

## President of Latvia: Latvia welcomes NATO 2030

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Today, President of Latvia Egils Levits delivered a speech at online NATO Eastern Flank (Bucharest 9) Summit, which was also joined by the President of the United States of America Joe Biden and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg. In his speech, President Levits underlined that he is honoured to attend the meeting of a special group of NATO Allies with a strong commitment to Transatlantic partnership and NATO's development.

Egils Levits thanked US President Biden for joining the e-summit and in-depth understanding of Eastern Flank issues: 'You confirmed this most clearly when you visited Latvia in 2016 and met with all three Baltic Presidents.' He also thanked NATO Secretary General for NATO 2030 initiative and the 2022 Strategic Concept.

President of Latvia urged NATO to step up its efforts in reinforcing information space: 'When authoritarian states use modern technology to distort our information space, to interfere in the fair conduct of our elections and even to carry out assassinations on NATO territory, then it is time to wake up to these new challenges. It is most important to remember, as we enter a renewed period of geopolitical rivalry, that this is a contest between democracy and authoritarianism.'

Egils Levits stressed the importance of close Transatlantic link: 'We must acknowledge the continued - or even increased - importance of the United States' leadership and the Transatlantic link itself. Europe needs the US, just as the US needs her Allies.'

He also paid tribute to the excellent support Latvia is receiving through eFP from the Canadian-led Battle Group in Latvia which comprises ten NATO Allies.

President Levits also emphasised the importance of NATO defending the shared values like democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law.

'Bucharest 9 must not forget its close neighbours. We should express our full support for Ukraine's and Georgia's aspirations of Euro-Atlantic integration. The people of Belarus, too, want political freedom. The citizens of all three countries aspire to defend democracy against authoritarianism. We must do what we can to help all three countries to develop free, democratic institutions as we ourselves have done since the fall of the Iron Curtain,' said President Levits.

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