

## President of Latvia: voting is the easiest way diaspora can contribute to future of Latvia

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On 9 June, President of Latvia Egils Levits addressed the participants of the annual board meeting of the World Federation of Free Latvians gathered at the Riga Small Guild. In his address, President of Latvia underlined the role of diaspora in shaping Latvia's foreign policy, domestic policy, security policy, as well as nurturing of Latvianness.

President of Latvia addressed the participants underlining that 'diaspora is encoded in Latvia's DNA. No matter what we personally think, diaspora belongs to Latvia'. According to President, this is also confirmed by constitution of Latvia, Satversme, and Citizenship Law.

One of the main tasks of diaspora in terms of nurturing Latvianness, according to President Levits, is continuous education. 'That is why our government supports Latvian schools and various public events abroad. Latvian State wants to preserve Latvianness,' President of Latvia said.

He also underlined the role of diaspora in promoting citizenship of Latvia and election participation. 'each Latvian has the right to become citizen. And that is important. Without citizenship you are still a part of Latin nation, but those who become citizen can also decide Latvia's future. Voting is the easiest way diaspora can contribute to future of Latvia.'

President Levits also underlined the significance of diaspora in advocating Latvia's interests abroad, including its security agenda. He also pointed out that Latvia plays an active role in NATO. 'We have secured bigger allied presence in Latvia, thus sending Kremlin a clear signal that NATO will continue to be committed to stronger eastern flank.'

Speech of President Levits also mentioned other issues at the top of the agenda for Latvia, such as energy independence, economic growth, stronger domestic politics and more inclusive society.



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