



## LATVIJAS VALSTS PREZIDENTA KANCELEJA

### PAZIŅOJUMS PRESEI

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10 November 2020

### **President of Latvia Egils Levits congratulates diaspora on Proclamation Day**

Dear Latvians around the world,

102 years ago, on 18 November, the day when the Republic of Latvia was proclaimed, the outstanding Latvian statesman Foreign Minister Zigfrīds Meierovics was in London.

He had just signed a brief letter to Kārlis Pētersons (Charles Peterson), a Latvian immigrant and producer of the famous Peterson Pipes of Dublin. In his letter Mr Meierovics asks for an audience and an opportunity to discuss possible assistance in matters crucial for Latvia.

This shows that cooperation between Latvia and Latvians living abroad began as early as the republic itself.

For many of you working for Latvia has become a second job. A passion worth your creative energy, time and money. Thank you for doing what you do!

Latvians throughout the world network and maintain their bond with Latvia through numerous diaspora organisations, a variety of different professional and other associations and diaspora media operating in host countries. Churches, Sunday schools and folk groups keep nurturing the Latvian language and lifestyle. This is your way of supporting the continuity and development of the Latvian nation in the 21st century. It is also your way of supporting the Latvian State because our state is the sum of all the small and big things we do.

I strongly believe that now more than ever the state of Latvia is ready to engage deeply with its diaspora. We have the appropriate legal framework, The Diaspora Law, an impressive number of permanent cooperation programmes. Re-emigration support programmes have been set up to help those who want to return to Latvia settle back easier. We need to keep working together to exploit numerous other opportunities and directions still ahead of us.

Fellow Latvians,

The pandemic has significantly affected our everyday life and plans, including gatherings. Many of you have most probably been forced to postpone your plans to visit Latvia for this year's 18 November celebrations or Christmas. This is something digital technologies will

never be able to substitute, yet they can still help us communicate across borders between countries and continents and continue to nurture Latvianness and contribute to a better and more developed Latvia collectively. Although the single-farmstead mentality is deeply embedded in every Latvian, the digital age requires global Latvians to create 'global villages'.

Dear countrymen,

Each year, during the national celebrations, 'God bless Latvia' unites all Latvians all over Zemgale, Vidzeme, Sēlija, Latgale, Kurzeme and other continents. The song composed by Baumaņu Kārlis has echoed over Latvia for almost 150 years. It has been our national anthem for more than a century now. It is the song that inspires and gives us strength. It is our pledge to always hold Latvia dear.

Thank you for everything you are doing!

I hope this year's celebrations will be as heartfelt as ever!

God bless Latvia!