

## **Organisation: Latvian Environment Protection Club**

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The organisation wasn't created just because of Chernobyl but it still is the oldest and biggest environmental NGO in Latvia (it was created when we were still part of USSR). They mostly fought against building a new hydro electricity station in 1987/1988 which would have destroyed various culture and nature objects nearby river Daugava in Latvia.

This is the information they have put in English in their homepage [www.vak.lv](http://www.vak.lv) :

Non-government Environmental Protection Organizations Union - Environmental Protection Club (VAK) was founded on February 25, 1987.

In the beginning VAK united common work groups, which saved sacred places, culture and nature objects from destruction and oblivion.

VAK was the first non-government awakening time mass organization in Latvia. The first activity organized by VAK during Soviet regime in the Fall of 1987 was titled "For clean Air, Water and the Earth", it was followed by a number of other actions... Several new political movements – LNNK (Latvian National Independence Movement), Informal People's front, Latvian Green party, found their roots in the Club.

Some more significant points:

- Today VAK unites 25 environmental organizations in Latvia and abroad.
- At present VAK co-ordinates 7 programs
- VAK issues its own journal - "Environmental News".
- VAK ideal - the Eco State.
- VAK vocation is to do good deeds for the sake of others: rivers, seas, birds and common thinking of people.

Now VAK is a grassroots organization with about 3400 individual members (more than 500 activists) and 25 local branches. Main topics of activities are nature protection (nature reserves, coastal protection, cleanups), public participation (EIA procedures, spatial planning and development issues), environmental protection (EU integration, EPI and horizontal issues), and environmental awareness (environmental education and information).

### **Nuclear energy**

*(Their stance on nuclear energy is explained in the homepage in Latvian and there is quite a lot of educational information <http://www.vak.lv/lapas.php?lp=25> but not a lot of it is about their own activities)*

Nuclear energy? No, thank you!

Nuclear energy is economically questionable, expensive and it creates various environmental and social risks. Citizens of Latvia should express a strict NO to the building of new NPP near the border of Latvia and in Baltic countries in general.

*(It goes on describing various safety and health risks, the nuclear waste issue and expenses they are concerned with when thinking about the idea of possible Visagina NPP in Lithuania.)*

- Members of organisations have written various publications in newspapers and magazines such as this: [http://www.vak.lv/dzervites\\_VV.jpg](http://www.vak.lv/dzervites_VV.jpg) (about the their activity- creating paper cranes and bringing them as protest symbol to the government)
- Meeting with the president of Latvia to discuss the building of Visagina NPP in Lithuania
- Informative street campaign against the building of new NPP in Esplanāde park in Rīga.
- Energy day in Daugavpils (2nd biggest city of Latvia) on 7th of November, 2007
- Sending campaign postcards to each Member of Parliament, ministries and president.