

## President of Latvia thanks healthcare professionals for selflessness and dedication in protecting the health of Latvian residents

Published more than 5 years ago

Published: 25.03.2020.



On 25 March, President of Latvia Egils Levits called the Director of the State Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Liene Cipule and warmly thanked the staff of EMS, and its Director personally, for their efforts in curbing the Coronavirus disease Covid-19 outbreak.

'You are on the front line. I want to thank you personally for strong and sound management. I want to thank your staff, as well, for high professional standards and resilience they have displayed,' said the President.

Liene Cipule underlined that EMS is constantly striving for the highest professional standards: 'It is what we do. Our service is a tight unit and we continue to provide adequate support as expected.'

President and EMS Director talked about latest efforts in preventing further spread of Covid-19. President Levits asked about the availability of protective equipment and items. Director Cipule said that healthcare workers are under highest level of protection. As soon as news about the spreading of virus globally reached Latvia, EMS immediately began to stock up on all necessary supplies. Liene Cipule also added that she is grateful to everyone who support EMS, including Ministry of Health, Ministry of Transport and Cabinet of Ministers as a whole.

EMS Director Liene Cipule underlined that Latvian business owners are very supportive. Given the circumstances, their willingness to restructure manufacturing and focus on domestic needs is crucial. That way we have enough essential items and are better protected against further spreading of the virus. Liene Cipule once again urged all public to act responsibly and comply with recommendations of EMS.

In conclusion, Egils Levits once again thanked EMS and other healthcare workers for fighting the outbreak of the virus, high level of preparedness and high professional standards.

Today, President of Latvia Egils Levits sent a letter thanking all doctors and family practitioners, assistant physicians, nurses, nursing assistants, ambulance drivers, dispatch operators, laboratory staff, hospital admissions support staff, pharmacists, assistant pharmacists, head of responsible authorities, head of care providers, medical assistance coordinators: 'We all know that you are exposed to the biggest risk of infection during the pandemic. However, you continue to serve your duty and follow your professional calling. Moreover, you do it selflessly and with utmost dedication. Let me express my deepest respect and gratitude to you on behalf of our nation and myself.'

In his letter, President Levits also underlined that this is a test to our society, our individual ability to act responsibly, restrain ourselves, be mindful and take care of our fellow men and women. 'Crisis reminds us of the actual role of healthcare professionals in our social life. It reminds us how important healthcare is for our country and political life. It reminds us that healthcare is more than an abstract number. It is important for our health and our life. I believe that the state of emergency will become a catalyst for long-term overhaul of the health system and will help secure proper funding for it. Latvian people need that,' emphasised Egils Levits.

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