

Address by H.E. President of Latvia Egils Levits at the 100th anniversary celebration of the National Library of Latvia

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Dear Madam Speaker of the Saeima, Dear Prime Minister, Dear Director,

I

Our palace of light has become a visible and recognisable symbol of the folk wisdom of the Latvian people, the desire of the Latvian people for knowledge, and the desire for development. This is especially essential now, in the hundredth year of the library, which marks fundamentality, seriousness, and ability to exist, survive, and change over time. Therefore, it is logical that on the eve of the anniversary day we look at the roots, the beginnings, and also the beginnings of our National Library of Latvia.

Today we are celebrating the National Library of Latvia for its 100th anniversary and opening the exhibition of 14 historical collections of the National Library of Latvia, which has formed the basis of the library's funds. I just looked at them, and you will have the opportunity to look at them, too. They are extremely impressive, and one could spend hours and hours there. Unfortunately, I did not have that much time today, so I promised that I would definitely come and spend one day there because studying those collections intellectually takes time, which is enormous pleasure and intellectual enrichment.

II

The origins of our library are as diverse and comprehensive as the significance of the National Library of Latvia today, covering the entire territory of Latvia, including the stories of destinies, private and public libraries, treasures found and cherished by history enthusiasts.

We see here today the synergy of history and the present. Children and young people, the ones who will shape our future, will see those 14 historical exhibitions today and for half a year. We can thank our predecessors who have created those collections have protected them for decades and even centuries, and those who provide access to them today. That is the only way we can ensure the inheritance of our knowledge, our experience, and our cultural memory, to gain historical depth, which is also the historical depth of our nation, without which our nation could not exist today. By knowing our past, we can both predict our future and shape it so that we all live in a prosperous, just, and flourishing Latvia.

III

Our country tests on our nation, while our nation rests on our culture and language. The National Library of Latvia is a symbol of our culture. It makes the depth and richness of our culture visible to everyone and accessible for everyone to familiarise. I extend my gratitude to the National Library of Latvia for its contribution to our nation and our country for a hundred years.

I wish you a happy anniversary!

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