



Valsts kanceleja

*State Chancellery of the Republic of Latvia*

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Information for media

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**Address by Prime Minister Laimdota Straujuma in the opening of Latvia's Presidency of  
the Council of the European Union in the Latvian National Opera January 8, 2015**

Honourable Mr President,

Esteemed Ms Speaker of the Saeima,

Highly esteemed Mr President of the European Council,

Highly esteemed Mr President of the European Commission,

ministers,

everyone present in Latvia and in Europe!

Liberté, égalité, fraternité! These words, which are so close to the hearts of French people, are particularly significant today. We stand united with the French people in mourning for the victims of violence. However, the people of France should know - Latvia, all European Union countries – we stand shoulder to shoulder with you in your sorrow. Today we all express a single idea - we will defend all European fundamental values and fundamental rights. We will not allow to affect them. We will be steadfast. We will increasingly honour these values. Human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights are the names of these values. The European Union will continue along its path. Towards growth, towards smart, innovative, globally strong Europe.

Therefore we – all 28 European Union countries, should work even more coherently and severely towards achieving ambitious objectives. Like we - every European, are different, also our countries and economies of our countries may differ. The objective of our united Europe is still to find the best models to complement each other to ensure that common growth of Europe benefits from this diversity.

For me, the European Union is also the economic logic, social standards, and more realistically and directly – the balance that we observe between the economic and social fields. The weighing buckets, which must not lose their equilibrium position.

Next weighing buckets where it is important for me to see the European Union in equilibrium is the centre or periphery. We can't simply ask: Hey, Europe, which one is more important for you - the right hand or the left leg? Increasing the common European standards of living is the key to balance. The place of living, whether it is the centre of Europe or remote

areas, the countryside or the city, cannot affect the way people live.

Since the student years I have been fascinated by the computer science. The technologies have gone far, and they still create innovative approaches, creative thinking even in such technology advanced world as ours. That is why I am glad that the priorities for Latvia are the competitive, digital and globally strong Europe. Those are the priorities, which provide enough space for ambitious aims and practical cooperation on daily basis.

Today we are on the art scene to open a story of Latvia's Presidency. Inspiration, muses, who inspire giants of music and other arts, are significant also for European economy. The global investors can be attracted only by the European Union whose attractiveness is characterized by originality, novel ideas, and which is not afraid of its own ambitions. The so-called "Copy/Paste" policy is not our style; we do not copy anyone in this world.

We are in favour of modern and economically active Europe. Europe that is close to every individual. We are in favour of Europe that resembles our Castle of Light - the treasury of knowledge, which always remembers the path to spiritual growth. This is how we will advance! I declare Latvia's Presidency of the Council of the European Union open! Enjoy your evening!

Prime Minister of Latvia  
Laimdota Straujuma