

President Levits' National Defence Academy 30th anniversary and graduation message

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National security

Egils Levits



Esteemed Parliamentary Secretary of the Defence Ministry, Honourable Chief of the Defence Staff, Honourable Rector of National Defence Academy, newest officers of Latvian army, Ladies and gentlemen,

The unshakable national aspirations of our people are fundamental to the state of Latvia. Our desire to live in our own independent and democratic state and be the makers of our destiny. We continue to build and strengthen our state with everything we do.

But it is beyond doubt, ladies and gentlemen, that becoming a soldier to serve and protect your country is the epitome of one's patriotism.

Today is a big day. 32 cadets will join the junior officer ranks today. National Defence Academy turns 30. And I am deeply disappointed that I cannot greet you in person and share your joy today as the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces.

Nevertheless, given the looming threat of war on the Ukrainian border and my duty to ensure the safety of Latvia militarily and politically, I have been compelled to travel to Munich to meet with senior official of our strategic partner – the US Vice President Kamala Harris. And I hope you can excuse my absence for that.

Presence of United States of America together with other NATO Allies in Latvia today is a clear signal that they will help us defend our country. Just as much as we are ready to help them defend themselves, fighting shoulder to shoulder with them in Afghanistan.

Ladies and gentlemen,

National Defence Academy opened its doors to young people looking to become military experts thirty years ago, giving our

national defence new generations of well-educated army specialists, officers, Latvian patriots, leaders with high moral standards, dignity and sense of responsibility who can handle accountability and successfully command others. Community of Latvian officers, which dates back to the National Military School of 1919, has been and will remain our national pride.

We can be proud of Latvia's progress in the area of security. National Armed Forces are growing with every day – not only in numbers, but also in terms of skills and knowledge. Latvian army is trying to keep up to date. It implements necessary adjustments to match new challenges all the time. Our troops are appreciated by Latvian people and allied nations. Our contribution to international missions is widely recognised.

Latvian officers' community grows together with the number of National Defence Academy graduates, as new officers join their ranks. Each graduation makes our national defence capabilities stronger and stronger.

Congratulations to the National Defence Academy on its 30th anniversary!

Dear junior officers,

Becoming a lieutenant is a major milestone. You and your parents should really be proud.

You have chosen the career of professional soldiers; with all the responsibility it entails. You will be watched and judged. It is an enormous responsibility weighing down on your young shoulders. You will be in charge of our troops. You will have to motivate and inspire them. And people of Latvia will look at you for well-balanced decisions.

Be proud of Latvia! Be brave and vigilant! Be the best version of yourself for your troops! Because heroes are forever stored in our collective memory. There are many heroic stories reinforcing the continuity that you can inspire and learn from. May you never lose pride and joy of being a part of National Armed Forces of Latvia.

We are prepared to defend our state, our independence and freedom.

I feel very proud of you, dear troops, and I have confidence in you because I have confidence in Latvia. I am certain that you will do good service to the Latvian State and its people.

Let us protect and treasure Latvia. Our independence and freedom will always be in good hands then. Let us gather under the Latvian flag and pledge allegiance to it.

Message was delivered by Jānis Kažociņš, National Security Adviser to the President of Latvia.

<https://www.president.lv/en/article/president-levits-national-defence-academy-30th-anniversary-and-graduation-message>