

## Press Statement of H.E. President of Latvia Mr Raimonds Vējonis after the meeting with H.E. President of Georgia Ms Salome Zourabichvili

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Your Excellency, Madam President of Georgia! It is my pleasure to welcome you to Latvia. We highly appreciate the fact that you visit Latvia and our neighbours, Estonia, in such a short time after taking the presidential office.

Latvia and Georgia share a close friendship and active cooperation in various areas of life. During the meeting, today, Madam President and I discussed our co-operation in economics, trade, education, culture, and tourism. We were pleased to note the steady upward trend in mutual trade, especially in tourism.

A significant part of our conversation was devoted to foreign and security policy. More than ten years have passed since Russia's aggression against Georgia. Latvia has always strongly condemned and condemns the actions by Russia in Georgia, condemns the occupation of the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. We have always supported and will support the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia in various international organisations. Latvia is an active member of the European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia.

Latvia highly appreciates Georgia's contribution to international security by participating in NATO-led and EU-led operations. Significant progress in reforms confirms Georgia's determination and tireless efforts to become a NATO member state in the future. We are supportive of those efforts taken by Georgia to become a NATO member state. Therefore, it is important to continue the NATO open door policy in this regard. The same goes for the European Union. Latvia has always supported and will continue to support the efforts by Georgia to achieve the goals set, and I am convinced that it will definitely happen.

During the meeting today, we also discussed closer cooperation between Georgia and the European Union, especially after many crucial decisions are taken and substantial agreements are signed such as the introduction of a visa-free regime between the EU

and Georgia. Those decisions are very important for the further facilitation of the negotiations between Georgia and the EU on the possibilities for even closer cooperation and becoming its member one day.

At the same time, Georgia has undoubtedly implemented and continues to implement various reforms successfully. However, work must be continued, because reforms are not just a requirement to continue negotiating on accession to an international organisation. Reforms are necessary for every society because they are aimed at improving the situation in every area of life. Moreover, Georgia is actively reforming and, I am sure, will continue to do so.

Your Excellency, Madam President,

I have had the opportunity to visit Georgia in various positions and observe the enormous positive changes in Georgia. Despite all the difficulties and the fact that two regions of Georgia are occupied, the people of Georgia are advocating democracy, the rule of law, and the strengthening of Euro-Atlantic links firmly and steadfastly. I wish you achieved the goals set so that our countries would become partners and member states in the same organisations and unions in the nearest future.

Thank you for your visit to Latvia!



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