

President of Latvia: Latvia welcomes Ukrainians with great sympathy and support

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On 9 May President of Latvia Egils Levits met with Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Ukraine Ms Olena Kondratiuk. The main topics of discussion were Russia's war in Ukraine, Ukraine's road to securing the status of a candidate country to the European Union (EU) and Latvia's support for Ukraine.

The Deputy Speaker stressed that it is a great honour for her people, who are suffering in the war, to see the Ukrainian flag flying atop the Tower of the Holy Spirit of Riga Castle. Ms Kondratiuk also welcomed Latvia's decision to mark 9 May this year as a day of commemoration of the victims and casualties of Russia's aggression in Ukraine. "I thank Latvia on behalf of the whole of Ukraine!" the Deputy Speaker said.

The President of Latvia stressed that Latvia strictly condemns Russia's aggression in Ukraine and supports the full restoration of the independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine, as well as the immediate granting of the status of an EU candidate country to Ukraine.

The President of Latvia noted that Latvia stands by the people of Ukraine and is providing aid in all possible forms – military, humanitarian, economic and political. "So far more than 25,000 Ukrainians have found safe refuge in Latvia, where they are embraced into the local communities. The people of Latvia are welcoming Ukrainians with great sympathy and support, because we know what war means," emphasised President Levits.

Ms. Kondratiuk thanked Latvia for the help it is providing to Ukrainian refugees and for integrating them into Latvian society. The Deputy Speaker attested that Ukrainians are ready to work in Latvia, because besides seeking safety, they also want to feel needed.

The President of Latvia also noted that a special tribunal should be established to investigate the war crimes perpetrated by Russia in Ukraine, and that Latvia is already collecting evidence from refugees which will eventually be used by the international

tribunal.

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