

Satellite laser ranging in the University of Latvia since 1975.

¹M. Abele, ²J. Balodis, ²A. Rubans, ¹K. Salmins, ²A. Zarins

¹ Institute of Astronomy University of Latvia, University of Latvia Boulevard Rainis 19, Riga LV1586, Latvia

² Institute of Geodesy and Geoinformatics, University of Latvia Boulevard Rainis 19, Riga LV1586, Latvia

The history of satellite geodesy at the University of Latvia started in 1957 with visual observations of “Sputnik-1”, the first artificial Earth satellite. Since then the University of Latvia has been constantly involved in satellite observation activities not only as an observation site, but also as a hardware and software design center for satellite observations. Passing through visual and photographic observation periods, in 1975 University of Latvia joined SLR community and is still there. This paper describes some of the highlights in satellite laser ranging history in Riga including satellite tracking activities, participation in international space geodesy programs, establishing a permanent laser ranging station, telescope and instrumentation design.