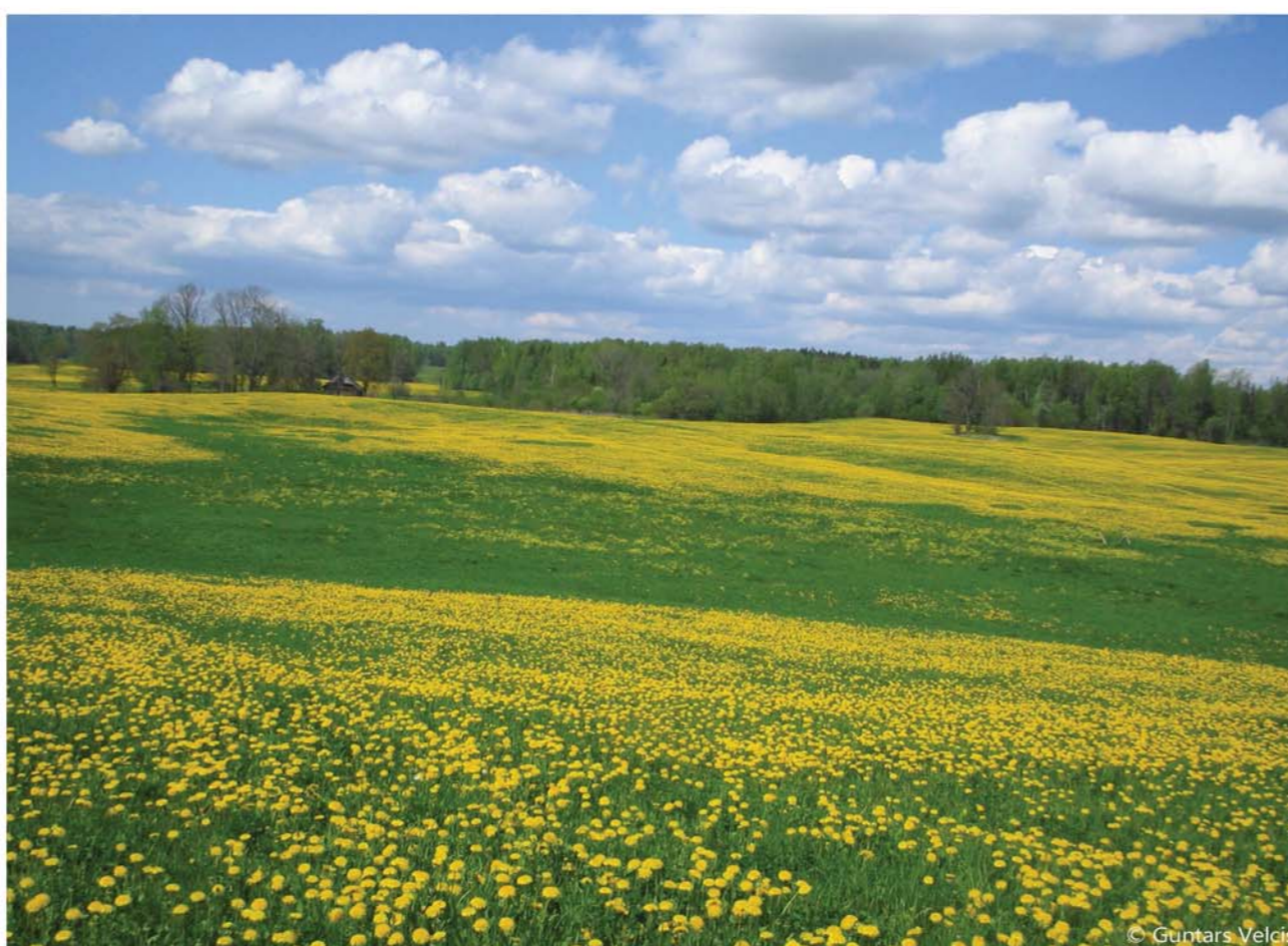
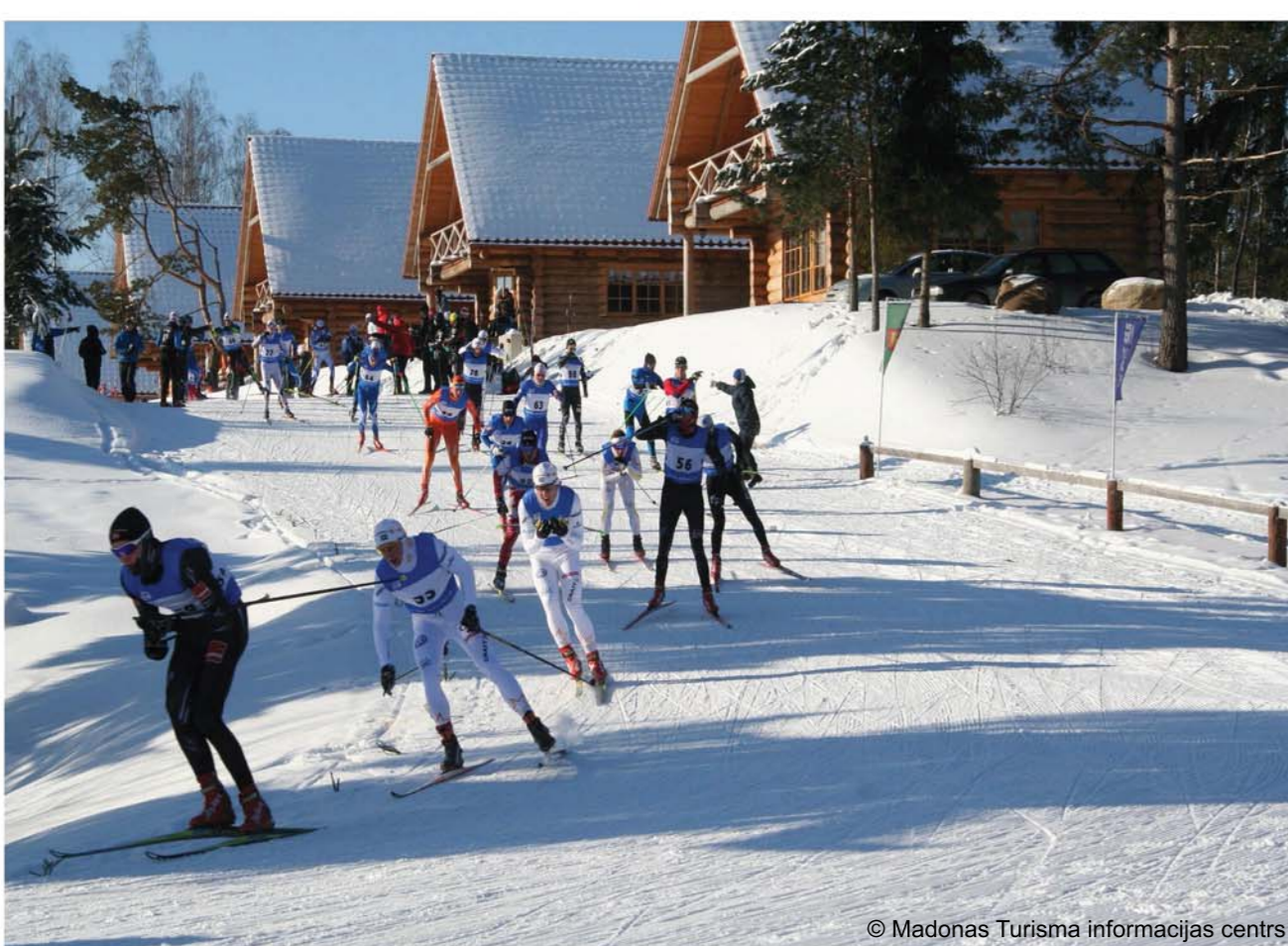


Region of Vidzeme | Latvia



The region of Vidzeme lies in the northeast of Latvia, bordering Riga to the West. Vidzeme is the biggest of the regions by territory, covering 15,257 km² or 24% of the territory of Latvia. The Vidzeme planning region, with a population of approximately 240,000, comprises 25 local municipalities and is nestled in the highest mountains of Latvia, known as the Gaizins.

The City of Ergli is particularly active in terms of energy targets. In its Development Programme, the municipality has determined its main goals to be energy efficiency and usage of renewable energy. The programme calls for long term investments in the field of energy efficiency.

Concretely, the Ergli vocational high school dormitory is a striking example of a successful energy retrofit using Passive House components. The previously shabby looking, Soviet-era building now has a modern look and the lowest level of energy consumption of any existing public building in the country. Through the renovation, this school's heating consumption dropped by a factor of more than 15, now amounting to a mere 10 kWh/m² per year. Heating for this project comes completely from renewable energy sources with district heating based on biomass (woodchips). In the summer, hot water will be delivered via solar collectors, which will be purchased in the near future.

The mix of energy efficiency and renewables has a key role to play in the green economy. Ergli, with its Passive House project, is bringing this topic to the fore and raising awareness. The Ergli project, as a true best practice example, has been inspiring politicians, investors, architects, builders, and owners alike.

In addition to the effect of the project, various informative events are being held throughout the region. A workshop on "The establishment of cost effective low energy buildings" was led by the Minister of Environmental Protection and Regional Development. Along with other informational events, awareness is also being raised amongst professionals via training courses in Passive House design, held at the Vidzeme University. This will surely drive more Passive House projects – good news for the region, as the refurbishment of public buildings such as day care centres and kindergartens would yield both energy and monetary savings.

