

President Levits' statement on signing the Law "On the Compensation of Goodwill to the Latvian Jewish Community"

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President of Latvia Egils Levits has released a statement on signing the Law "On the Compensation of Goodwill to the Latvian Jewish Community" adopted by the parliament (Saeima) on 10 February 2022.

According to President, the bill has gone through all stages of parliamentary law-making process. It was proposed by the Saeima itself and has been reviewed in all three readings. As President Levits monitored the passage of the law, he had no doubts about stable majority support for the bill. There has been a constant support from $\frac{3}{4}$ of all members of Saeima, which equals to almost $\frac{2}{3}$ of votes required to adopt the proposed law. Adoption of the law has been supported across the political spectrum as votes have come from both coalition and opposition groups.

This is how parliamentary autonomy can be exercised, with MPs as elected representatives coming forward with their own legislative initiatives and making the laws instead of waiting on Cabinet of Ministers, or any other constitutional body, to draft a bill and present it. Full political responsibility for bills adopted by majority of MPs therefore rests on Saeima. It is legislature's duty to explain the rationale and purpose of the law, its national and social long-term goals.

Adoption of this law required Saeima to show its political will, says President Levits. To decide how this high-profile matter for Latvia will be regulated. And that means that those who drafted the law and belong to the majority of MPs that adopted it are now responsible for explaining the rationale and purpose of the law, its national and social long-term goals.

President notes that parliamentary debate and adoption of this bill by the Saeima has raised huge public interest across Latvia. It is also a matter that bears foreign policy significance as well.

Chancery of the President of Latvia has received seven requests (signed by different parties) from political parties, parliamentary groups, individual MPs and private individuals asking President to return the bill to the parliament for additional consideration and

sign it into the law. For example, the following MPs and parliamentary group leaders have asked President Levits to enact the law: Juris Pūce, Arvils Ašeradens and Juris Jurašs. According to them, 'adoption of this law is important for our national security and thus its adoption is crucial given the current geopolitical context. 13th Saeima was determined to pass the bill through all stages quickly while also maintaining a wholesome and balanced debate. Law has gone through all three readings, the deadline for commenting was unusually long in the run-up to the second reading. The consideration process in the relevant committee has been diligent and thorough, which has led to a number of important improvements in the bill. Bill has been widely supported by MPs. It is reflected in the voting on designating the responsible committee and all three readings. Law has been supported by roughly ¾ of MPs who voted'.

President of Latvia has therefore respected the political will of the majority of members of the Saeima to draft such a bill and has signed it into law.

As president points out, this law puts an end to the discussion on restitution. It will no longer be on the political agenda of Latvia's strategic allies.

<https://www.president.lv/en/article/president-levits-statement-signing-law-compensation-goodwill-latvian-jewish-community>