

Remarks by Egils Levits, President of Latvia, on media freedom as a cornerstone of democracy for the session hosted by the Netherlands at the Summit for Democracy

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[Foreign policy](#)

[Egils Levits](#)



Excellencies,

Dear colleagues,

I thank the Kingdom of the Netherlands for hosting this event and dedicating it to the topic of media freedom – one of the pillars of any democratic society. While the freedom of expression as a universal human right must be respected and protected by all countries, global reports and freedom indexes paint an alarming picture – media freedom is in decline and violence against journalists is on the rise.

We are grateful for the indispensable role of free and pluralistic media in providing the international community with factual and timely information. At the same time, we continue to lose lives of dozens of journalists in war zones. They heroically report on the crimes and abuses perpetrated by oppressive regimes.

Dear colleagues,

Latvia defends freedom of speech with a range of practical measures.

First, our assistance goes to ensure the continued work of Ukrainian independent media in war conditions. Second, several independent Russian media organizations and journalists under the threat of repressions and censorship have relocated to Latvia. A similar step was taken by the Moscow bureaus of media outlets like Radio Free Europe and Deutsche Welle. The Media Hub Riga established by our civil society and supported by the Latvian government provides practical help to journalists in danger.

When standing up for freedom of speech and media pluralism, we must also invest in our own resilience. Our online information environment must be free, open and inclusive. At the same time, it needs to be safe, secure and resilient to the hostile manipulation by authoritarian adversaries. Therefore, together with Canada and the Alliance for Securing Democracy, Latvia leads the Cohort on information integrity to counter the spread of disinformation.

I wish you fruitful discussions in the Netherlands. Let us reinforce our efforts to strengthen democracy through freedom of speech, media diversity and a healthy information space!

<https://www.president.lv/en/article/remarks-egils-levits-president-latvia-media-freedom-cornerstone-democracy-session-hosted-netherlands-summit-democracy>