

President of Latvia: Poland played an invaluable role in defending Latvia's statehood in 1920

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Today, during his official visit to Warsaw, President of Latvia, Egils Levits, met with the Marshall of the Senate of Poland, Stanislaw Karczewski, and the President of the Sejm of Poland, Elżbieta Witek.

During the meeting with representatives of the Polish parliament, President Levits underlined the importance of parliamentary democracy for Latvia and Poland. He underlined that parliamentary systems are a crucial element of the development of modern states and European countries should prevent the diminishing of the constitutional role of parliaments.

Marshall of the Senate of Poland, Stanislaw Karczewski, praised his recent visit to Latvia, including the meeting with the Speaker of the Saeima (parliament of the Republic of Latvia), Ināra Mūrniece, Polish diaspora in Daugavpils and Polish troops deployed to Camp Ādaži in scope of the NATO's multi-national battlegroup.

President Levits complimented Poland's efforts in keeping close ties with Polish diasporas across the world, including Latvia, and ensuring the continuity of Polish culture throughout generations. Polish parliamentarians thanked Latvia for respecting the Polish community living in Latvia. They also emphasised that there are four Polish secondary schools, one primary school and kindergarten in Latvia, and Polish children can actively participate in the life of Latvia, while maintaining their links with the Polish culture and language.

President Levits assured that Polish community in Latvia plays an important role in the life of our country. Poles have made a significant contribution to Latvia's culture and heritage, including participation in the Latvian War of Independence a hundred years ago and the Awakening, as members of the Latvian National Front (LNF). President of Latvia specifically emphasised the personal contribution of Ita Kozakeviča, one of the most prominent members of LNF who also revived the Association of Latvian Poles, which was instrumental in regaining Latvia's independence.

Both Polish parliamentarians thanked Latvia for the hospitality extended to Polish troops stationed at Camp Ādaži, whereas the President of Latvia thanked Poland for presence of Polish troops in Latvia and crucial support in strengthening of the regional security.

President of Latvia stressed that Latvian people are still deeply grateful to Polish soldiers who sacrificed their lives to help Latvia win back a significant part of its territory in 1920, thus ensuring Latvia's statehood.

Both meetings were strongly focused on Europe's media landscape, cyber security and fight against disinformation. Both sides agreed on the need to preserve the collective memory to give future generations full awareness of historic lessons and prevent the return of painful experiences of totalitarian rule.

Marshall Karczewski and President Vīteklis expressed their deepest gratitude for President Vīteklis' participation in the events commemorating the beginning of the World War II on 1 September. Polish parliamentarians stressed that it was crucial to have 40 official delegations of different countries participating in those events, thus confirming the determination of these countries to prevent similar tragedies like the World War II from ever happening again. According to the President of Latvia, European countries are constantly monitoring current processes to prevent violations of international law – we all know the terrible consequences of tragic incidents like the World War II.

Given the active past cooperation, both sides agreed on the need to continue promoting close inter-parliamentary cooperation between Latvia and Poland. The significance of active cultural and tourism ties was also highlighted. Further research of the traces of Polish culture and heritage in Latvia would bring more Polish tourists to various significant locations in Latvia.

Programme of Latvian president's official visit also included flower laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier to pay tribute to fallen soldier of the World War II. President also revealed a commemorative plaque in the centre of Warsaw at a place where the Latvian diplomatic mission stood from 1923 to 1939. The actual embassy building was destroyed during the bombardment of Warsaw in 1939, therefore the plaque was installed at the adjacent Agricultural Research Institute on 2/4 Ulica Szkolna.

During the plaque reveal, President of Latvia, Egils Vīteklis, thanked the embassy staff, which worked at the embassy back then, for their input in building ties between Latvia and Poland. He also thanked the current Ambassador of Latvia and Ambassador of Poland to Latvia for promoting close and friendly relationship between our countries today.

In his address to the Polish Latvians, who attended the reveal, President Vīteklis stressed the significance of their personal efforts in promoting friendship between the two countries. "It is symbolic that Poland lost its freedom in the very first days of World War II and Latvian embassy was also destroyed at the outset of the war," said the President. President Vīteklis also used the opportunity to once again thank Poland for helping Latvia defend its statehood in 1920. "The spirit of resistance and freedom aspirations of both countries eventually prevailed over totalitarian rule," underlined the President of Latvia.



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