

Address by the President of Latvia, Egils Levits, on the 103rd Anniversary of the Proclamation of the Republic of Latvia

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Dear Fellow Latvians,

Tonight, we celebrate the founding of the Latvian State together. No matter how far or close we are. November 18th is the most important day for all of us, for everyone here in Latvia and elsewhere in the world. It is an important day for everyone who considers themselves Latvian and Latvian citizens who treasure Latvia in their heart.

Latvia is what binds us together. Yes, we are all sad and anxious about what is going on. Some have lost their temper and begun drawing lines between us and them. Everyone is finding refuge in their own truth.

But it is crucial to remember that we are Latvia, and we must all embrace our freedom, plurality and richness of life experiences.

The things that unite us are far stronger than anything that may come our way to divide us.

The decision to proclaim the Republic of Latvia 103 years ago came from 39 members of the People's Council. They had different values and visions, too. There were many hot topics and disputes between them. Nevertheless, they came together for the greater good of the Latvian nation and chose the ultimate goal of creating the Latvian State.

By working together, joining our forces, we can turn the wheels of history in our desired direction. We have won the War of Independence, joined hands in the Baltic Way to regain our freedom, worked together to change Latvia and turn it into a modern European country.

We are stronger together, reinforced by our sense of togetherness, care for each other. And that is what the 18 November is all about. We are part of the bigger picture where everyone is equal and important because they belong here, they are one of us.

I urge you to pay your tribute to our founders tonight. Send your prayers for everyone with whom you are sharing all the joy and sorrow life brings your way as you celebrate tonight.

May the 104th year of Latvia give you lots of energy to do the best and finest at your job.

We are together here, in Kurzeme, Zemgale, Sēlija, Latgale and Vidzeme. Together wherever Latvians are in this world.

God bless Latvia!

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