

# Parliament can work remotely: it is constitutional and technically possible says Satversme

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Today, President of Latvia Egils Levits chaired the second Meeting of Constitutional Bodies in the Riga Castle. President of Latvia, Prime Minister, President of Constitutional Court and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court met for a top-level government meeting to discuss the framework for further cooperation and rules of procedure for coming meetings.

First joint meeting of the President of Latvia and heads of constitutional institutions representing the legislative, executive and judicial branches of the government took place on 23 March 2020. 'Core principles of constitutional institution emergency response' adopted during the meeting ensured that government's response to crisis caused by Covid-19 was well-coordinated and strategically oriented. First meeting between constitutional bodies also showed how important these meetings are in giving heads of constitutional bodies a format for political debate on current national agenda required to come up with shared position on possible solutions backed by all.

During the meeting, Ināra Mūrniece, Speaker of the Saeima, informed other participants about the decision of the Presidium of the Saeima to let parliamentarians continue to work remotely. Other participants agreed that parliament has the right and, more importantly, the duty to restructure its proceedings depending on changing forecasts regarding the development of pandemic and take all necessary formal decisions. All sides reiterated that it is constitutionally and technically possible for parliament to work remotely according to Satversme.

Other topics included preparations for the 100th Anniversary of the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia (Satversme) in 2022. Heads of constitutional institutions agreed to work together on bringing constitution closer to the people, especially younger audiences. It was also underlined that people in rural areas should be able to enjoy the anniversary of our constitution as much as those living in the capital. President Levits praised centenary celebration organisers and underlined that 'various events helped attract greater attention to circumstances surrounding the founding of the Latvian State – many people were encouraged to

contemplate the meaning and role of various future-defining historical moments, which is good for national pride. Satversme affects the life of all of us. Our people need to deepen their understanding of what our constitutional law means'.

President also thanked Ineta Ziemele, President of the Constitutional Court, for constructive and excellent management of the court's work and wished her to keep up close cooperation with Latvian authorities after she has started working in her new capacity as the judge of the European Court of Justice.

Participants of the meeting agreed that constitutional institution meetings should be held on ad hoc basis, not less than twice a year. Agenda of these meetings should be comprised of discussions on how to improve the joint governance of constitutional arrangements that exceed the scope of responsibility of either branch of government.

Participants: President of Latvia Egils Levits, Speaker of the Saeima Ināra Mūrniece, Parliamentary Secretary of the Prime Minister Evika Siliņa, President of the Constitutional Court Ineta Ziemele and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Aigars Strupišs.



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