

The President of Latvia Raimonds Vējonis visits Tartu during his state visit to Estonia

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While continuing his state visit to Estonia, President of Latvia Raimonds Vējonis met with the Mayor of Tartu and addressed the students and lecturers of the University of Tartu in Tartu on Thursday, 11 April 2019.

At the Tartu City Hall, the President of Latvia was awarded the Honorary Medal for outstanding merits. The Tartu City Council makes a decision on awarding the Honorary Medal.

In his turn, when addressing the audience at the University of Tartu, the President of Latvia has stressed that in the 19th century, during the national awakening of Latvians and Estonians, the destiny of our nations became closely linked through studying and teaching at the Tartu University. It is the place, which demonstrated that one, who acquires knowledge, inevitably seeks freedom – as individuals and as a nation.

“We are small nations in terms of population and territory. Our greatest resource is our people. There is no better investment in people than in education. Never in the past had we had so many opportunities to pursue knowledge as today. And it is our responsibility - both in government and education institutions - to provide access to comprehensive education, and much more – to create a knowledge society - a society where the urge to know more, to study and to grow is natural. In the same way, we are responsible for the creation of an environment that is beneficial for the development of science,” emphasised Raimonds Vējonis.

The President of Latvia has indicated that knowledge society refers to the society in which the creation, dissemination, and utilisation of information has become the most important factor of production. In such a society, knowledge assets, also called intellectual capital, are the most powerful producer of wealth. “Only educated society can maintain a strong state in the long term. And only well-informed society can build a better and more inclusive society,” stated Raimonds Vējonis.

The President of Latvia has noted that most of the contemporary knowledge is very different from what was a cutting edge many centuries ago. One must speak about the new technologies and the new world they create every day. Technologies have a great power of bringing society together, and at the same time, they can create new divides. Technologies form completely different and new challenges for both society and education. The question of freedom is at the core of such challenges. Internet freedom has become one of the core human freedoms all over the world – the same as the freedom of speech and the freedom of assembling. We – Estonia and Latvia - have achieved a lot by applying innovative solutions in the public sector, becoming an example for many others.

“Today we need more and more knowledge to maintain freedom in the technological world. The increase of our knowledge must be at least proportional to that of other societies and individuals. No one can achieve this alone. In this regard, the Baltic Defence Academy located in Estonia is an excellent example of shared efforts for our common goals,” mentioned Raimonds Vējonis.

To conclude his address at the University of Tartu, the President of Latvia stressed, “At present, our nations are connected through countless partnerships between our students, artists, politicians, business people, athletes, and many, many others. Still, I am sure that we can do even more together through the shared efforts of our countries and more personal connections as well.”

From 9 April to 11 April 2019, President of Latvia Raimonds Vējonis pays a state visit to Estonia. First Lady of Latvia Iveta Vējone accompanies the President of Latvia on the state visit to Estonia.

When continuing his state visit to Estonia in Tartu, the President of Latvia will lay flowers at the graveyard of Latvian riflemen and Latvian refugees killed in the First World War. At the end of the visit, the presidential couple will attend the reception hosted by the Ambassador of Latvia to Estonia and an official farewell ceremony of the Presidents of Latvia and Estonia at the Estonian National Museum.

During his state visit to Estonia, the President of Latvia and First Lady of Latvia Iveta Vējone had an extensive program in Tallinn, Paide, and Tartu, covering the political, economic, educational, and cultural cooperation of the countries.

Address at the University of Tartu “Defending Our Freedoms: the Role of Knowledge”





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