

DEMSTAR

Democracy, the State, and Administrative Reforms

State of the State in Latvia

Appendix 6:
The Formal Structure of Government
in Latvia (from 1990)

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Appendix 6

The formal structure of government in Latvia (from 1990)

1st government of the Republic of Latvia: Ivars Godmanis, Head of the Council of Ministers, Period of governance: May 1990 - July 1993

On 3 May 1990 the newly elected Supreme Council (SC), the higher legislative body, held their first meeting. On 4 May 1990 "The declaration of independence" was accepted. On the degree of the SC, Ivars Godmanis was appointed the first Head of the Council of Ministers. This government was formed on the basis of the law passed by the SC on 11 May 1990, "On the structure of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia" and consisted of a Prime Minister, 1st deputy of Prime Minister, deputy Prime Minister, 18 ministers, and the head of the state security committee. As the highest executive body in the Latvian Republic (LR), the Council of Ministers is accountable only to the Supreme Council.

The following changes were made during May 1990: ministries of Architecture and Construction, Energy, Agriculture, State Assets, and Transport were established, while the Ministry of Municipal services Committee for Sports and Physical Education was abolished.

Later that summer the Ministry of Fishery was set up, along with the Ministry of Forestry and an independent Department of Transfer of State Assets (see Figure 1). Very essential changes were made in the autumn of 1991 when absolute independence was finally regained. The changes were stipulated in the law "On the Ministries of the LR" of 13 November 1991.

- The Ministry of Defence was established (see Figure ???)
- The Ministry of Economic Reforms was set up, while the Ministry of Economy and the Department of Transfer of State Assets were abolished
- The Ministry of Foreign Trade was established and the Ministries of State Assets and of Trade were abolished
- The Ministry of Manufacturing and Energy replaced the Ministries of Manufacturing and of Energy
- The Ministry of Welfare was established, absorbing the Ministries of Health Care and of Social Affairs
- The Ministry of Maritime Affairs replaced the Ministry of Fishery
- The Ministry of Communications was turned into the Department of Communications within the Ministry of Transport
- The post of Minister of State Affairs, Government Administration, was abolished, while the position of State Minister was instituted
- The posts of 1st Deputy and deputies of the Head of the Council of Ministers of the LR were abolished

Two stages of the work of this government require further description (May 1990 to November 1991 and the subsequent period). Until state independence was completely re-established, aspects like Latvia's capability to exist independently were of great importance in view of the considerable dependence on the USSR concerning resources, and quite a number of fights arose because of functions duplicated by LR departments and USSR departments (e.g. the prosecutor's office). After Independence ministries essential to the new situation were set up (e.g. the ministry of security). Beginning with the second government, the ambition was to introduce a more compact system of state administration

to replace the complicated, vertical state administration of the former Latvian Soviet Republic (LSR).

2nd government of the Republic of Latvia: Valdis Birkavs, Prime Minister (President of Ministers). Period of governance: July 1993 - September 1994

When the 1922 constitution (the Satversme) came into force, the laws regulating the structure of government were changed and reactivated. The Constitution, the law delimiting system of the Government, together with the law governing the Ministries, form the legislative basis for regulating the structure and behavior of the government. Within a ministry the minister, the parliamentary secretary (the representative of the minister in the Saeima), the press secretary, the advisor and the assistant are politically responsible for the ministry. The state secretary is head of the administrative body, the ministry. The state minister can be appointed to govern one branch of a ministry, and he is vested with voting rights in the government on questions concerning only his own area of responsibility. The law stipulates 13 ministers in the government (see Figure 3), but the number of state ministers depends not only on the coalition agreement, but also on the number of specially assigned ministers. The Prime Minister can appoint one deputy of Prime Minister from among the appointed ministers and one from outside. All except state ministers have full voting rights in the government (see above concerning state ministers).

The following state ministers were appointed during July, August and September 1993: two in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, two in the Ministry of Economics, three in the Ministry of Finance, one in the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, two in the Ministry of Welfare, one in the Ministry of Justice, one in the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, and one in the Ministry of Agriculture (see Figure 4). By appointing state ministers, the government sought to prioritize those branches of the government that are essential to the state. While this and the next government were in office, foreign affairs were given top priority because it was essential to become integrated into numerous international organizations and to develop relationships with Northern Europe and the other Baltic states. The process of privatization was well underway. In general, the need for state ministers in this and next government was considered a prerequisite for improved management of particular branches of government.

3rd government of the Republic of Latvia: Maris Gailis, Prime Minister (President of Ministers). Period of governance: September, 1994 – December, 1995

This was the second and final government during the 5th Saeima. The new Prime Minister represented the same party as his predecessor. Several changes were made, among them a change in the number of ministries: the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science was divided into the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education and Science (see Figure 5). This was motivated by the insufficient and ineffective performance of the Department of Culture within the old ministry. Furthermore, in July 1995 the Ministry of State Reforms was abolished because it was originally established with a brief to initiate reforms in government, local authorities, and the civil service. It was envisaged that the ministry was to be abolished upon fulfillment of its the targets, and success was achieved in mid 1995. The department charged with reforming local authorities was absorbed by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development under the leadership of a state minister. From this point on the number and titles of ministries remained unchanged.

Other changes concerned state ministers. The position of State Minister responsible for Foreign Trade and the European Community was abolished, but two new positions were established within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Ministry of Finance abolished the State Minister of Budget Issues. The State Minister of Labour in the Ministry of Welfare was abolished along with the Minister of special assignments, while the Ministry of Agriculture now got a State Minister on Cooperation Issues.

4th government of the Republic of Latvia: Andris Skele, Prime Minister (President of Ministers). Period of governance: December, 1995 – February, 1997

This was the first of three governments during the rule of the 6th Saeima. The elected parties found it very hard to make a coalition. In the third attempt, the President appointed Andris Skele, who was non-party, to form a government. This government was approved by the parliament shortly before Christmas, and the trend towards smaller government began.

Only one state minister remained in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The state minister responsible for energy in the Ministry of Economy was abolished. The Ministry of Finance abolished the State Ministers for Foreign Trade and for State Property, and replaced them with a State Minister for Investment and Loan Policy. Two new positions were created in the Ministry of Education and Science (one for education and one for higher education and science), the State Minister for the Labour was retained, and the position of State Minister of Fisheries was created. The functions of the State Minister of Reforms of Local Authorities was turned over to the established minister of special Assignments, and a new minister of special assignments concerning the European Union area (see Figure 6) was appointed. Initially the government was not much smaller than its predecessor because of the hard coalition talks, but changes were made in the course of time (see Figure 7). The main initiator of the optimization of government was the Prime Minister, who argued that it is much easier to make decisions in smaller governments. The problem lay in the legislation, which stipulated that minister, state minister, and state secretary can give direct orders to every civil servant within their area of responsibility. This hindered decision making within ministries as well. As the civil service reform progressed, the need for state ministers increasingly became a political issue in the process of forming a government during coalition talks. The reduction of the number of state ministers was based on the lack of funding, duplication of functions and the need to trim the administrative apparatus.

Soon after, the Minister of special Assignments for Municipal Affairs was again upgraded to state minister status (in effect, the same position as in the previous government). In November 1996 three state minister positions were abolished (Foreign Affairs, Education and Industry, Property and Privatisation). Plans of further radical reforms were on the agenda (concerning abolishment of all state ministers), but a crisis led the government to its fall in early 1997.

5th government of the Republic of Latvia: Andris Skele, Prime Minister (President of Ministers). Period of governance: February, 1997 – August, 1997

The Latvian president once again called upon Andris Skele to form a government, and he again succeeded. His new government had only four state ministers: one each from the Ministres of Welfare and of Finance, and two from the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Reforms. This was accepted because the largest parties agreed to a reduction of the number of state ministers (see Figure 8).

6th government of the Republic of Latvia: Guntars Krasts, Prime Minister (President of Ministers). Period of governance: August, 1997 – November, 1998

This was the last government during the rule of the 6th Saeima. It remained in office until the new government of the 7th Saeima received a vote of confidence from parliament. Disagreements between the parties and the former Prime Minister, who was apolitical, led to the fall of this government. The number of state ministers was not changed in the new government. The only change was the abolishment of the Ministry of Special Assignments for EU Affairs (see Figure 9). After a crises in April, 1998, the position of deputy PM was also abolished (see Figure 10).

7th government of the Republic of Latvia: Vilis Kristopans, Prime Minister (President of Ministers). Period of governance: November, 1998 – July, 1999

It proved difficult to establish new government, and the person nominated for the task did not represent the party that won the elections. The new government did receive a vote of confidence, but only after protracted negotiations between coalition partners in search of support from non-coalition parties. Several changes in the government were made at the outset (see Figure 11), and only two positions of state minister remained (State Minister for Environment and for State Revenues). A Ministry of Special Assignments for cooperation with international financial institutions was established, and a deputy PM in EU Affairs.

But in the spring a crises forced the Prime Minister to invite more persons to participate in the government, and four new positions were established: State Minister of Forestry, State Minister of Highest Education and Science, State Minister of Health, along with a Minister of special Assignments for Public and Municipal Reform Affairs (see Figure 12).

Officially these changes were described as necessary in order for the ministries to help manage the various branches, but they were surely dictated by the crisis.

8th government of the Republic of Latvia: Andris Skele, Prime Minister (President of Ministers). Period of governance: July, 1999 –

The previous government had collapsed, and the leader of the winning party in the elections, the “People’s Party”, was called upon to form his third government. This time the parliamentary majority was based on the coalition agreement between the “People’s party”, “Latvia’s way” and “For Fatherland and Freedom”, two latter having taken part in the previous government. All positions of State Minister were now abolished, as was the position of deputy PM of EU Affairs. No further changes took place in the government from that point on, and Latvia now has the smallest government since 1990 – only 15 members. As former President of Latvia, Guntis Ulmanis, said in November, 1996, when the process of reducing the number state ministers began, “we do not have to be number one in Europe as the largest government”. The reduction is significant and is shown in Table 1.

Overview: Latvian governments after independence.

Supreme Council	Prime Minister (Head of the Council of Ministers)	Ivars GODMANIS	May, 1990 – July, 1993
5 th Saeima	Prime Minister (President of Ministers)	Valdis BIRKAUS	July, 1993 – September, 1994
	Prime Minister (President of Ministers)	Maris GAILIS	September, 1994 – December, 1995
6 th Saeima	Prime Minister (President of Ministers)	Andris SKELE	December, 1995 – February, 1997
	Prime Minister (President of Ministers)	Andris SKELE	February, 1997 – August, 1997
	Prime Minister (President of Ministers)	Guntars KRASTS	August, 1997 – November, 1998
7 th Saeima	Prime Minister (President of Ministers)	Vilis KRISTOPANS	November, 1998 – July, 1999
	Prime Minister (President of Ministers)	Andris SKELE	July, 1999 – May, 2000
	Prime Minister (President of Ministers)	Andris BERZINS	May 2000 -

Figure 1. First Latvian government (Godmanis), May 1990 - Nov 1991

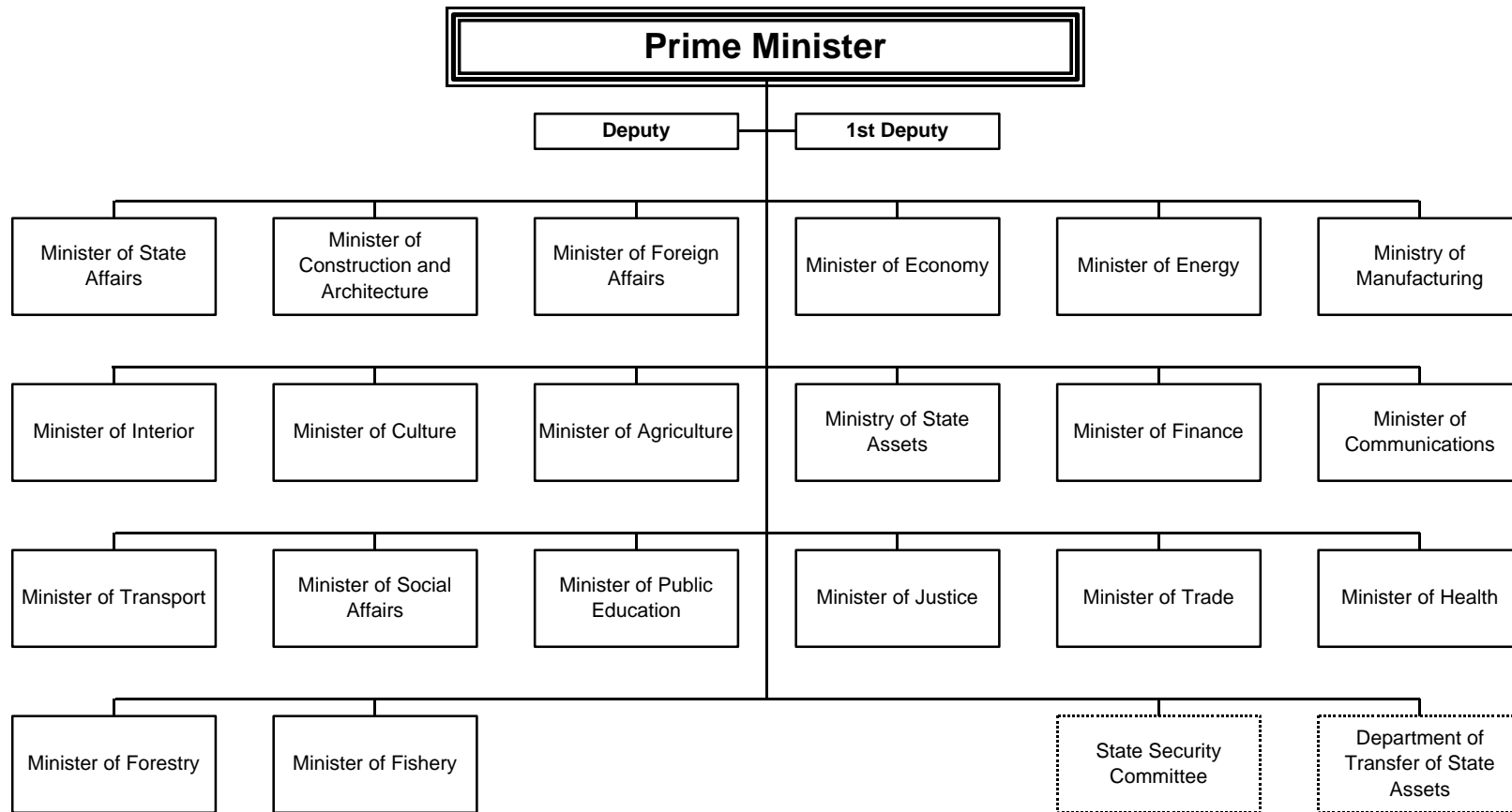


Figure 2. 2nd Latvian government (Godmanis). November 1991-July 1993.

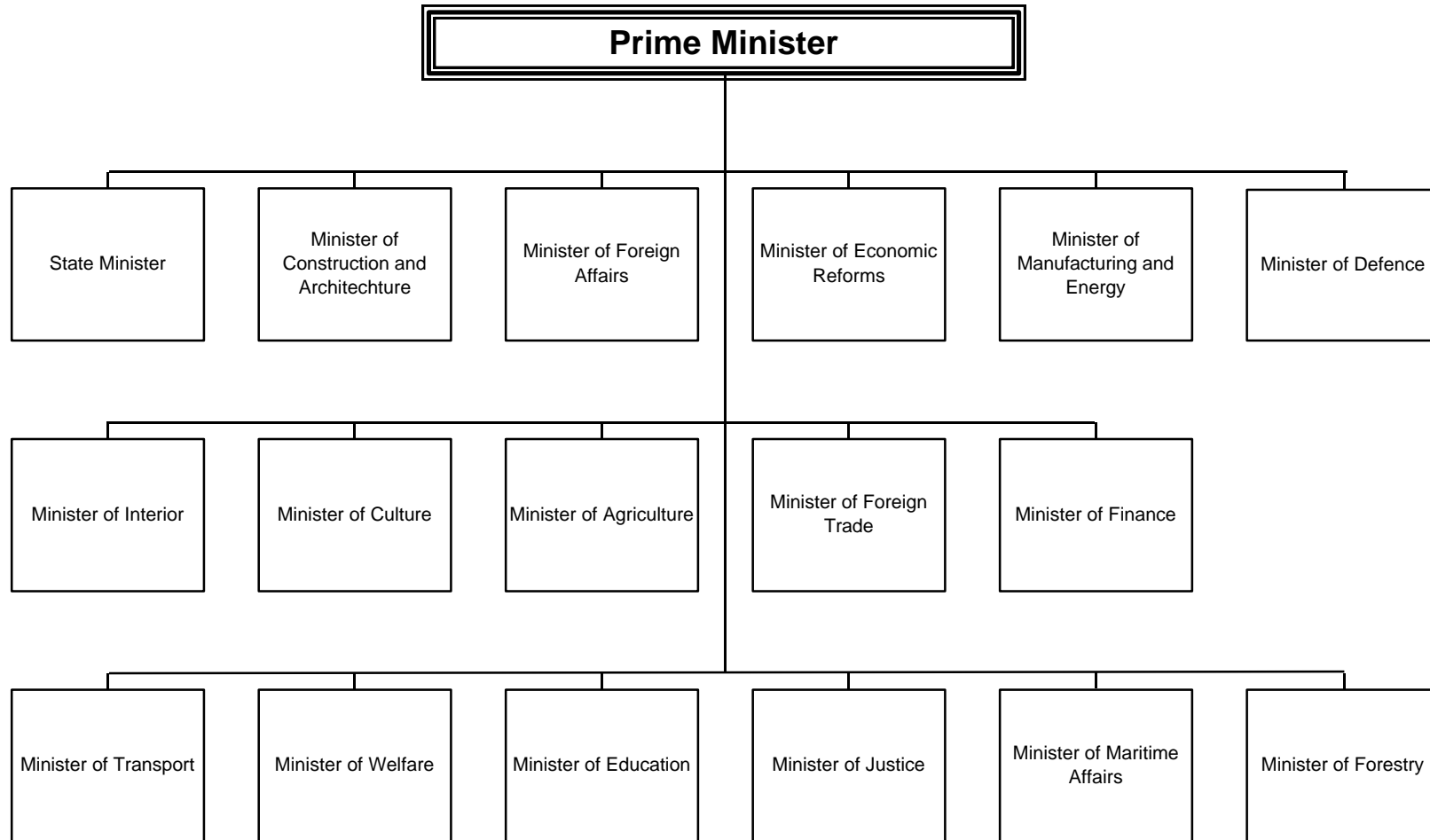


Figure 3. Structure of Ministry.

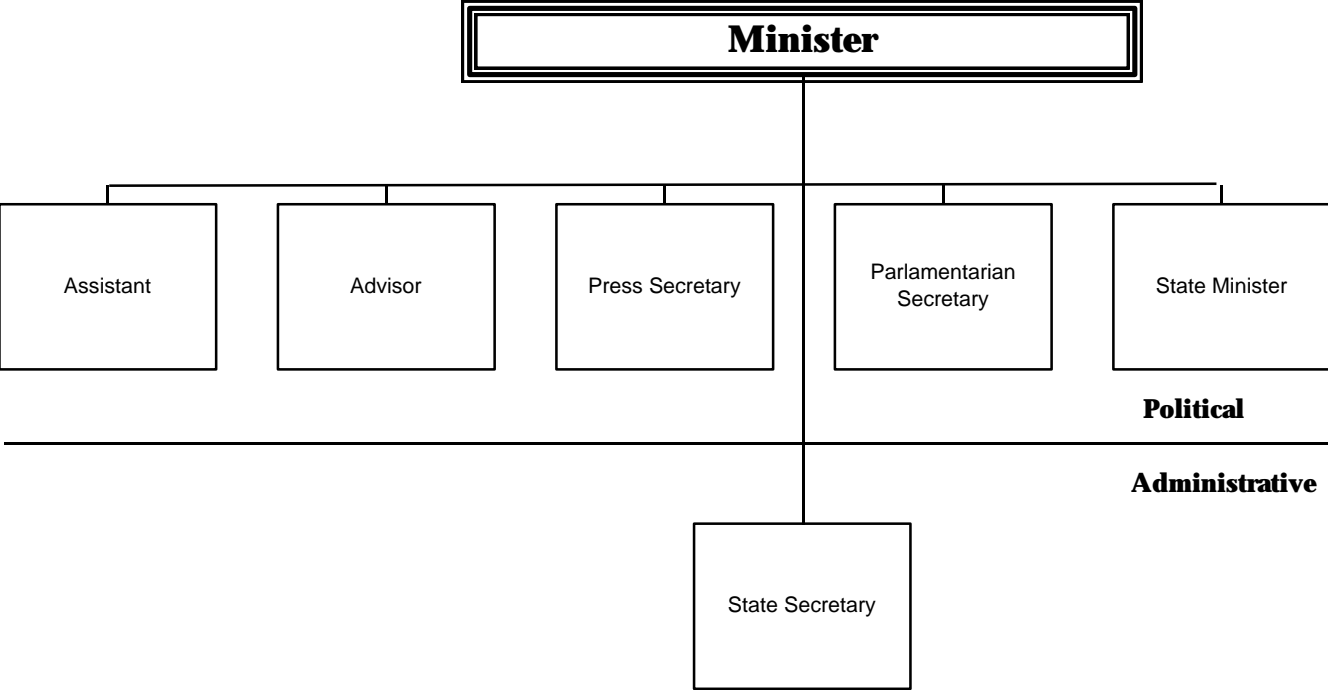
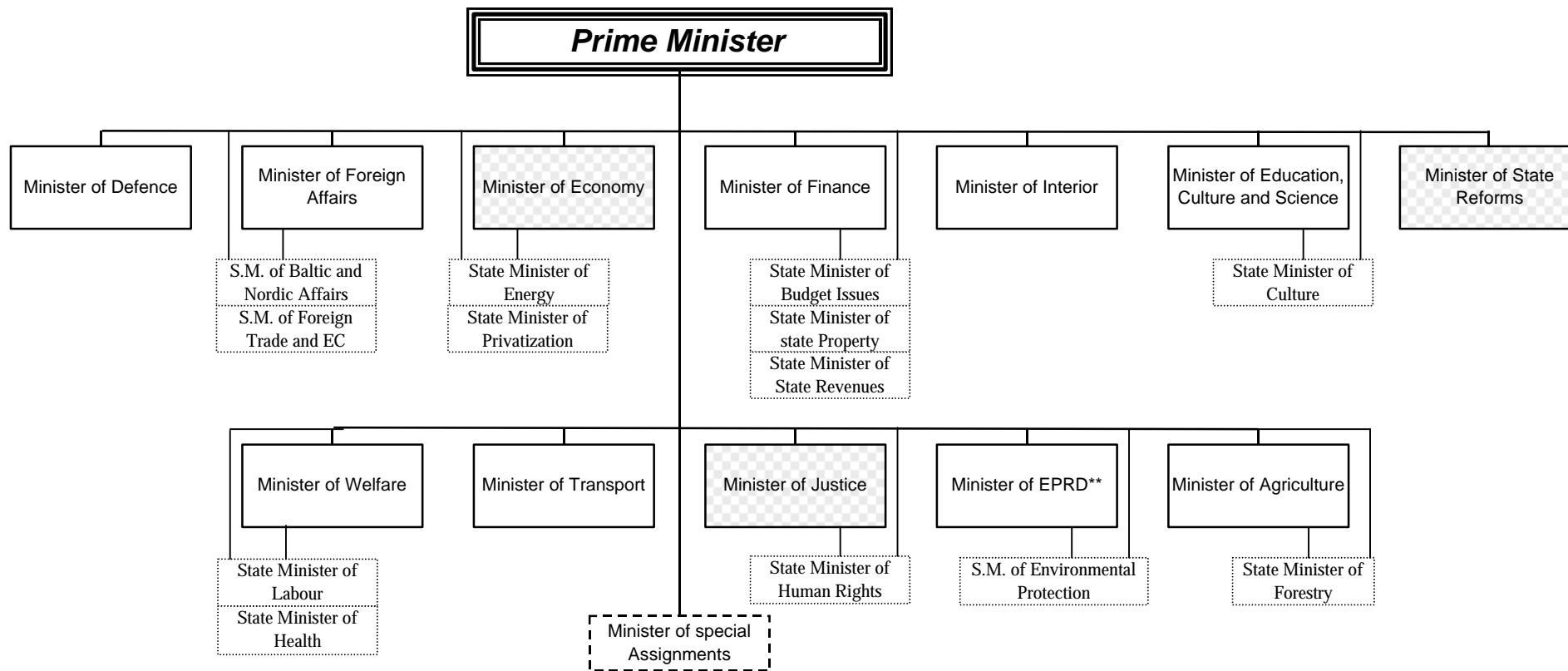


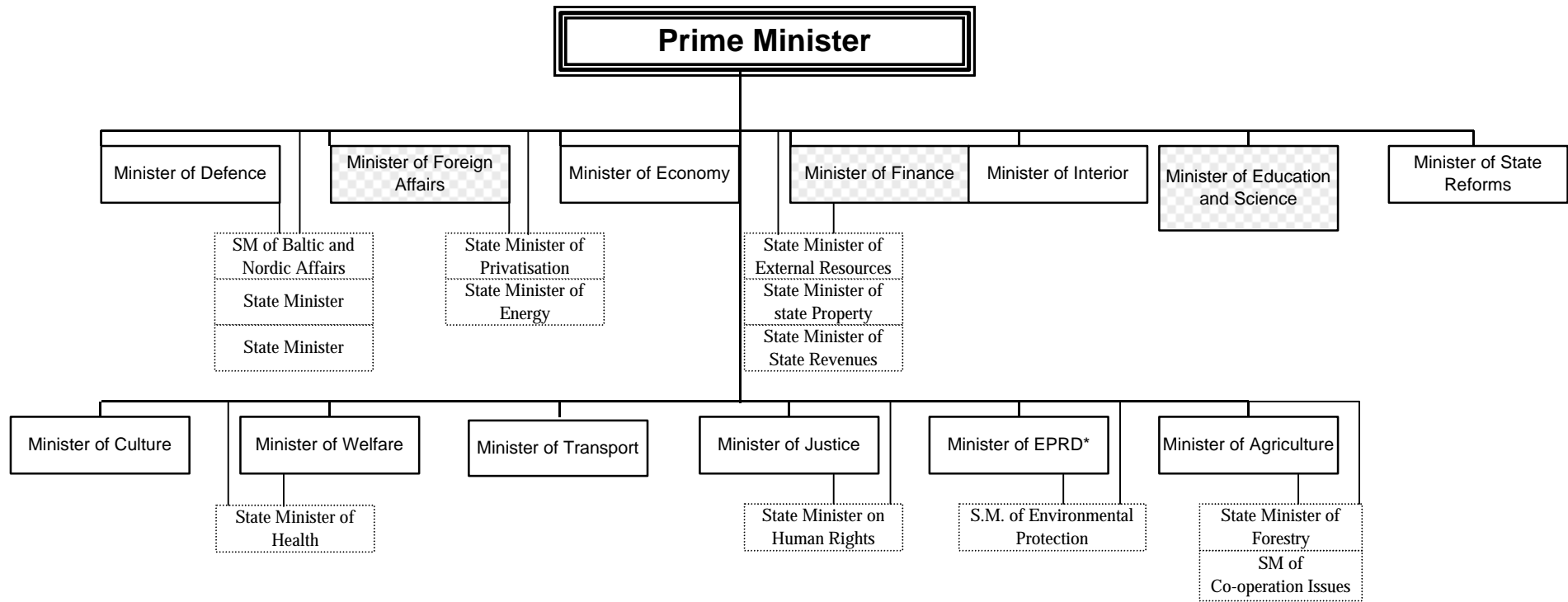
Figure 4. 3rd government (Birkavs), July 1993-September 1994



* Gray patterned boxes - Also function as Deputy PMs

** Minister of EPRD - Minister of Environmental Protection and Regional Development

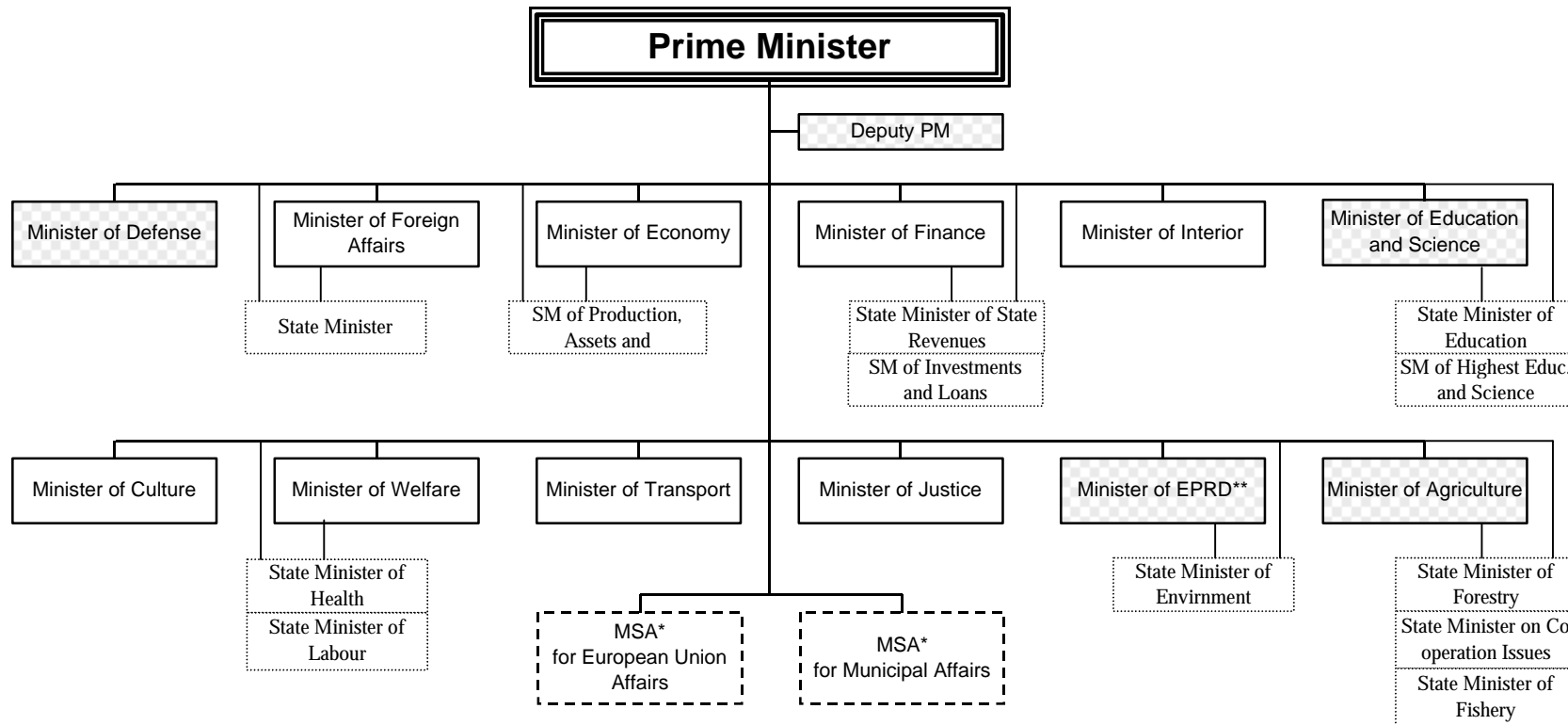
Figure 5. Third Latvian Government (Gailis) Sep. 1994 - Dec. 1995



* Minister of EPRD - Minister of Environmental Protection and Regional Development

** Gray patterned boxes - Also function as Deputy PMs

Figure 6. 4th Latvian government (Skele), December 1995-November 1996

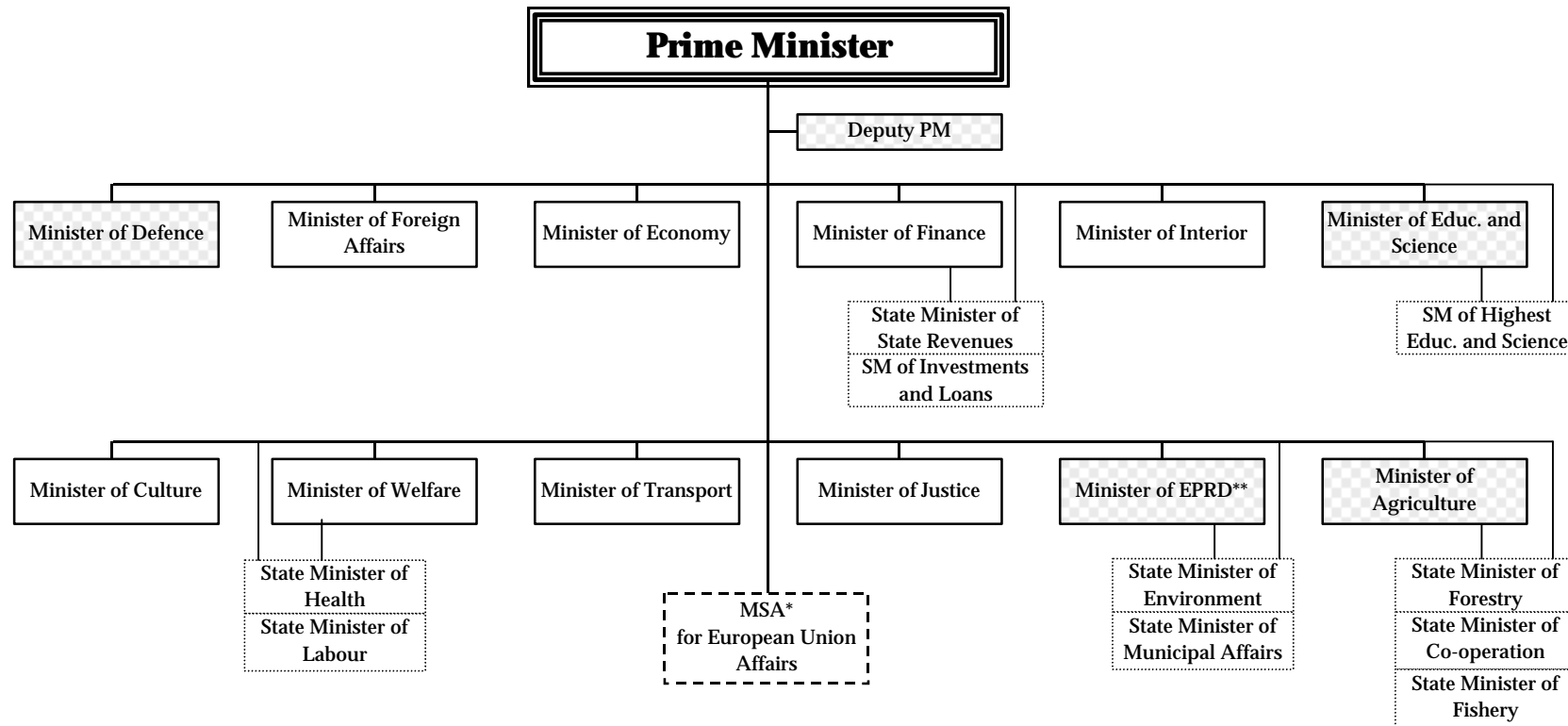


* MSA - Minister of special Assignments

** Minister of EPRD - Minister of Environmental Protection and Regional Development

*** Gray boxes - Also serve as Deputy PMs

Figure 7. Sixth Latvian Government (Skele) Nov. 1996 - Feb. 1997

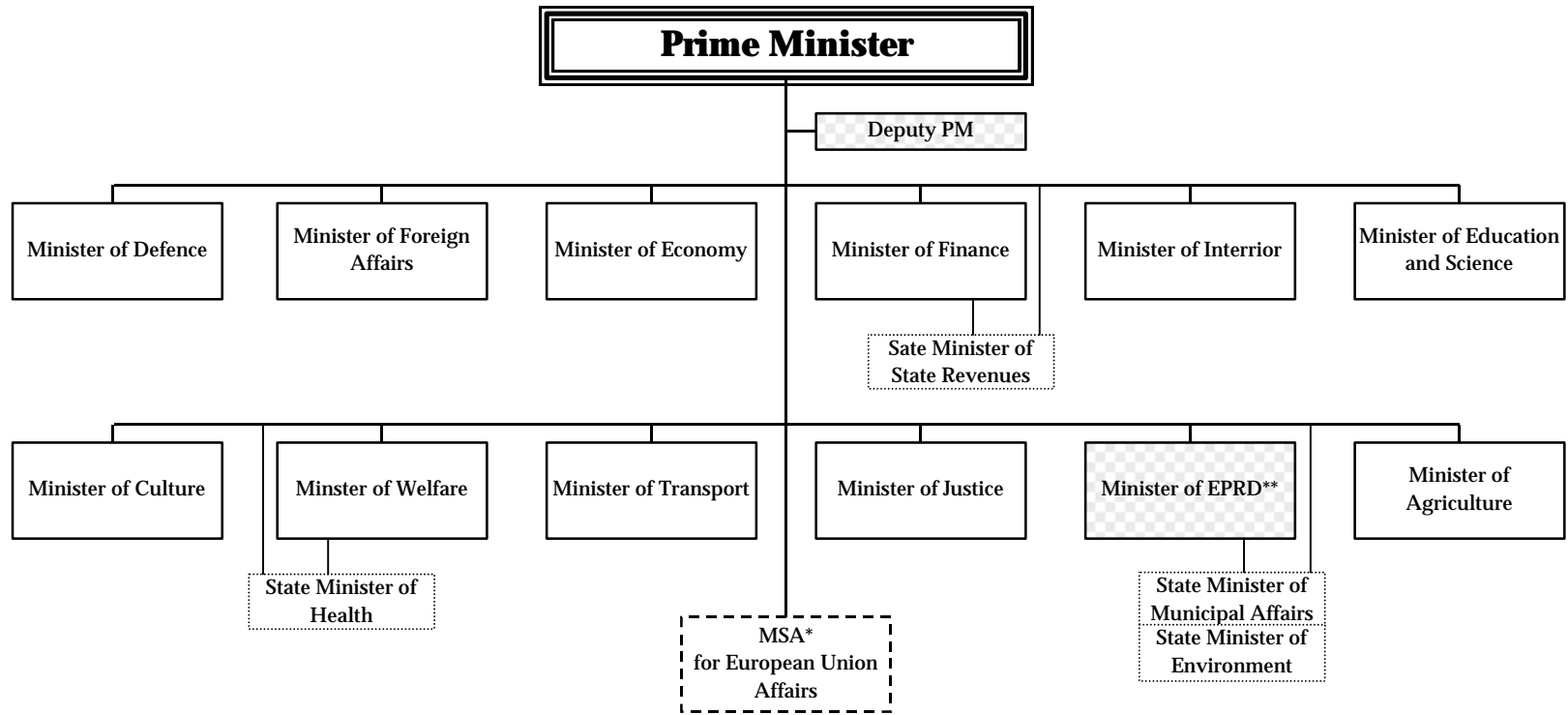


* MSA - Minister of Special Assignments

** Minister of EPRD - Minister of Environmental Protection and Regional Development

*** Gray boxes - also function as Deputy PMs

Figure 8. Seventh Latvian government (Skele) February 1997 - August 1997.

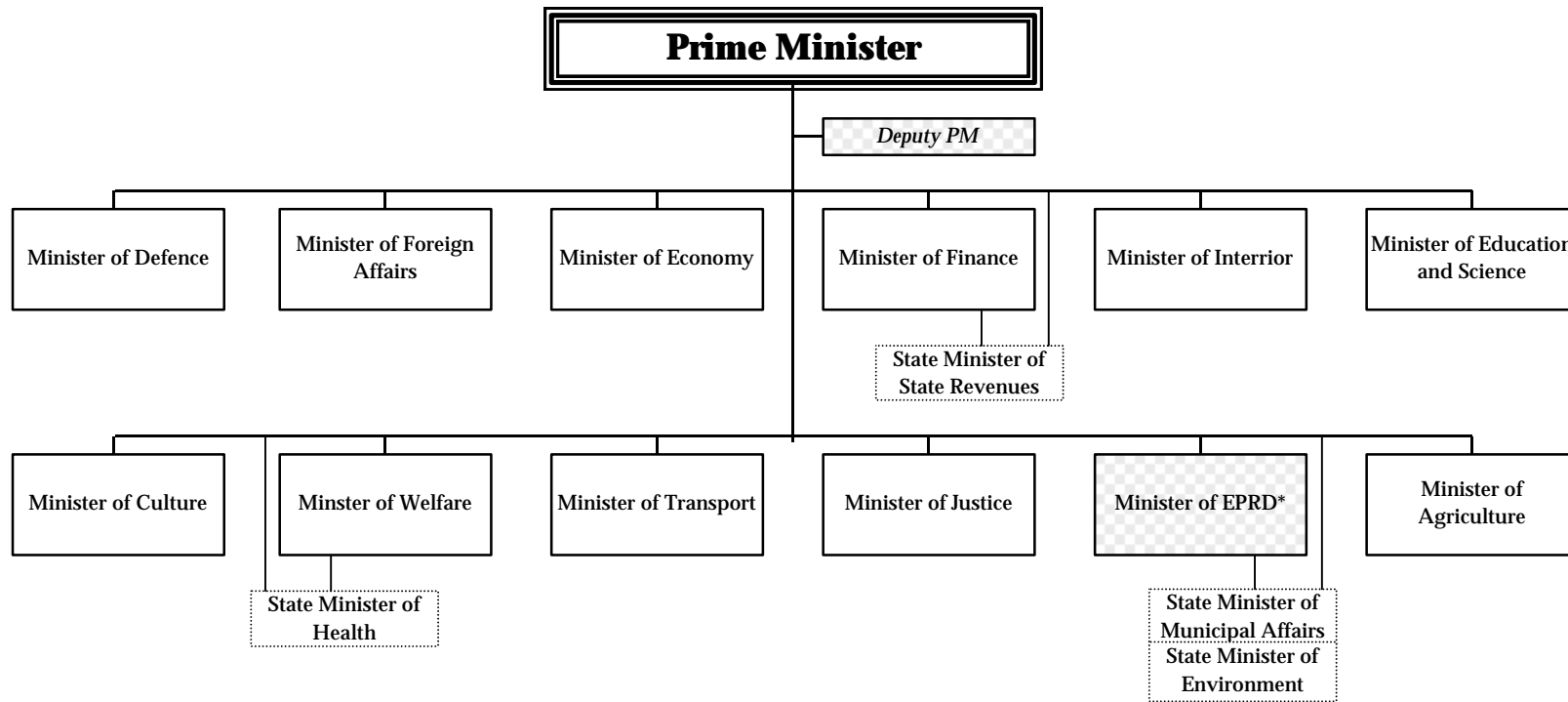


* MSA - Minister of special Assignments

** Minister of EPRD - Minister of Environmental Protection and Regional Development

*** Gray boxes - Also funtion as deputy PMs

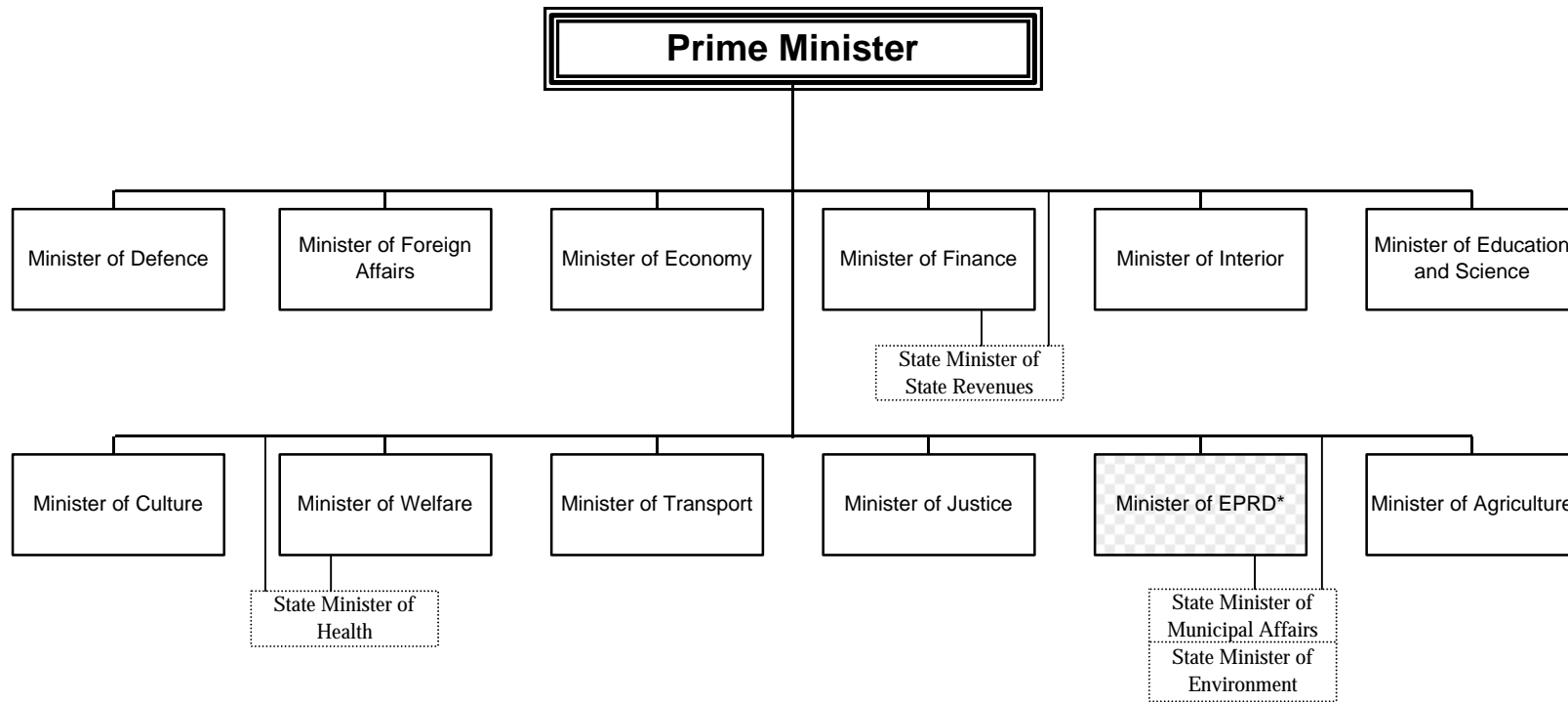
Figure 9. Eighth Latvian government (Krasts), August 1997 - April 1998.



* Minister of EPRD - Minister of Environmental Protection and Regional Development

** Gray boxes - Also function as Deputy PMs

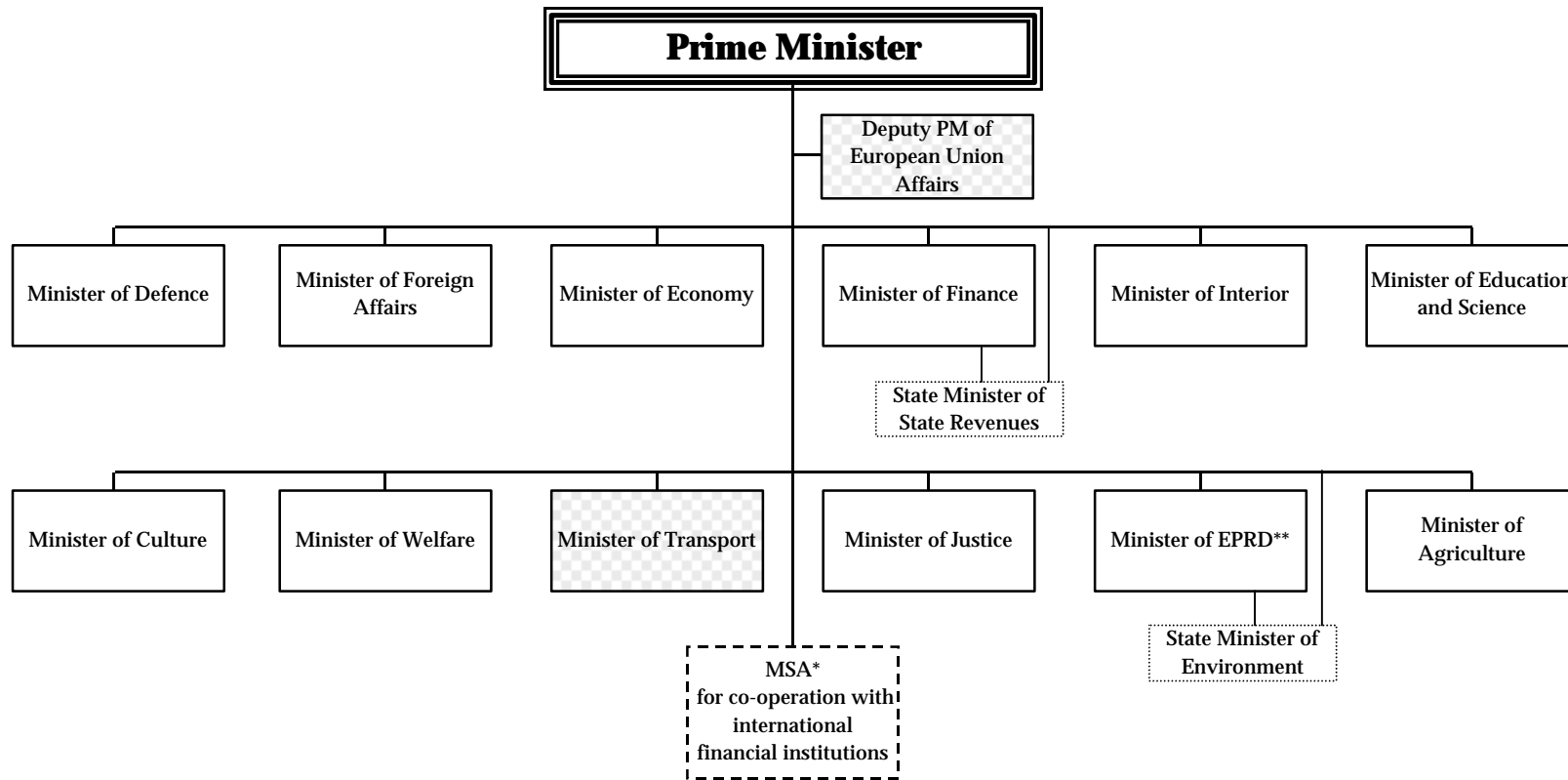
Figure 10. Ninth Latvian government (Krasts), April 1998 - November 1998.



* Minister of EPRD - Minister of Environmental Protection and Regional Development

** Gray boxes - Also function as deputy PMs

Figure 11. Tenth Latvian government (Kristopans), November 1998 - May 1999.

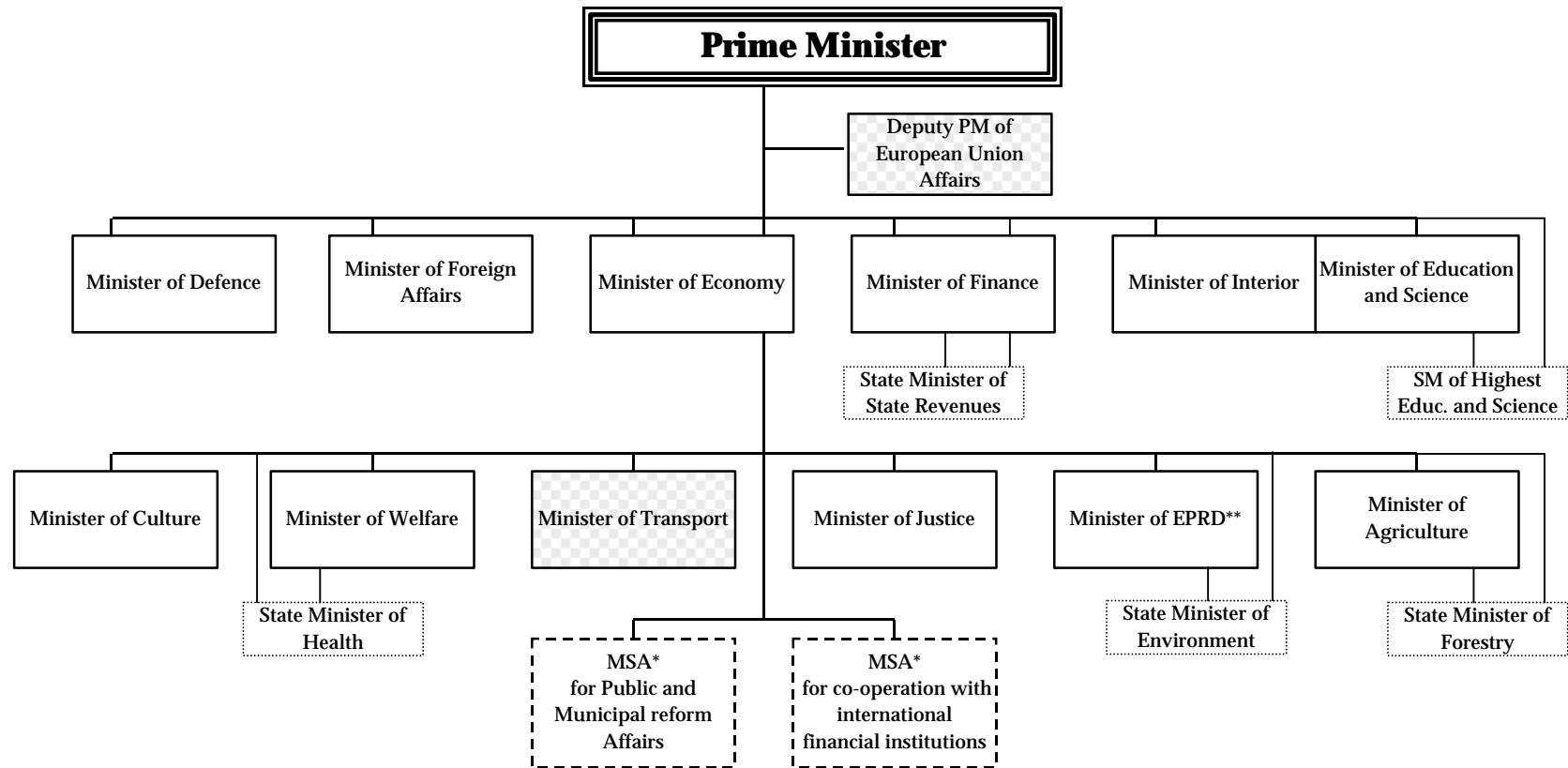


* MSA - Minister of special Assignments

** Minister of EPRD - Minister of Environmental Protection and Regional Development

*** Gray boxes - Also function as deputy PMs.

Figure 12. Eleventh Latvian Government (Kristopans), May 1999 - July 1999.

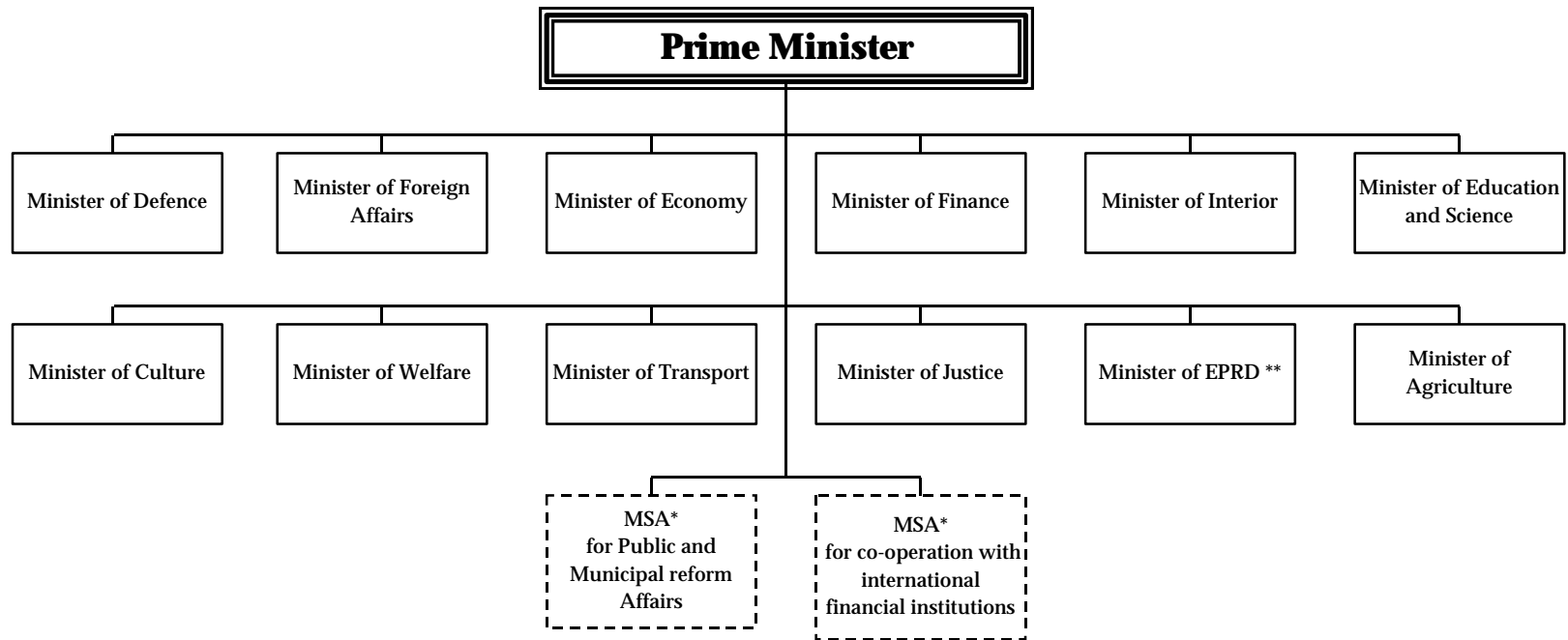


* MSA - Minister of special Assignments

** Minister of EPRD - Minister of Environmental Protection and Regional Development

*** Gray boxes - Also function as deputy PMs

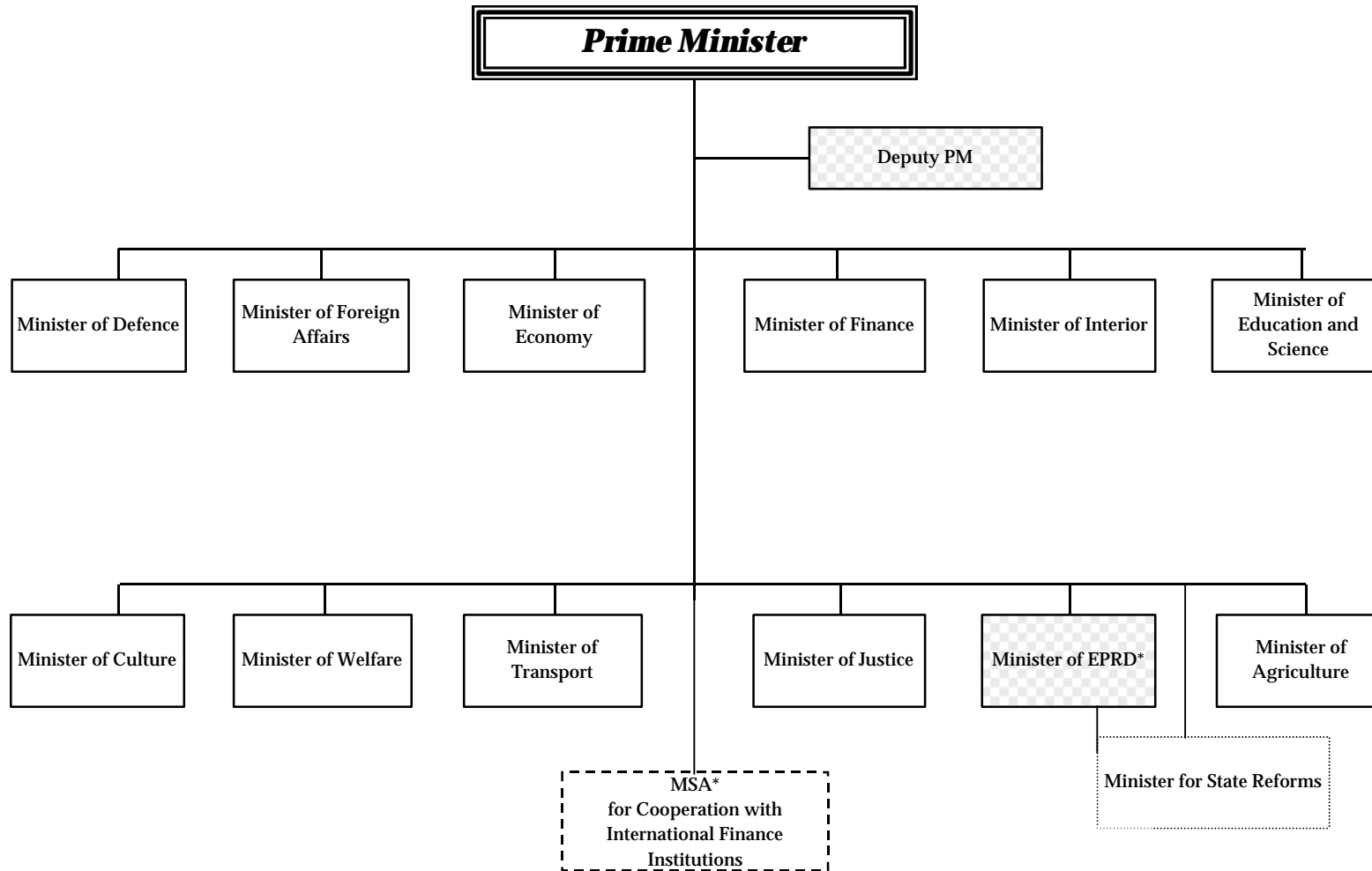
Figure 13. Twelfth Latvian government (Skele), July 1999 - May 2000.



* MSA - Minister of special Assignments

** Minister of EPRD - Minister of Environmental Protection and Regional Development

Figure 14. Thirteenth Latvian Government (Berzins) May 2000 -



* Minister of EPRD - Minister of Environmental Protection and Regional Development

** Gray boxes - Also function as deputy PMs

Table 1. Comparison of number of members in Latvian governments

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	1st Latvian government (Godmanis) May 1990 - November 1991	2nd Latvian government (Godmanis), November 1991 - July 1993	3rd Latvian government (Birkavs) July 1993 - September 1994	4th Latvian government (Gailis) September 1994 - December 1995	5th Latvian government (Skele), December 1995 - November 1996	6th Latvian government (Skele) February 1996 - February 1997	7th Latvian government (Krasts) August 1997 - April 1997	8th Latvian government (Krasts) April 1998 - November 1998	9th Latvian government (Skele) November 1998 - May 1999	10th Latvian government (Berzins) May 1999 - July 1999	11th Latvian government (Berzins) July 1999 - May 2000	12th Latvian government (Skele) May 2000 -	13th Latvian government (Skele) May 2000 -
Number of ministers	20	17	12	13	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
Number of special assignment ministers	0	0	1	0	2	1	1	0	0	1	2	2	2
Number of state ministers	0	0	13	13	12	10	4	4	4	2	5	0	0
Number of deputy Prime Ministers (non-ministers)	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0
Number of members in the Cabinet of Ministers	23	18	27	27	28	25	19	18	17	17	21	15	15