

Address of the President of Latvia, Egils Levits, at the Public Utilities Commission's 20th anniversary conference

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Dear ladies and gentlemen,

20 years of Public Utilities Commission is a good milestone for taking a look back at contribution and role of this independent regulatory authority in public administration.

Public Utilities Commission is responsible for ensuring regulatory oversight of public service providers and sectors, and it also is directly involved in promotion of the energy sector.

Efficiency of your organisation is vital for sustainable development of democratic Latvia and more open competition on the domestic market.

In recent years you have made significant progress in boosting our energy market.

You have introduced better regulatory tools for our market and also created platform for public engagement in decision-making.

You have had your share of challenges at times, as well, when society took more active stance on further opening up of electricity market. Electricity and heating market, and hence the decisions of the national regulatory authority, have huge impact on our everyday life and determine how we perceive the Commission.

That is why your vision of becoming one of the most reliable and open government bodies from the public perspective is very much linked to how independent and professional you are in making sure general public understands the rationale of your

regulatory decisions.

Commission must be able to reconcile the interests of all stakeholders: the society as consumer and public service provider as player competing on the domestic market.

National regulatory authority must have qualified staff, which can perform its responsibilities professionally, impartially and without bias. Commission must be actually and thoroughly independent because its decisions on public services are often linked to politically sensitive matters and may lead to political pressure being exerted.

In recent years, some decisions of the Commission have sparked a very lively legal debate at the Court of Justice of the European Union. Senate of the Supreme Court has put several proceedings on hold until it receives a preliminary ruling on how to interpret the EU laws regarding opening of the electricity market from the Court of Justice of the European Union.

Such debate on common values underpinning the European legal space only contributes to better visibility of Latvia.

Public Utilities Commission has also built strong partnerships with its Lithuanian, Estonian and Polish counterparts in scope of the Baltic electricity grid synchronisation project.

Thank you for everything you have done in the past 20 years! I wish you all the success in finding the most innovative application of ground-breaking technologies the age of information has given us.

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