



LATVIJAS VALSTS PREZIDENTS

**Address of President of Latvia Raimonds Vējonis at the military parade  
to mark the Day of the Restoration of the Independence of the Republic of  
Latvia in Liepāja on 4 May 2017**

Dear people of Liepāja and Kurzeme, dear Ladies and Gentlemen, dear Compatriots!

I congratulate you on the Day of the Restoration of the Independence of Latvia! Today the red-white-red flags are flying especially gallantly in the city of winds, Liepāja, and throughout Latvia. We are proud of Latvia, of our home and of our freedom.

Nobody gifted us the country and independence. We fought for it ourselves. There were people who dared in November 1918, and there were the people who were courageous in May 1990. On this day twenty-seven years ago, the Members of the Supreme Council adopted declaration “On Restoration of the Independence of the Republic of Latvia”.

City Liepāja will always remind about our strength. It is exactly where our first government found a shelter, when the most part of Latvia was seized by the enemy. From here, the men of Oskars Kalpaks stemmed themselves during the Latvian War of Independence to reclaim our land and state. There was a desire for freedom glowing in the city of winds during the occupation that inspired all of us with the truth manifested in the sounds of rock in our native language.

Twists and turns of fate have led Latvia along many crossroads, and people’s destinies have entwined with them. A new generation has grown up besides those of us, who will always think that the endless sea of the Awakening red-white-red flags and the uniting fire of the January Barricades happened just yesterday. That is the generation, for whom May 4 in the history books is as old as November 18 and who finds out the events of that period from the memories and stories of their parents and grandparents. Today, the younger generation must take responsibility for ensuring that Latvia exists forever, that Latvia is safe and prosperous home for all of us.

Latvia has been entrusted to us. We received it as a gift from previous generations to pass it on to our children and grandchildren. Now it is our time to protect Latvia.

Let us support Latvia with our thoughts, words, and deeds. Every deed that we conduct in good faith; every family that takes care of their home and raises children; every land plot we tend in Latgale, Vidzeme, Kurzeme, and Zemgale – all these are our deeds for Latvia.

Let us ask ourselves, “How can I strengthen independence and freedom of my country? What exactly can I do? Let us look to the left. Now let us look to the right. People next to us constitute our Latvia. We all form our Latvia. We are building Latvia. No one else is going to do that instead of us.

At this military parade, we confirm that we are also ready to defend Latvia with weapons if it would be necessary. Shoulder to shoulder, we stand on guard for Latvia together with our friends and allies.

I thank every soldier, National Guard, border guard, police officer, and firefighter. Thank you for your daily contribution to peace and security in our country. We also thank the soldiers of NATO Member States for their support in strengthening our national security.

Looking at you, dear youth guards, I am confident about the future of Latvia. You are determined to try your best in creating a better Latvia.

Today we will come together with our families and friends around the tables covered with a white tablecloth. Let us celebrate that we live in a free Latvia. May the celebration today inspire and encourage us for the deeds for our country!

God bless Latvia!