

## President of Latvia: Latvia supports successful completion of Montenegro EU accession negotiations

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On 11 March, President of Latvia Egils Levits hosted the President of Montenegro Milo Đukanović in the Riga Castle. As this is the first official visit of a President of Montenegro to Latvia, this became a historic meeting.

During the meeting, Egils Levits thanked Montenegro contributing its troops for NATO enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) Battle Group Latvia together with 8 other NATO member countries, thus promoting the security of Latvia and enhancing the collective defence capabilities of the Alliance. Montenegro joined NATO in 2017 and according to President Levits, Latvia highly appreciates the active involvement of Montenegro in NATO activities.

As presidents of both countries agreed during the meeting, Latvia and Montenegro believe that multilateralism is vital to international affairs based on international order and clear legal rules. 'Latvia and Montenegro have very good bilateral relations, fruitful political dialogue and similar stance on international affairs. Last year, during the UN General Assembly, we announced that multilateralism is crucial to the world peace and order, and we reaffirmed that today in the Riga Castle' said President Levits.

President of Latvia also underlined that Latvia has supported and will continue to support the European Union (EU) membership of Montenegro. 'Support for European integration of Western Balkans has been our policy for a long time. We believe that it would benefit Europe and Western Balkan countries, including, of course, Montenegro. These countries need to go through a transition period, demonstrate their readiness to join the EU and then become EU member states. Montenegro has made a substantial progress in terms of European integration and we hope that it will allow Montenegro join the EU in the nearest future.'

President of Montenegro and President of Latvia discussed how Latvia could provide its technical assistance to Montenegro during the accession negotiations. Latvia would help Montenegro strengthen the rule of law using the experience acquired while

helping other transition countries.

Egils Levits pointed out that Latvia has substantial experience in combating of hybrid threats: 'NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence based in Latvia is actively engaged and successfully addresses these concerns. President of Montenegro expressed interest in cooperating with Latvia on ensuring that Montenegro is capable of addressing the relevant security challenges.'

Egils Levits and Milo Đukanović confirmed that Latvia and Montenegro are actively looking forward to deepening of bilateral relations in various fields.

After the meeting with President of Latvia in the Riga Castle, President Đukanović went to Camp Ādaži to meet with Montenegrin troops deployed to NATO eFP Battle Group Latvia. He also visited the Museum of Occupation of Latvia. President of Montenegro began his official visit to Baltic countries by visiting Estonia and Lithuania.



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