

SPECIAL EDITION – DEDICATED TO THE WORKING VISIT OF PRESIDENT VALDIS ZATLERS

This issue of the newsletter is dedicated to the working visit of Valdis Zatlers, President of the Republic of Latvia, who was in the United States from March 27–April 4, 2011. During his visit, the President visited Michigan, Washington, DC and Chicago.

President Zatlers was invited as the keynote speaker at the Joint Baltic National Committee (JBANC) Conference in Washington, DC on April 2nd. The President's JBANC speech is available [here](#).



President Zatlers with Vice President Joe Biden Photo: Office of the President of Latvia

On April 1 President Zatlers met with U.S. Vice President Joseph Biden at the White House. During their hour-long meeting, the two officials discussed relations between Latvia and the U.S., relations between the U.S. and Europe, and partnership within the framework of NATO. President Zatlers also presented the Vice President with the Order of Three Stars.

Ambassador Pildegovics states: "The meeting with Vice President Joe Biden was the result of many years of close cooperation. As a senator, Joe Biden expressed his unwavering support for Latvia's independence, Latvia's accession to NATO as well as the visa-waiver program. The opportunity to discuss Latvia's issues in detail with the U.S. Vice President can be considered a true achievement

and a confirmation of the continuity of Latvia-U.S. relations."

At a reception in honor of the 50th anniversary of JBANC President Zatlers presented the Order of Viesturs to General William Tom Hobbins, commander of the US Air Force in Europe, for his investment in helping ensure success for the NATO summit which took place in Riga in November 2006.



Photo: courtesy of the European Institute

While in Washington President Zatlers was the guest of honor at a luncheon for policy makers organized by the **European Institute**. The President also addressed professors and students on the topic [Transatlantic Dialogue: The Latvian Perspective](#) at **Georgetown University**, doing so just a few hours after President Barack Obama had spoken there.



Illinois Governor Pat Quinn with President Zatlērs in Chicago, Photo: Office of the President of Latvia

In Chicago and in Michigan President Zatlērs attended openings of Latvia's honorary consulates, expressing gratitude to two new honorary consuls for their active involvement in fulfilling their new duties. Mr. Roberts Blumbergs has been appointed honorary consul in Illinois; Mr. Andris Lacis in Michigan. The honorary consuls will help strengthen business contacts between Latvia and Illinois, as well as between Latvia and Michigan.



Meeting with Major General Gregory Vadnais, commander of the Michigan National Guard, photo: Office of the President of Latvia

While in the U.S. President Zatlērs also met with business leaders, congressional representatives, the Latvian communities of Detroit and Chicago, as well as with the Michigan National Guard.

**PRESIDENT VALDIS ZATLĒRS MEETS WITH
LATVIAN – AMERICAN YOUTH**



President Zatlērs with Latvian-American youth

On April 1st at the Embassy of Latvia, President Zatlērs had the opportunity to meet with members of the American Latvian Youth Association, who informed him about existing projects such as the 2x2 youth camp, as well as future projects.

**LATVIA'S DEFENCE MINISTER MEETS WITH
DEFENSE SECRETARY ROBERT GATES**



Photo courtesy of the Pentagon

On April 13, 2011 Artis Pabriks, Minister of Defense of Latvia, met with US Defense Secretary Robert Gates at the Pentagon to discuss military-economic issues.

Secretary Gates thanked Latvia for its involvement and logistical support regarding non-military cargo

FINANCE MINISTER AND BANKING EXPERTS AT THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION

transit to Afghanistan, using the Northern Distribution Network (NDN). In turn, Minister Pabriks discussed the possibility of the participation of Latvian companies in supply deliveries to U.S. troops in Afghanistan.

Both officials discussed U.S. plans to review the deployment of U.S. troops in Europe. Minister Pabriks expressed hope that these plans will not lessen the U.S. presence in the Baltic region. The ministers also discussed the situation in the Middle East and Belarus, as well as cooperation between NATO and the countries of the Caucasus region and Central Asia.

Also during his visit to Washington Minister Pabriks met with Senator Carl Levin and Congressman John Shimkus, as well as addressed diplomats, military experts and State Department representatives at the Center for American Progress.



On April 15 Andris Vilks, Minister of Finance; Ilmars Rimsevics, Governor of the Bank of Latvia and Irena Krumane, Chairwoman of the Financial and Capital Market Commission of Latvia participated in a roundtable discussion "Latvia's Way Forward: Recovering the Growth" at the Heritage Foundation in Washington, DC. Among the topics discussed with the invited analysts and experts were lessons learned in dealing with economic and financial challenges, including in the larger regional and Transatlantic contexts.

AMBASSADOR VISITS UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN – EAU CLAIRE

On April 8, Ambassador Andrejs Pildegovics spoke on "Latvia as a Paradigm of Change: 20 Years Ago and 20 Ahead" at the 12th annual [Symposium on East Europe](#), held at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. The topic of this year's symposium was "Twenty Years After: What We Have Learned and What We Have Failed to Learn."

EURASIA CENTER EVENT AT EMBASSY OF LATVIA

The Eurasia Center and The Eurasian Business Coalition (EBC) invites you to attend an event at the Embassy of Latvia on **Thursday, April 28** at 6:30 p.m.

The evening will provide an opportunity to meet with leaders from American investment, high technology, banking, firms as well as with government officials to interact with those seeking to expand international trade and investment between Latvia and the U.S.



DR. ARTIS PABRIKS, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF DEFENCE, LATVIA WELCOMED TO THE NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY, WASHINGTON, DC BY DR. HANS BINNENDIJK, VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH, APRIL 11, 2011

Dr. Hans Binnendijk, Vice President for Research, welcomed Dr. Artis Pabriks and his delegation to the National Defense University on April 11. (above photo courtesy of NDU)

At the conclusion of his U.S. visit, the Minister visited the Michigan National Guard, as well as met with professors and students at the University of Michigan.

To Register for the “Evening with the Latvian Embassy”, please visit the [Eurasia Center](#) website or contact Michael Cooper at 202-494-0774. (**RSVP required**).

**COMING UP IN MAY – EUROPEAN UNION
OPEN HOUSE**

As in past years, the Embassy will be participating in the [EU OPEN HOUSE](#), to be held on **Saturday, May 7.**

EXHIBITIONS

**PHOTO EXHIBIT “TOUCH” (“Pieskāriens”)
OPEN THROUGH APRIL 30**



Embassy of Latvia photo

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Embassy of Latvia website: www.latvia-usa.org

On April 7 Ambassador Andrejs Pildegovics opened the photo exhibit: “Touch” (“Pieskāriens”) by photographer Sarmite Bezzubova. Mrs. Bezzubova, spouse of Col. Juris Bezzubovs, Latvia’s military attaché in Washington, is a former educator and a former member of Latvia’s armed forces. Sarmite’s photos have been exhibited in Latvia and her photos have been published in Latvian magazines.

The exhibit is a collection of photographs over the past decade and will be open at the **Art Space of the Embassy of Latvia** (2304 Massachusetts Ave., NW) **through April 30**. The exhibit will be open **Saturdays, Tuesdays and Thursdays** from 11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.