

100 years of the Presidential institution

Published: 11.02.2022.



CHANCERY OF THE PRESIDENT OF LATVIA

Constitutional Assembly adopted the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia, Satversme, on 15 February 1922. The first president of Latvia, Jānis Čakste, was elected on 14 November the same year. This day is considered the birth of presidency of Latvia.

Events marking the 100 years of the Presidential institution

Opening of concert-story 'Our own. Within' by the Riga Castle on 12 November at 17:00 will begin the Patriot Week and centenary of the Presidential institution celebrations.

The concert will bring together works created during Latvia's first centenary, in songs and videos telling about the times when Latvia existed as a free country, and about the times when free, creative expression was denied to our people. The concert will be broadcast live on public digital media platform LSM.lv and later that night as recording on Channel 1 of the Latvian Television at 22:35.

Forfeited pieces of Latvian art from different periods, carefully selected under the guidance of historian Jānis Kalnačs, will be illuminated on the facade of the Riga Castle during the performance of concert-story.


Musical performances will be provided by many beloved Latvian musicians, such as Daumants Kalniņš, Jānis Aišpurs, Aija Andrejeva, Intars Busulis, Ieva Kerēvica and Katrīna Paula Felsberga. Other artists will include actors Arturs Krūzkops, Ieva Segliņa and Klāvs Kristaps Košins, Kokle player Laima Jansone and Mixed Choir of the Riga Cathedral Choir School conducted by Jurgis Cābulis, as well as Gospel Choir conducted by Una Stāde. Musical accompaniment will be provided by Rihards Jakuško's 'Cover band'.

Latgalian rapper Ūga has written a special song for this event called 'Naida runa' (Hate speech), which talks about our personal choice to one of our own, a feeling that starts within us.


Concert-story 'Our own. Within' is directed by Juris Jonelis, playwright Matīss Gricmanis, stage/video director Austrā Hauks, costume designer Baiba Grīna, lighting director Kristaps Bunga and music director Juris Vaivods. Concert producer is Rihards Gulbis.

Satversme, the constitution of Latvia, was adopted by Constitutional Assembly on 15 February 1922. On 14 November, the first Saeima (parliament) appointed Jānis Čakste the first President of Latvia and the institution of presidency of Latvia was born. Concert-story 'Our own. Within' has been created to give all Latvian an opportunity to celebrate the 100 years since the adoption of Satversme and establishment of Presidential institution together.

On 12 November, at 14:00, youngsters will come together at the Riga Castle for discussion with President of Latvia 'How easy is it to be a president in democracy?'. Egils Levits and Valdis Zatlers (President of Latvia during 2007–2011) and contestants of 'Put yourself in President's shoes and write the anniversary message to the people' competition will discuss what it means to be the head of the state in a democracy and what is the role of presidents of Latvia from the public perspective and the constitutional perspective. Discussion will also explore what presidents are allowed and expected to do. Discussion will be moderated by Jānis Kronis, actor of independent theatre company 'Kvadrifrons' (Quadraphone).

Continuity of the state and Riga Castle: reveal of the portraits of two acting presidents: Jāzeps Rancāns and Pauls Kalniņš  ▾

On 14 November, President of Latvia Egils Levits and Head of the Chancery of the President of Latvia Andris Teikmanis will open the reveal portraits of acting presidents of Latvia Pauls Kalniņš (1944–1945) and Jāzeps Rancāns (1947–1969) painted by Ritums Ivanovs at the Riga Castle.

Opening of exhibition '100 years of the Presidential institution' on Riga Castle Square  ▾


On 28 September, marking the 100 years of presidency of Latvia, 21m-long open-air exhibition was opened on the square by the Riga Castle. It tells the history and various stages of development of the institution of presidency of Latvia, with particular focus on continuity of Latvian State and importance of democratic traditions.

'We are celebrating the centenary of our constitution, Satversme, this year. The first president of Latvia was elected as soon as constitution came to force. In a parliamentary democracy, institution of presidency is designed to assure the continuity and sustainability of the state,' President of Latvia Egils Levits said at the opening of exhibition. 'This exhibition also showcases the story of two key figures you would normally not find in the presidential gallery. Pauls Kalniņš and Jāzeps Rancāns were acting presidents who served as presidents during the occupation and ensured the continuity of Latvian State,' President said.


'Presidents of Latvia are the main theme of this exhibition. For more than a century their values, firm stance and position shaped the way our nation lived and lives today,' Sarmīte Ēlerte, the Head of the Office of the Presidential Advisers, Adviser to the President of Latvia on Cultural Policy, said at the opening. Exhibition strives to juxtapose three dimensions. 'First, the responsibilities of the president defined in Satversme and other laws. Secondly, personal traits of presidents. And, thirdly, challenges that each president faced during their term,' she added.

Open-air exhibition aims to attract a wide variety of audiences, but it will be specifically interesting for pupils and teachers for whom this rich source of information would benefit learning more about our Latvian State. Open-air exhibition '100 years of presidency of Latvia' on the Riga Castle Square will be open until 2 December. It is likely to reopen in spring of 2023.


This open-air exhibition has been co-produced by Doctor of History Gatis Krūmiņš. It is based on information and data from 44 different institution.

Digitising of historical presidency of Latvia documents  ▾

Documents available in [Latvian National Digital Library](#) (in Latvian)

Updating of curricula on presidency of Latvia across Latvian schools  ▾

Curricula will be updated in collaboration with National Centre for Education.

Interactive billboard campaign about presidency of Latvia and Riga Castle 



Updates coming soon.

<https://www.president.lv/en/100-years-presidential-institution>