



The safety of buildings: are we doing enough?

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Audit report

The safety of buildings: are we doing enough?

Regularity and performance audit “Are the preconditions met for compliance with the requirements for the safety of the buildings commissioned for the operation which are managed and under the control of the local and regional governments?”

3 December 2019

The audit was performed based on audit schedule No 2.4.1-45/2018 of the Fifth Audit Department of the State Audit Office of 12 November 2018.

The cover design includes an image from the archives of *demontaza.lv*. The photo was taken while dismantling a multi-apartment residential building in Krāslava Regional Government in July 2019.

Dear reader,

A few decades ago, many of us found ourselves in a very specific situation. At some point, our neighbours and ourselves became the owners of apartments where we lived and which were located in an apartment building. While the state had taken care of the urgent work for the maintenance and repair of the house before, then we had to take care of who and in what sequence would perform both acute and long-term work. We had to agree with our neighbours on the sequence of these works their scope, and the investment they would require.

We acted differently, and our desires and interests were different. We could not always understand all the consequences of our own actions and those of our neighbours for our common home.

At the moment, many of us are in a situation where we cannot do it ourselves, but the state and a local or regional government do not provide support measures so that we can make the investments necessary for the full maintenance of apartment buildings. This has resulted in a situation where our safety is jeopardised, the quality of life is declining, and the property value is decreasing. Property has become or might become an unbearable burden for us.

We conducted this audit to assess, together with the line ministry and local and regional governments, what is working and what must be improved within the existing legal framework, how effective the control mechanisms that are in place in the country are, and what opportunities are available for building owners who want to improve the safety of buildings to receive timely and comprehensive support in order to extend the service life of the buildings.

In our opinion, it is necessary to create a situation in the country where we are aware

of our responsibilities as owners of buildings and apartments so that we are motivated to invest our, albeit small, resources in improving the existing housing stock and where supervisory authorities would point out threats and consequences of our actions consistently in cases where we do not perform our duties properly.



The housing stock is the wealth of our entire country, although it belongs to each of us individually. If the state acts responsibly, it does not ruin the wealth of its people, even when the people themselves are not yet able to take care of it with the responsibility of a landlord.

We are confident that the audit report will provide extensive information on the current situation in the cities and regions of Latvia, and we expect that it will serve as a good basis for all of us - state institutions, local and regional governments, their institutions, house managers and all people in Latvia who face the issues regarding the safety of buildings – to agree together on further steps to improve the safety of buildings.

We thank the employees of the Ministry of Economics, Aloja, Ērgļi, Gulbene, Limbaži, Olaine, Saldus, Tērvete and Ventspils Regional Governments, Daugavpils and Valmiera City Municipalities, and the Latvian Association of Large Cities, the Latvian Association of House Managers, the Latvian Association of Insurers for cooperation during the audit! Special thanks to Mr Aigars Udrišs, Doctor of Engineering, for his contribution to the audit!

Respectfully
Edgars Korčagins
Department Director

Summary

Motivation

The maintenance of buildings is undeniably related to financial investments, so it will always be a sensitive area for the public.

Nevertheless, ensuring the proper technical condition of a building is necessary not only to ensure that the safety and security of the building do not endanger human life and health, for example, a balcony on a lower floor, but also to avoid having to deal with where to live or train students because the technical condition of the building has become dangerous.

For example, the Krāslava Regional Government demolished a multi-apartment house recognised as dangerous this year, and its residents had to look for another home¹. In its turn, in August 2018, the Aloja Regional Government closed the premises of the large school, the Aloja Auseklis Secondary School for the same reason, and the students were placed in a small school where there was not enough space to ensure a proper learning process².

According to the OECD³ report, households in Latvia spend the least number of resources on building maintenance compared to other household expenses. The increase in the number of accidents in residential buildings and the violations detected by the State Construction Control Bureau of Latvia in municipal buildings show that we are most likely to spend the least on timely maintenance of buildings because we spend much more on “emergency response”. However, suppose we invest in the maintenance of buildings in time. In that case, it will cost much less in the long run because we will not have to cover the damage caused by accidents and because construction costs are rising every year.

As the entity responsible for the development of construction and housing policies, the Ministry of Economics (hereinafter - the Ministry) is responsible for how buildings should be maintained to meet safety requirements and for setting up a control mechanism that is “triggered” when owners do not maintain their buildings. In their turn, owners, managers, and institutions included in the control mechanism must fulfil the obligations specified in laws and regulations.

What are the reasons why we invest little in the timely maintenance of buildings, which poses risks to human health and life and the need to cover the ever-increasing cost of accidents due to damages in the buildings? Is there a mechanism currently in place to address those risks? Those are the questions we tried to answer during the audit.

The audit findings cover the commissioned multi-apartment residential buildings belonging to ten local and regional governments included in the audit scope, that is, Aloja, Ērgļi, Gulbene, Tērvete, Saldus, Olaine, Ventspils, Limbaži Regional Governments, Daugavpils and Valmiera City Municipalities, and the apartment buildings which are only managed and operated by the local and regional governments, and the buildings, where municipal construction boards have performed inspections within the framework of safety control.

The local and regional governments included in the audit scope have been selected to illustrate how multi-apartment residential and non-residential buildings are maintained in different urban and regional municipalities with a small and relatively large population.

The maintenance of multi-apartment residential buildings has been chosen, taking into account that 69% of the number of dwellings in Latvia (approximately one million homes) are located in multi-apartment residential buildings⁴; thus, the audit findings would cover a large part of the country's population.

Main conclusions

Multi-apartment residential buildings and schools, libraries, and parish administration buildings belonging to local and regional governments were mostly built before World War II or during the Soviet era. The lifespan of those buildings lasts several decades, and their owners have faced many difficulties and challenges in maintaining the buildings for political, social, and economic reasons.

One such challenge was the privatisation of apartment buildings, which began 30 years ago. As the result of privatisation, multi-apartment residential buildings, formerly owned by the state, local and regional governments, share companies, agricultural holdings, and collective fishery farms, became the joint property of former apartment tenants.

Consequently, from one owner, who had to take care of the maintenance of the building, the multi-apartment residential home turned into joint ownership of several individuals. When privatising an apartment, tenants who could previously count on the state or local or regional government to take care of the maintenance of the building, then became obligated to take care of the safety of the building themselves. **The audit findings show that the owners' awareness of the need to meet their new responsibilities and financial means have unfortunately not been sufficient then or now.** However, access to safe and affordable housing for all is one of the goals set by the United Nations (UN), which calls on its Member States, including Latvia, to take action to achieve this goal. Safe and affordable housing in the context of international commitment is also housing that does not have mould-promoting conditions such as damp walls, floors, foundations, leaking roofs and rot in window frames and floors⁵.

Safe housing, schools, culture centres, shopping centres, and other non-residential buildings is a target which is both significant for meeting the international commitment and **for protecting a citizen's right to life and health, which the dangers of the building can jeopardise.**



45% of multi-apartment residential buildings were built before 1941, while 53% were built between 1961 and 1992.



The proportion of people in Latvia living in a dwelling with significant damage is the fourth highest in the European Union.

Various tools have already been developed and defined to make buildings safer and more accessible by imposing some obligations on building owners, managers, and construction boards as controllers of safety. **However, the audit has detected that those obligations exist only on paper in many cases and are not sufficient to maintain or even improve the technical condition of the buildings.**



The obligations set by law and in regulations remain on paper only.

The lack of understanding of the consequences of not maintaining buildings and the tenants residing in such buildings has led to the sluggishness we saw in the audit when assessing how owners, managers, and construction boards are performing their responsibilities as controllers of safety.

Substantial investments are required to ensure the compliance of buildings, but the current national and municipal support measures cannot solve the situation when insufficient attention has been paid to the timely maintenance of buildings for several decades:

- ⊗ Municipal co-financing to the extent that would motivate building owners to use it is available only in the largest local or regional governments;
- ⊗ The solvency of both the owners themselves and other co-owners of the multi-apartment residential buildings stifles them from applying for state support programs or using standard solution projects to renovate balconies.

Consequently, at least 51 multi-apartment residential buildings under the management of the ten local and regional governments included in the audit scope have damages related to non-compliance with fire safety requirements (inadequate construction and operation of heating equipment, chimneys, electrical installations in critical condition).

Failure to repair that damage will endanger the health and lives of almost one and a half thousand people residing in those buildings. As a result of such non-compliances alone, 38 fires occurred in ten local and regional governments in two years.



In addition to repair costs, the building owners will have to cover other expenses, such as:

- ⊗ Emergency repairs (in case of damage and rupture of cold, hot water supply and sewerage pipelines, thus overloading the capacities of emergency services);
- ⊗ A higher insurance premium when there is a desire to protect oneself from potential losses due to an improperly maintained building. When determining the insurance premium amount, insurers consider the dwelling house's technical condition (year of construction and repair, depreciation, state of heating

From 82 multi-apartment residential buildings, 76% are damaged, whose repairs (replacement of the roofing, drainpipes, water supply and sewerage pipes, and electrical installation) will cost up to 100,000 euros to the owners of one house.

systems, engineering network and electrical installations) and the statistics of already existing loss.

It is not permissible for people to reside in unsafe buildings. However, in the current situation where local and regional governments own apartments in the same houses themselves, there are limited possibilities to move the residents to safer premises. It is not expedient to make further investments in several residential houses owned by local and regional governments. **Therefore the need to build a new municipal housing stock should be considered, which could amount to up to 29 million euros in the local and regional governments included in the audit scope alone.**

In **non-residential buildings owned by the local and regional governments such as schools, cultural centres, parish administration buildings, and other buildings, there are also safety shortcomings detected regularly**, which indicates that the current practice of governing municipal property is ineffective, and one must act to improve governance.

Safe buildings are the result of many elements. Building safety is heavily influenced not only by sectoral policies, but also by other closely related areas and processes, such as construction, crediting, migration, demographic situation, and social security, and the impacts resulting from all of these areas not always predictable and manageable. **Nevertheless, safe buildings will always be based on the direct, precise and effective definition of obligations and support measures for the building owners, managers, and controllers of safety.**

The situation observed during the audit confirms the clear need to reassess existing policy implementation instruments, obligations stipulated to building owners, managers, and supervisors in laws and regulations, possibly complemented by other tools, including awareness-raising and training measures and financial support mechanisms.

The State Audit Office calls on the Ministry, as a construction and housing policy-maker, to take actions that would lead to the most appropriate solutions for ensuring safe buildings, including identifying solutions based on a comprehensive study of existing problems.

With the current practice of choosing solutions without a comprehensive study of the problem, or a plan setting out the objectives to be achieved and the tasks to be performed to address the identified problem and without monitoring the impact of the chosen solutions, **one will create a situation where both the existing solutions are not implemented, and all future planned solutions will not be able to provide the safety of commissioned buildings.**

The safety of commissioned buildings is an area where other public institutions are also engaged, including the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, which oversee the legality of the activities of local and regional governments. Cooperation among those institutions is essential to address the problems connected to the safety of buildings.



The local and regional governments included in the audit scope should decide on the relocation of one and a half thousand people to safer premises; however, the local and regional governments do not have a safer housing fund themselves either.

Hence, for safeguarding successful cooperation of the involved institutions in solving the problems identified in the audit, **the State Audit Office will invite the Cabinet of Ministers to decide on further action to implement the proposal - to instruct the Ministry to carry out a comprehensive study of the problems and their causes in cooperation with the public administration institutions involved in ensuring the safety of buildings and to develop appropriate solutions for the prevention of the problems.**



In the audit, we assessed whether the obligations specified in laws and regulations were fulfilled, which were prerequisites for the compliance of buildings with safety requirements.

Obligations that exist mostly “on paper” but are not fulfilled.

Management of multi-apartment residential buildings

We have already pointed out that until 1995, multi-apartment residential buildings belonged to the state, local and regional governments or share companies, agricultural holdings and collective fishery farms. After that, the Privatisation Law took effect, allowing the tenants of those residential buildings to privatise or buy the apartments they had previously rented from the state and local or regional governments.

As a result, a multi-apartment residential building that had belonged to one individual turned into a building owned by several individuals, and its new owners undertook the obligation pertaining to the ownership to take care not only of their own apartment but also the common property, that is, staircases, lifts, balconies, roof, water supply and sewerage systems of common use.

However, in addition to purchasing apartments, the apartment owners also had to convene a general meeting of owners to take over the right to manage the residential building from the state or local or regional government or the right to decide themselves what work should be done in the building.

Many owners have not yet done so, so it is up to the state or a local or regional government to decide what work is needed in those apartment buildings. The owner may not decline from performing mandatory management activities or maintenance, routine repairs, and reconstruction measures. At least, this is required by law.

In their turn, in cases when the obligations of management has been taken over from the state or local or regional government, the owners of multi-apartment residential buildings decide themselves about how much they should invest in the homes they own. Still, even then, **their actions must ensure that the building complies with safety requirements; namely, it must be mechanically strong and stable, protected against fire hazards, it must be harmless and safe to use.**

Nonetheless, we have detected during the audit that in the multi-apartment residential buildings managed by six municipal enterprises included in the scope of the audit, where the owners have taken over the management rights, they refuse to perform works (without allocating funding to the manager for the performance thereof) that affect the compliance of residential buildings with safety requirements. For example, the owners of residential buildings have refused to repair the roof in the Daugavpils City Municipality. However, its condition has been assessed as incompliant. In contrast, the residential building owners⁶ have refused to replace the water supply and sewerage pipelines in the Ventspils City Municipality.

The local and regional governments included in the audit scope, which manage multi-apartment residential buildings where the management obligations have not been taken over, do not fulfil the

obligations provided for in laws and regulations. Such multi-apartment residential buildings account for 67% of all the buildings under the management of local or regional governments.

Although the payment for those buildings must be determined by drafting an estimate of maintenance and management work, including the cost of repair work necessary to prevent any damages, the fee was set without drafting an estimate for every year for more than one half of the buildings out of the 119 multi-apartment residential buildings managed by the ten local and regional governments included in the audit sample.

Historical council decisions determine the administration and management payment for multi-apartment residential buildings. This mostly only covers the costs of mowing the lawn and administration costs. For example, the management and administration payment for multi-apartment residential buildings in Braslava and Brīvzemnieki Rural Districts of Aloja Region varies between 0.04 euros to 0.17 euros per square metre. In contrast, it is 0.14 euros per square metre in Lutriņi Rural District of Saldus Region.

Although an annual estimate of maintenance and management work is prepared for the other multi-apartment residential buildings under the management of the local and regional governments included in the audit, the costs of maintaining the buildings are included only to the extent that they do not exceed the apartment owners' desired payment per square metre. This is evidenced by the fact that:

- ☑ In several multi-apartment residential buildings, the technical condition of the building has not been assessed before the determination of the management and administration payment. For example, in 2017, 26 building files did not include any documents proving the performance of a visual inspection out of 58 multi-apartment residential houses in 2017;
- ☑ Even in cases where visual inspection reports have been drafted, or entries have been made in the inspection logbook, the information in the documents does not allow an assessment of the damage to the residential building (one indicates: valid for operation, needs minor repairs, needs major repairs and needs to be replaced) or does not provide information on the technical condition of all elements;
- ☑ Maintenance work plans are drafted in less than half of the residential buildings. However, of the plans that are prepared, they do not include the work necessary to prevent all damage, the term of accruals, and the planned costs. In addition, in 67% of cases, the cost of those works are not assessed or included in the estimate of the maintenance and management of the residential building so that the manager could receive funding to repair the damage .



Visual and technical inspections are necessary to determine the technical condition of the building and to prevent dangerous damage in a timely manner.

Hence, of the 82 multi-apartment residential buildings in the audit sample whose technical condition could be determined, 62 dwelling houses have significant damage (for instance, need to replace the roofing, water supply, sewerage systems, wiring), and 51 residential buildings also have damage related to improper construction and operation of the heating system and chimneys, thus endangering human health and life. The management and administration payment for residential buildings managed by the Daugavpils City Municipality is set from 0.15 to 0.36 euros per square

metre, from 0.08 to 0.16 euros per square metre in the Tērvete Regional Government, and 0.21 per square metre in the Ventspils Regional Government. Nonetheless, in accordance with, for example, the damage identified by the Daugavpils City Municipality, the works required to repair them and their costs in the apartment buildings under its management, **the payment that would include the costs necessary to repair the damage (required replacement of roofing, water supply and sewerage systems) would increase by up to 3 euros per square metre for one multi-apartment residential building over a three-year period**, which is significantly higher than the amount of management and administration payments charged by the local and regional governments included in the audit.

In multi-apartment residential buildings, where the management rights have not been taken over and which the local and regional governments manage included in the audit scope, emergency repairs will also not be carried out in cases when the damage must be eliminated immediately, such as crumbling ventilation shafts and chimneys, , leakages thereof, crumbling balcony elements, through which rain enters into apartments.

Management of non - residential buildings owned by local and regional governments

The legal regulation for the management of non-residential buildings differs much from the one for the management of residential buildings, as local and regional governments stipulate the principles and procedures for the management of non-residential buildings themselves. Nevertheless, despite the differences, maintaining the properties (quality) of buildings for use throughout their service life and preventing hazards are equally important in the management of both types of buildings.

Only one of the local governments included in the audit scope, Valmiera City Municipality, has established such principles and procedures. Regardless of the latter, auditors consider that the management practices of non-residential buildings in this municipality and other local and regional governments included in the audit scope are not effective enough to prevent damage.

The State Construction Control Bureau **has also identified safety deficiencies in 74 public buildings owned by the local and regional governments in the audit scope, including the total or partial decommissioning of 21 buildings**. Unfortunately, this has not been a sufficient reason for local and regional governments to start assessing the effectiveness of existing governance.



In every fourth non-residential building of the local or regional government, the State Construction Control Bureau has identified safety shortcomings.

The audit has identified that the local and regional governments included in the audit scope pay relatively little attention to the comprehensive identification of management needs and planning of the necessary actions that should be taken following best practices for the physical preservation and prevention of hazards to the building. A survey of the managers of non-residential buildings in those local and regional governments revealed that for the management of 1,325 non-residential buildings:

- ⊗ There were no management plans drafted, which would indicate what management activities such as visual inspection, technical inspection, sanitary and technical maintenance should be performed and how often;

- ⊗ It was not documented in the event of which damage the managers were obliged to warn the supervising entity and to perform non-routine repairs;
- ⊗ It was not specified as to the technical condition of which elements should be checked in a visual inspection; for example, during the visual inspection of the foundations of a building, one should check whether there has any subsidence, cracks forming, openings between elements of the building, etc.;
- ⊗ No real estate files were established and recorded, which would allow one to improve the external and internal control over the management activities and ensure the transparency of the experience.

The users of such buildings mostly perform the management of non-residential buildings in the local and regional governments included in the audit scope; for example, the respective educational institution manages school buildings, as well as museums, libraries, parish administration buildings, etc.

Management activities, such as visual inspection of buildings, are also mostly performed by the heads of those institutions, specialists of the institution, maintenance/superintendent employees, auxiliary workers, who most often have not received professional education in the area of building management and do not have the education of a construction expert. The requirement to obtain such education is also not specified in laws and regulations, in contrast to the management of residential houses. There is also no indication in employees' job descriptions that such education is necessary to perform the position's duties.

Control of the safety of commissioned buildings to prevent situations where buildings are not adequately maintained

Following the Zolitūde tragedy, a new control mechanism was included in the Construction Law to inspect public buildings that have already been put into operation to ensure that buildings taken into operation comply with safety requirements:

- ⊗ An obligation for the owners of the public buildings of the second and third groups (buildings with a capacity of up to and respectively over 100 people) to perform a technical inspection of the building at least once every ten years and an obligation for a construction specialist who has completed a technical inspection of a building to submit an opinion to the Construction Board or the State Construction Control Bureau;
- ⊗ The task for construction inspectors of the State Construction Control Bureau and municipal construction boards to supervise the safety of buildings.

In the opinion of the Parliamentary Commission investigating the Zolitūde tragedy, the submission of an opinion to the State Construction Control Bureau and municipal construction boards will strengthen the owner's obligation to take care of the safety of a commissioned building.

Yet, the audit has established that construction specialists as performers of technical inspection submit opinions to the municipal construction boards included in the audit scope only at the same time as the construction project for the reconstruction or renovation of the building. Thus, for example, the Gulbene Regional Government Construction Board did not have information on the results of the technical inspection of the public buildings of the second group owned by the regional government, although they contained indications of non-compliance of the buildings with safety requirements.



The number of construction inspectors in municipal construction boards is insufficient, which is why inspections must be organized according to risk-based criteria, where there is the greatest threat to society.

The parliamentary investigation commission of the Zolitūde tragedy noted that it was impossible to inspect all buildings with the existing number of construction inspectors. However, according to best practice, ensuring that inspections are carried out where they are most needed requires organising safety controls according to a risk-based approach by inspecting buildings with the greatest hazard to public safety.

Although the construction boards of the local and regional governments included in the audit scope pointed out the buildings in their administrative territories that posed the greatest hazard to the public during the audit, **none of the construction boards used a risk-based approach to organising inspections.** The number of scheduled inspections is minimal, and the chosen strategy of building boards to inspect degrading and collapsed buildings cannot guarantee the use of resources where they are most needed and proportionate to the safety situation.

Individual construction boards perceive the control of operational safety of buildings as a right of the construction board instead of a function. Construction boards also do not obtain information that could be used for targeted safety inspections. They do not use data that is easily accessible to them, nor do they cooperate with other authorities with information about structures where there is a hazard.

The preparation of the opinion of the construction inspector is not followed by all the necessary decisions of the local and regional governments and construction boards included in the audit scope to prevent the hazard. In the audited local and regional governments:

- ⊗ out of 97 opinions, 28% of the decisions binding on the owners of buildings of 97 opinions have not been made due to the discrepancies established in the opinions (in Gulbene, Ērgļi, Saldus, Aloja, Olaine Regional Governments and Valmiera City Municipality);
- ⊗ in 67% of cases when the owners did not fulfil the obligations imposed by the decisions, the construction board did not commence or initiate any enforcement of the adopted decision (in all local and regional governments included in the audit scope, except Valmiera City Municipality and Tērvete Regional Government);

- ⊗ A decision was made within the framework of administrative violation proceedings only in one case out of 73 opinions, in which the facts indicated violations provided for in Article 152 of the Latvian Code of Administrative Violations. In comparison, an increased real estate tax was applied only in 10 cases out of 43 opinions.

Insufficient support solutions

From year to year, no management and administration payment has been set in the multi-apartment residential buildings managed by the audited local and regional governments for performing the necessary works to prevent existing damage. Therefore, there are also significant damages, the elimination of which (replacement of roofing, water supply and sewerage pipelines, wiring in common use premises) will cost the owners of residential buildings up to 100,000 euros and will have a significant impact on their monthly management and administration payment.

For example, if the Daugavpils City Municipality had included the maintenance costs to eliminate the damages indicated in the maintenance work plans of the estimates of maintenance and management of residential buildings, the owner who possesses an apartment of 60 square metres would pay 180 euros per month for three years.

The average net salary in the six local and regional governments included in the audit scope did not exceed 636 euros per month in 2018, thus **in a situation where the potential costs of maintaining a residential building could reach even more than a third of the current salary, the opportunities for house owners to cover them without national and municipal support are limited.**

Municipal co-financing to improve the technical condition of residential buildings is one of the support types. However, not all local and regional governments (Ērgļi and Tērvete Regions) have issued binding regulations and provided co-financing to residential building owners. Even when such regulations have been issued, the support provided covers only very small costs; for example, the Gulbene Regional Government covers only the costs of energy audits, technical inspections, and drafting documentation.

Due to the solvency of the population, there are also limited opportunities to apply for state support schemes or to use the research results and standard solution projects of individual residential building elements ordered by the Ministry. The lack of effective control over the performance of obligations does not facilitate that either.

In its turn, the approach of the Olaine Regional Government when its municipal enterprise applies the deferred payment to the owners of multi-apartment residential buildings for the improvements made in the buildings for ten years advances the overall situation with the technical condition of the housing stock in the municipal administrative territory. However, the fact that the criteria for granting this aid has not been laid down and that the municipal enterprise manages houses that are not undergoing emergency repairs evidences non-transparency of the support and the risks of its availability to everybody.

Major recommendations

Based on the findings of the regularity and performance audit and the auditors' conclusions, there is a recommendation provided to the Ministry of Economics:

- ⊗ Identify the problems affecting the safety of commissioned buildings and choose the most appropriate solutions for their elimination;
- ⊗ Set objectives, performance indicators for their achievement, and control measures to monitor their implementation, thus ensuring the possibility to measure the progress and adjust the actions if necessary.

In their turn, a recommendation was made to the ten local and regional governments included in the audit scope to identify the quantity and technical condition of multi-apartment residential buildings owned and managed by them as well as the investment required to shape further municipal actions, as well as a recommendation to improve the management process of non-residential buildings.

Recommendations were also provided to the audited local and regional governments to improve the efficiency of building safety controls:

- ⊗ Municipal construction boards shall increase the proportion of inspections based on risk assessment, thus providing a more proportionate contribution to the prevention of hazard;
- ⊗ Calling on the local and regional governments to assess the need to change the form and content of institutional subordination of construction boards.

The Olaine Regional Government is recommended to eliminate the risks of non-transparency and accessibility of the support provided by the municipal enterprise to all residents of the municipal administrative territory.

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- ¹ An apartment building recognised as dangerous is being demolished in Krāslava: <https://www.lsm.lv/raksts/zinas/latvija/kraslava-nojauc-par-bistamu-atzitu-daudzdzivoklu-maju.a325622/> (viewed on 27 September 2019).
- ² Teachers, students, and parents of the Aloja Auseklis Secondary School do not understand why the reconstruction was stopped: <https://www.lsm.lv/raksts/zinas/latvija/alojas-ausekla-vidusskolas-skolotaji-skoleni-un-vecaki-neizpratne-par-parbuves-apturesanu.a322377/> (viewed on 27 September 2019).
- ³ Abbreviation for Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (used here and hereafter).
- ⁴ Informative Report of the Ministry of Economics “Long-term strategy for building renovation 2014–2020” (reviewed at the sitting of the Cabinet of Ministers on 24 October 2017), available online: http://tap.mk.gov.lv/doc/2017_10/EMZIN_300817_EKU_ATJAUN.2056.DOCX (viewed on 4 March 2019), p. 40.
- ⁵ Population living in a dwelling with a leaking roof, damp walls, floors or foundation or rot in window frames of floor by poverty status (sdg_01_60). ESMS Indicator Profile (ESMS-IP). https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=sdg_01_60&plugin=1 (viewed on 11 March 2019).
- ⁶ Residential house maintenance plan for 2019, Minutes of the general meeting of apartment owners No 5 of 11 April 2019 of multi-apartment residential house under management of “VNK Serviss” Ltd of the Ventspils Regional Government at Ventas Street 6, Vārve Rural District.