

President of Latvia calls for urgent review of law important for preservation of Saint Peter's Church currently stuck in the parliament

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On 18 January 2020, President of Latvia Egils Levits sent a formal letter to the Chair of the Saeima Education, Culture and Science Committee Arvils Ašeradens regarding the proposed Riga Saint Peter's Church Law. In his letter President stresses that 'legislature should pass the law, which provides a well-considered and sufficiently integrated regulatory framework, thus securing the future and sustainability of Riga Saint Peter's Church for the benefit of Latvian people'.

Letter of the President points out that 'a separate law is needed to recognise the special legal status of Riga St Peter's Church. It is the duty of the parliament to pass the law that gives answers to all questions about the legal status of Riga St Peter's Church'. President Levits also underlines that the law has been delayed for too long and this situation needs to be sorted out as soon as possible, because 'Riga St Peter's Church building is in a very poor condition and major financial investments and repair works to preserve the building are absolutely unavoidable and imminent'.

According to President, law should consider all roles of the Riga St Peter's Church, which is a notable national architectural and cultural monument requiring reconstruction, it is used for religious ceremonies, it is part of national heritage (especially the Baltic German part of this heritage) that needs to be preserved, it is a cultural asset and attracts many tourists. To fulfil all these roles, as President Levits suggests, law should provide a sustainable church management model. 'Republic of Latvia, Riga City administration and Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia (together with German Evangelical Lutheran St Peter's Church of Latvia, which would be given a special status within the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia by this law) can create an entity for managing the Church building and take care of its preservation and development. Law should define the key governance aspects and guidelines, including decision-making procedures,' indicates President Levits.

He also expresses gratitude to Saeima Education, Culture and Science Committee for agreeing to resume the review of the

proposed law. Egils Levits is certain that Committee, which successfully passed special [laws](#) regarding the handover, restoration and future use of buildings on 4 Richard Wagner Street and Valņu Street in Riga, should be perfectly capable of finding the most sustainable Riga St Peter's Church management model.

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