

## President of Latvia: our country needs sustainable development-oriented policies

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On 16 December, President of Latvia Egils Levits took part in the conference 'Sustainability of Latvia and the State Council' at the Riga Graduate School of Law. In his speech, President Levits said that State Council would ensure the sustainable development of Latvia and provide independent assessment of the quality of proposed laws.

'Sustainability is a relatively new concept in politics and law. Latvia is one of three countries in the world that speaks about sustainability in its constitution,' Egils Levits said as he mentioned Switzerland and Finland as two other countries where sustainability is a constitutional element.

According to President Levits, sustainability is a concept described in the Preamble of the constitution, Satversme. The first paragraph of Satversme says that the state of Latvia has been established to guarantee the existence and development of the Latvian nation, its language and culture throughout the centuries. 'We want our state to exist throughout centuries. Given our geopolitical situation and history of our state, we need to focus and find ways to ensure that these overarching principles of the constitution of Latvia as a democratic, socially-responsible nation-state governed by the rule of law remain,' President of Latvia said.

Quality laws are a way to ensure sustainable democracy and socially-responsible nation-state, President of Latvia pointed out. External independent validation of proposed laws is therefore necessary, Egils Levits said. The proposed State Council would be the institution that would advise Saeima on the quality of its laws before they are adopted. 'State Council could give external independent evaluation of new laws and laws that concern the constitutional basis of the Latvian State to law-makers, identifying sustainability and rule of law aspects,' Egils Levits specified.

'Legislature is a political and constitutional body that operates within the remit provided by voters. Satversme does not limit

legislature's scope of competence. Law-makers have the right to exercise their political will by adopting laws specific to various areas. Whereas sustainability and good laws limit the political discretion of law-makers, ensuring that these principles are applied rationally,' Egils Levits explained.

As President of Latvia pointed out, Latvia currently does not have an institution that could advise lawmakers on these issues.

Full recording of the conference available here: <https://www.facebook.com/r gsl.lv/videos/682635879882887>



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