

Global Pro Bono Guide 2026

Pro Bono Practices and Opportunities in Latvia

Introduction

In Latvia, the practice of pro bono legal work is permitted, but unregulated. As a result, pro bono legal services have not developed in a systematic or structured manner. At the same time, there are a number of opportunities for lawyers to deliver pro bono legal assistance in Latvia, involving assisting both individuals and non-governmental organizations (“NGOs”). As such, international and domestic law firms operating in Latvia are encouraged to provide pro bono legal services to those in need.

At a glance

Minimum pro bono hours requirement for lawyers?	Specific pro bono licence required?	May foreign lawyers practice pro bono?	Insurance required for law firm pro bono?	Insurance required for in-house pro bono?	Rules to limit advertising pro bono work?	Does pro bono work count to CLE credit?	Limitations for in-house lawyers to do pro bono?
No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No

The landscape

Professional regulation	
<p>1. Describe the laws or rules that regulate the provision of legal services, including any licensing required to provide legal services. Please highlight any differences for lawyers working as in-house counsel.</p>	<p>The Advocacy Law of the Republic of Latvia (<i>Latvijas Republikas Advokatūras likums</i>) sets out the legal framework in relation to the professional and corporate activities of advocates in Latvia.¹</p> <p>The Cabinet Regulation No. 270 Regulations Regarding the Examination and Qualification Test of a Sworn Advocate (<i>Ministru kabineta noteikumi Nr.270 Zvērināta advokāta eksāmena un kvalifikācijas pārbaudījuma noteikumi</i>) sets out the framework in relation to the national training system for lawyers in Latvia.²</p> <p>The following persons may work as advocates³:</p>

¹ Section 1, Part 1 (General Provisions) of the Advocacy Law of the Republic of Latvia, adopted April 27, 1993 (“**Advocacy Law**”) See <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/59283-advocacy-law-of-the-republic-of-latvia> (last visited on March 9, 2026).

² Cabinet Regulation No. 270, Regulations Regarding the Examination and Qualification Test of a Sworn Advocate, Adopted April 27, 2021. See <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/322826> (last visited on January 25, 2025).

³ Section 4, Part 1 of the Advocacy Law.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sworn advocates; • assistants to sworn advocates; • citizens of European Union (“EU”) Member States who have obtained the qualification of an advocate in one of the EU Member States; and • foreign advocates, except for advocates of EU Member States, may practice in accordance with the international agreements on legal assistance binding to Latvia. <p>Advocates shall be independent and shall be subject only to the Advocacy Law in their professional activities.⁴</p>
Regulatory landscape for pro bono	
<p>2. Describe the laws or rules that regulate the provision of pro bono legal services.</p>	<p>There are no rules directly governing the provision of pro bono legal services in Latvia.</p> <p>However, some general litigation rules such as “Loser Pays” (state duties and sworn attorney fees, where the party against whom the judgment is rendered must compensate the winning party for court expenses and certain litigation costs) may foster a reluctance to utilize available pro bono legal services.</p> <p>There are also general practice restrictions that affect the availability of pro bono counsel, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) In criminal matters, only (a) a sworn advocate; (b) an assistant of a sworn advocate; (c) a citizen of a EU Member State who has acquired the classification of an advocate in one of the Member States of the EU; or (d) a foreign advocate (except a citizen of a EU Member State) in accordance with the international agreement regarding legal assistance binding on Latvia (“advocates”) are permitted to act as a defense counsel.⁵

⁴ Section 6, Part 1 of the Advocacy Law

⁵ Section 79(2) (*Defence Counsel*) of Chapter 5 (*Persons who Perform Defence*) of the Criminal Procedure Law.

	<p>(ii) In civil matters, only (a) natural persons and (b) legal persons (through their officials or authorized employees) are permitted to appear in front of the court of first instance, in the appellate court and a court of cassation to conduct their case personally or through an advocate in matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. falling under the jurisdiction of the Economic Court; II. concerning obligations law, if the claim exceeds EUR 150,000; and III. concerning protection of commercial secrets against unlawful acquisition, use and disclosure.⁶
<p>3. Do lawyers need a license to provide pro bono legal services (beyond usual local qualification to practice law)?</p>	<p>Lawyers in Latvia do not require a specific license to provide pro bono legal services.</p> <p>Any lawyer can provide pro bono legal services except in criminal cases where only an advocate can provide pro bono legal services.</p> <p>To provide legal services in criminal matters, advocates need to have an order (proxy). To provide legal services in civil matters, authorization of an advocate for the provision of legal aid needs to be confirmed by an order.</p> <p>If an advocate acts as an authorized representative of a party, his or her authorization needs to be confirmed by a written authorization⁷</p> <p>The authorization of the State ensured legal aid provider for the provision of legal aid shall be certified by an order for the provision of legal aid issued by the responsible State authority.</p>
<p>4. Do foreign-qualified lawyers need any additional license to provide pro bono services (beyond their foreign qualification</p>	<p>Advocates of EU Member States do not need any additional licenses to provide pro bono legal services in civil matters.</p>

⁶ Section 82.¹(1) (*Exceptions to the general rules on the right to representation*) of Chapter 12 (*Representatives*) of the Civil Procedure Law.

⁷ Sections 85(3) (*Formalising Representation*) of Chapter 12 (*Representatives*) of the Civil Procedure Law.

to practice law)?	<p>Other foreign advocates may practice in Latvia only in accordance with the international agreements on legal assistance binding to Latvia.</p> <p>If foreign advocates wish to represent clients in criminal cases, in addition to the above they will need to register at the Council and the Council will provide them with a statement, that will allow them to represent the client in their capacity as an “advocate” in criminal cases.</p>
5. Are lawyers required by such rules to work a minimum number of pro bono hours? If so, how many?	Lawyers in Latvia are not required to work a minimum number of pro bono hours.
6. Are aspiring lawyers required to complete a minimum number of hours of pro bono legal services to become licensed lawyers?	Aspiring lawyers in Latvia are not required to complete a minimum number of hours of pro bono legal services in order to become licensed lawyers.
7. Aside from mandatory targets (if any), are there aspirational pro bono hours targets for lawyers set by the local bar association, regulatory body or other body?	<p>There is no rule that requires lawyers in Latvia to work a minimum number of pro bono hours, either to maintain licensure or to satisfy a professional body.</p> <p>Pro bono is generally encouraged by some law firms, with some setting aspirational internal targets, and the Latvian Bar Association also encourages it, through, for example, free legal aid days, when sworn advocates and assistants of sworn advocates provide free legal advice.⁸</p>
8. Do lawyers receive any “Continuing Legal Education” (CLE) or equivalent credit for pro bono hours worked?	Lawyers in Latvia do not receive any “Continuing Legal Education” or equivalent credit for pro bono hours worked.
Insurance and advertising	
<p>9. Do lawyers need professional indemnity legal insurance cover for pro bono legal services they provide? Does the requirement differ for in-house lawyers?</p> <p>If insurance is required, can lawyers meet the requirement by working under the</p>	<p>Under the Advocacy Law and related Bar regulations, sworn advocates must have professional civil liability insurance and the insurance must cover liability arising from the provision of legal services. This would apply to pro bono services too. The risk of potential loss resulting from the professional activities of</p>

⁸ https://daugavpilszinas.lv/lv/Sabiedriba/1/10528/Sonedel-pieejamas-advokatu-bezmaksas-konsultacijas?utm_source (last viewed on 9 March 2026).

<p>cover of another pro bono provider, e.g. in partnership with a private law firm or organization working on the same pro bono project?</p>	<p>advocates must be insured.⁹</p>
<p>10. Are there any rules that limit or prohibit advertising of pro bono successes or soliciting new pro bono clients?</p>	<p>There are no rules in Latvia that prohibit advertising of pro bono successes or soliciting new pro bono clients.¹⁰ Latvia does regulate the advertising of legal services by sworn advocates, but it is not prohibited. It is subject to professional conduct rules under the Advocacy Law and the Code of Ethics of Sworn Advocates of Latvia.</p>
<p>Pro bono practice and culture</p>	
<p>11. What are the main areas of law which require or present opportunities for pro bono? What are the major unmet legal needs?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently, state-funded legal aid is only available to natural persons and not to NGOs or other persons, so there is an opportunity to provide pro bono services to such organisations. • In a criminal case, if a person wants an advocate as defense counsel or it is mandatory to have an advocate under the law, the State may provide such defense counsel and will determine the salary of the defense counsel which is paid from public funds, and this payment will completely or partially discharge such person from payment.¹¹ However, the criteria for such state-funded legal aid is high and many individuals do not qualify. Pro bono legal services are especially important for such people who don't qualify, as well as NGOs and similar organizations.
<p>12. Who are the main providers of pro bono legal services?</p>	<p>The main providers of pro bono legal services in Latvia can be categorized as follows:</p> <p><u>Private lawyers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal professionals and law students in Latvia can provide pro bono legal services.

⁹ Section 114, Part 6 of the Advocacy Law.

¹⁰ Section 6 of Code of Ethics of the Latvian Collegium of Sworn Advocates.

¹¹ Section 20(4) (*Right to Defence*) of Chapter 2 (*Basic Principles of Criminal Proceedings*) of the Criminal Procedure Law.

	<p><u>Private law firms</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law firms develop and maintain pro bono programs either independently or in partnership with local charities and the Latvian Council of Sworn Advocate (“Council”).¹² <p><u>NGOs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delna (The Society for Transparency), a branch of the international anti-corruption organization.¹³ • Transparency International in Latvia created a network of pro bono lawyers as part of the European Commission’s Speak Up project to strengthen public confidence in democracy and the rule of law by increasing the capacity of the Delna Legal Support and Advocacy Center to investigate and secure anonymity and protection of whistleblowers.¹⁴ • Latvian Centre for Human Rights provides pro bono legal services to individuals on a wide range of human rights cases.¹⁵
<p>13. Are there any noteworthy examples of how innovative technology or artificial intelligence is being used to enable access to pro bono or otherwise as part of pro bono cases or matters?</p>	<p>There are no specific examples of AI being used in pro bono matters in Latvia. Generally, AI and technology tools have the potential to greatly enhance legal pro bono work across Europe by utilizing the framework set by the EU’s Artificial Intelligence Act (Regulation (EU) 2024/1689). This regulation requires transparency, risk assessments, and human oversight for high-risk AI systems, while prohibiting certain “unacceptable risk” uses. AI and innovative legal technologies can make pro bono work more efficient by automating routine tasks like document drafting, intake, and legal research, allowing lawyers to concentrate on more complex client needs. Furthermore, these technologies could increase access to justice by providing scalable, low-cost tools such as multilingual chatbots and rights checkers, which could help empower vulnerable groups to</p>

¹² See <https://www.advokatura.lv/en/article/lawyer-providing-pro-bono-assistance-ukrainian-refugees> (last visited on January 28, 2025).

¹³ <https://delna.lv/en/about-delna/> (Last viewed on 9 March 2026).

¹⁴ See <http://delna.lv/lv/2014/11/06/ti-latvia-pro-bono-juristu-tikla-izveide/> (last visited on January 28, 2025).

¹⁵ See <http://cilvektiesibas.org.lv/en/legal-assistance/> (last visited on January 28, 2025).

	understand and assert their legal rights.
Sources of Pro Bono Opportunities and Key Contacts	
<p>14. Describe notable sources of pro bono matters or resources in your jurisdiction.</p>	<p>There is no main non-governmental source of pro bono resources in Latvia and very little information is available about pro bono in Latvia, but these organizations offer some support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delna, a Latvian operated non-governmental organization working as an anti-corruption watchdog and supporting whistle blowers;¹⁶ • Latvian Centre for Human Rights, an independent non-governmental organization which works with integration issues, elimination of discrimination and hate crimes/speech, asylum, migration and fundamental rights issues¹⁷; • Center MARTA, a non-governmental organization that aims to provide support to women in Latvia, although the center provides state legal aid service in collaboration with Legal assistance administration¹⁸; and • ProBono Publico Latvia, society that promotes and provides pro bono legal assistance, encourages legislative change and promotes anti-corruption ideas.¹⁹ <p><u>Legal aid</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The State Ensured Legal Aid Law seeks to institutionalize State funded legal aid and has the stated purpose of promoting the rights of natural persons to fair court protection by ensuring State guaranteed financial support in the form of legal aid.²⁰ A person eligible for legal aid may request legal aid in certain civil and criminal matters and administrative proceedings.²¹

¹⁶ See <https://delna.lv/en/> (last visited on January 28, 2025).

¹⁷ See <http://cilvektiesibas.org.lv/en/> (last visited on January 28, 2025).

¹⁸ See <https://www.marta.lv/en> (last visited on January 28, 2025).

¹⁹ See <http://probonopublicolatvia.wixsite.com/probono> (last visited on January 28, 2025).

²⁰ Section 1 (*Purpose of this Law*) of Chapter 1 (*General Provisions*) of the State Ensured Legal Aid Law.

²¹ See Chapter 4, Chapter 5, and Chapter 6 of the State Ensured Legal Aid Law.

<p>15. Is there any public or private organization with which a local or foreign lawyer can register to be made aware of pro bono opportunities?</p>	<p>Lawyers can contact the Latvian Bar Association which organizes free legal aid days, when sworn advocates and assistants of sworn advocates provide free legal advice.²²</p> <p>There are also global pro bono clearinghouses and legal services providers such as TrustLaw or PILnet.²³</p>
<p>16. Are there any awards, lists or rankings related to pro bono work?</p>	<p>There are no specific pro bono awards in Latvia, however, there are global pro bono awards offered by TrustLaw, PILnet and the International Bar Association.²⁴</p>

Acknowledgements

Name of law firm: Sorainen

Name of lawyer: Andris Taurins and Paula Sutava

Learn more

[Navigate the full Global Pro Bono Guide](#) to explore the global landscape and pro bono practices and opportunities across 100+ jurisdictions.

²² <https://www.advokatura.lv/> (Last viewed on 9 March 2026).

²³ <https://www.trust.org/trustlaw/> and <https://www.pilnet.org/> (Last viewed on 4 March 2026).

²⁴ <https://www.trust.org/trustlaw/awards/the-2025-awards/>, <https://www.pilnet.org/event/pilnet-global-forum/awards/> and <https://www.ibanet.org/Annual-IBA-Pro-Bono-Award>. (last viewed on 9 March 2026).