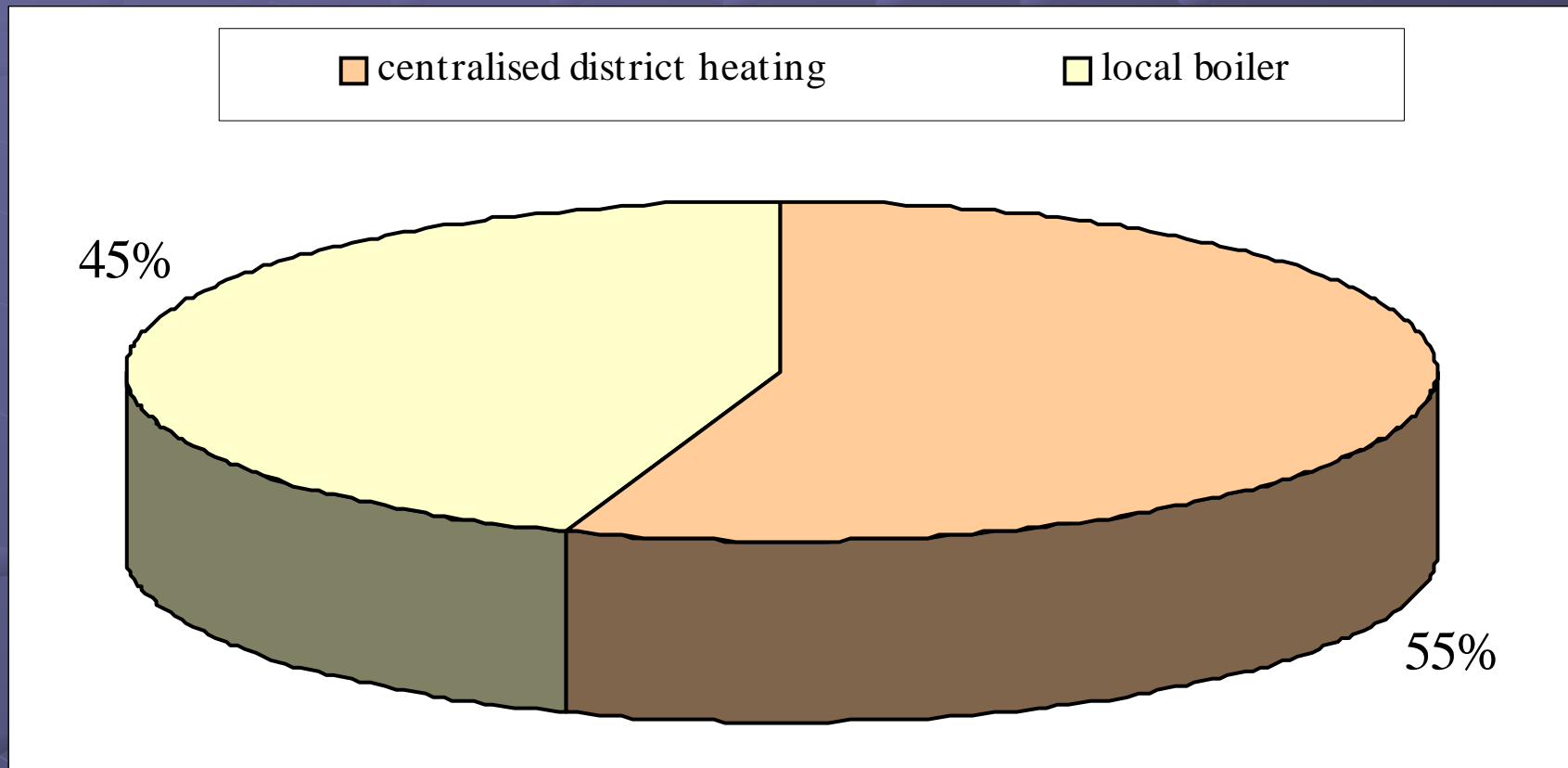
Technical

- Heating systems are morally and physically old and do not fill technical and economical requirements;
- Houses have not effective insulation – big losses through walls, windows, balcony doors etc.;
- Small % of social houses with utilities (50% of total)

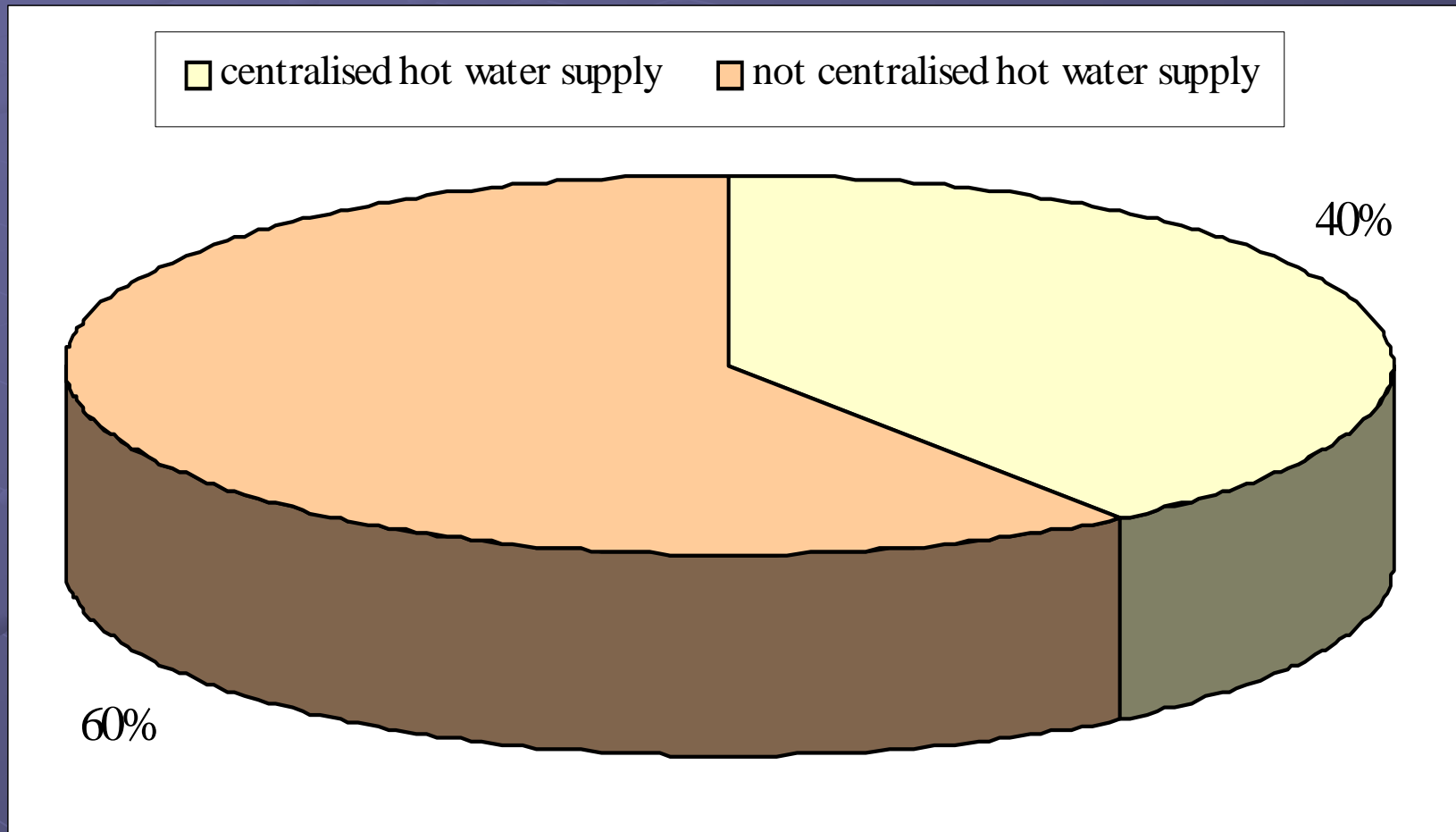
Technical conditions



Social houses with centralised district heating and local boilers and ovens



Social houses with centralised hot water supply



Social house in Skrunda was built in 1932. The area of building is 130 m² and there are living 8 persons. The house are heated with the local wood



Social house in Tukums was built in 80ties and the heated area in building is 2600 m²



Social house in Emmas street

House was built in 1968 and renovated in 2001 .

Total heated area is 5209 m² (basement and staircases are heated as well). As well this building in Soviet time was built as dormitory and now there are created 93 apartments with rooms for 116 inhabitants – pensioners.



Retrofitting – for saving and life quality

Half of buildings either municipality or inhabitants themselves have been implementing some energy efficiency measures. (Usually that was packing of spaces in between the windows, which is the cheapest measure).

In “big” cities from municipalitys budget other energy efficiency measures were implemented like insulation of attics and basements or insulation of walls.

Several social houses (mostly in capital city) have been newly renovated and reconstructed.

State support

Procedures by which State Earmarked Subsidies are to be Granted to Local Governments for Solving Apartment Matters

(adopted in Government 5 April 2005)

In accordance with these Regulations, local governments may qualify for earmarked subsidies:

1. for the construction of social residential houses – in the amount of 30 % of the construction costs;

2. for the reconstruction into residential houses of buildings owned by a local government or the completion of unfinished houses (the construction work of which has been stopped), – in the amount of 30 % of the reconstruction (renovation) costs

In 2006. effected project with state



Opportunities from ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) and Social Fund

ERDF

Allocation to housing shall be either a maximum 3% of the ERDF allocation for the Operational Programmes concerned or 2% of the total ERDF allocation.

Social Fund

No eligible expenditures for construction, retrofitting or renovation of Social houses.

Considering that:

- certain elements of EU-legislation and EU-programmes have affected and will affect housing very directly and significantly ;
- social inclusion is one of significant goal in all EU countries;

It is important to pay more attention in EU level to refurbishing of Social houses and restructuring their surroundings, and to take account of constructional, social and economic and eco-efficiency aspects.

Therefore, special social programs need to be foreseen from Structural Funds (in addition to National programmes) in the set of refurbishment measures in order to avoid social tensions and economic losses.

Thank you for your attention

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