

# Opening remarks by the President of Latvia Egils Levits at the conference “WindWorks. Moving Energy.”

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Egils Levits



Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour to open the wind energy conference for the third time. Looking back on what has changed since the first conference, I see quite a remarkable shift.

In 2021, in my first meeting with you, I urged to speed up wind energy projects in Latvia and not to allow our national plans to stay only “on paper”.

I urged the government to be more serious about our commitment to climate neutrality and fulfilling Latvia's obligations concerning energy goals for 2030.

It seems that the winds have changed fast enough. Today, Latvia has even its own Ministry for Climate and Energy, of which I have been a supporter from the beginning. And the ministry is here.

Renewable energy has been high on the European political agenda already for years, and I am glad that it is a priority now on Latvia's national energy agenda.

Of course, the Russian war against Ukraine added an energy security perspective to our thinking about renewable energy.

It showed clearly that Europe, Baltics and Latvia have to act immediately to cut all energy ties with the aggressor country.

Due to the unprecedented energy price spikes, it also added an energy affordability perspective. Energy security and affordability are clear priorities, which also help us to move away from fossil fuels.

However, just a shift in our thinking is not enough. Our good intentions must be backed up by our practical plans and hard work.

Firstly, we have to adapt our national renewable energy policy goals to the current geopolitical situation. A clear vision is needed of the ways to achieve these goals.

For example, we must plan how to strengthen our energy infrastructure to grow the share of renewable resources in our economy. A clear plan will help find the right balance and tools to finance the transition. Finance is one of the biggest problem in energy transition.

Secondly, together with international partners, we have to actively participate in advancing innovations and solving the challenges related to renewable energy storage.

I was glad to see that last year Latvian industry participants signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the development of hydrogen technology.

Third, we should look at the global development of the wind energy sector as a broader economic opportunity that we can benefit from. Some of our manufacturing companies already successfully participate in the global wind industry value chains (*Aerones, Naco Technologies*).

The agenda of today's event illustrates a clear "to-do" list.

Last but not least, we still need to raise public awareness of renewable and wind energy, "not in my backyard" phenomenon is still there in our society. Society must see and feel the clear benefits of renewable energy development.

I would like to thank the organizers – the Latvian and Estonian Wind Energy associations, the Danish Embassy in Latvia, the Norwegian Embassy in Latvia, the Netherlands Embassy in Latvia, as well as all the industry partners of the conference.

Also, I welcome the participation of the Ukrainian wind energy association at today's event. Latvia will continue to support Ukraine, including helping rebuild its energy sector already now and after the war.

The international nature of this conference proves the importance of cross-border cooperation in moving towards securing reliable, affordable and sustainable energy for the Baltics and Europe!

I wish you all fruitful discussions and a successful day!



<https://www.president.lv/en/article/opening-remarks-president-latvia-egils-levits-conference-windworks-moving-energy>