



LATVIA IN NATO 15

This year, the most powerful military alliance in the world – NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation is celebrating its 70th anniversary. NATO was founded when the Iron Curtain had descended across Europe, and freedom was threatened by the Soviet Union's totalitarian communist regime. The end of the Cold War brought hope that the world would change fundamentally and the international order would no longer be faced with major challenges.

However, the events in Europe in recent years – the illegal and illegitimate occupation and annexation of the Crimea and Russia's aggression in the east of Ukraine – demonstrate that we need NATO more than ever. Since the restoration of independence, Latvia has sought to gain a foothold in the space of Euro-Atlantic values and security. And we have achieved that goal!

2019 marks the 15th anniversary of our membership in NATO. Latvia is an active and reliable NATO ally and it diligently fulfils the responsibilities incumbent upon it. As a NATO member state, Latvia takes part in decision-making at the highest level, and this has a direct influence on Latvia's security. Although Latvia enjoys security guarantees unprecedented in its history, being part of the Alliance comes along with serious commitments.

Therefore Latvia, mindful of its security and being a faithful ally, takes part in NATO operations, provides the required host nation support for the Allied troops in Latvia and invests 2 percent of its GDP in defence, thereby upholding collective decisions.

From the aspect of national and regional security, it is in Latvia's interests to promote further practical collective defence measures by the Alliance in the region. NATO's Baltic Air Policing and the deployment of NATO battlegroups, as well as the stationing of the NATO Force Integration Unit in Latvia are the most visible signs of the Alliance's presence and support.

Latvia's interests lie in a strong NATO; and with this in mind, the country will actively support the further enhancement and restructuring of the Alliance's capabilities to respond effectively to the challenges of the 21st century.



Photo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Edgars Rinkēvičs
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic
of Latvia



Latvia on the path to NATO

1991 20 December



Photo: NATO

NATO establishes the **North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC)** for cooperation with potential partners. Latvia also takes part in the NACC foundation session in Brussels, thereby becoming a member state of that Council

1994 14 February



Photo: NATO

Latvia joins the **Partnership for Peace programme**, which gives the possibility for taking advantage of consultations by NATO civil and military experts, their support and practical assistance in the development of the defence system. The document is signed by Prime Minister **Valdis Birkavs** in the NATO Headquarters in Brussels

1995 April

In “The Foreign Policy Concept of the Republic of Latvia”, accession to NATO is named as **one of the foreign policy priorities**

1995 13 December



Photo: NATO

Latvia applies for participation in the NATO-led **Implementation Force (IFOR)** and signs the **Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA)** between the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation member states and countries participating in the Partnership for Peace programme and its Additional Protocol

1996 3 April

The first Latvian **peacekeeping unit** arrives in Bosnia and Herzegovina

1992

1992 11 May



Photo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia, **Jānis Jurkāns**, visits NATO Headquarters in Brussels

1993

1995



Photo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

From 1995 onwards, Latvia is taking part in the **Partnership for Peace Planning and Review Process (PARP)** to better prepare for joint military exercises

1994

1995 15 May

With the view to strengthening cooperation with NATO, the former Minister of Defence of the Republic of Latvia, **Jānis Trapāns**, is appointed Minister of Special Assignments for NATO and the Western European Union

1995

1996 January

The Saeima approves a decision to take part in the **NATO Peacekeeping Mission** in the territory of the former Yugoslavia

1996

1996 19 April

Latvia deposits the instrument of ratification of the **Status of Forces Agreement** and its Additional Protocol

1997 30 May

The delegation of Latvia headed by the Foreign Minister **Valdis Birkavs** takes part in the foundation meeting for the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), the successor to the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, in Sintra, Portugal

1998 16 January



Photo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

In Washington D. C., the **Charter of Partnership** among the United States of America and Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania is signed

1998 15 October

At NATO Headquarters in Brussels, the President of Latvia, **Guntis Ulmanis**, presents Latvia's NATO Integration Plan

2000 18–19 May



Photo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Foreign Minister **Indulis Bērziņš** takes part in the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of NATO aspirant countries with NATO Secretary General in Vilnius to discuss further enlargement of the Alliance. The Vilnius Declaration is adopted on the need to further coordinate the cooperation among the nine countries aspiring for NATO membership. In 2001, Croatia joins the Vilnius group

2002 5–6 July



Riga hosts the summit meeting of NATO aspirant countries "**Riga 2002: Bridge to Prague**"

1997

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1997 8–9 July



Photo: NATO

The NATO Summit in Madrid sees the adoption of a landmark decision on NATO **enlargement to the East**. The first countries acceding to NATO after the collapse of the USSR are the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary (1999)

1998 22 April



Photo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Latvia, **Imants Viesturs Lieģis**, submits his credentials to the Secretary General of NATO. Latvia establishes full diplomatic representation to NATO

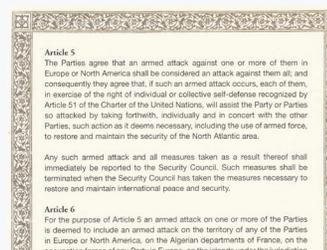
1999 23–25 April



Photo: NATO

At the NATO summit meeting in Washington, USA, NATO proposes that Latvia and the other eight aspiring countries elaborate a **Member Action Plan (MAP)** for participation in NATO. Countries aspiring to NATO membership, including Latvia, must prepare their annual national plans that reflect their preparations for the membership of the Alliance

2001 11 September



NATO invokes **Article 5** for the first time in its history after the 9/11 terrorist attacks against the United States

2002 21 November



Photo: NATO

The President of Latvia, **Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga**, takes part in the NATO Summit in Prague, delivering a brilliant speech to the leaders of the Alliance. At the NATO summit meeting in Prague, Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia are invited to begin negotiations on accession to NATO. NATO draws up the Partnership Action Plan against Terrorism in 2002

2002 26 November



Photo: I. Kļava

The State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, **Māris Riekstiņš**, is appointed head of the delegation to ensure Latvia's participation in NATO accession negotiations. The State Secretary of the Ministry of Defence, **Edgars Rinkēvičs**, is appointed negotiator for the "Defence" chapter. The negotiations are held in several rounds

2003



Photo: J. Poikāns

Latvia joins the largest NATO operation in Afghanistan – the **International Security Assistance Force, ISAF**. On 1 January 2015, it is succeeded by NATO's advisory, training and support mission, **Resolute Support**, in which Latvia continues participation

2003 8 May

The **US Senate** ratifies unanimously the accession protocols to the North Atlantic Treaty, thereby expressing support for the admission to NATO of seven countries, including Latvia

2003 4–5 December



Photo: NATO

The Foreign Minister **Sandra Kalniete** takes part in the Meeting of NATO Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Brussels, which is the first time when Latvia is represented in the session of the North Atlantic Council at the foreign ministers' level together with NATO member states and other countries invited

2004 29 March



Photo: I. Kļava

Latvia, together with other aspirant countries, deposits its accession documents to NATO in Washington and **officially joins the Alliance**. The Prime Minister **Indulis Emsis** presents Latvia's documents to the United States Secretary of State, Colin Powell

2003

2004

Latvia in NATO

2004 30 March



Photo: Ministry of Defence

NATO launches the **Baltic Air Policing** mission deployed on Zokniai air force base in Siauliai, Lithuania

2006 28– 29 November



Photo: J. Mažeikis

The NATO Summit in Riga addresses the unity of the Alliance, the mission in Afghanistan, enlargement matters, and energy security. At the event, NATO Secretary General issues a statement on the NATO Response Force being at full operational capability

2010 19–20 November



Photo: NATO

The NATO Summit in Lisbon approves the Alliance's "Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization". In 2009–2010, the former Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Latvia to the US and NATO, **Aivis Ronis**, works as part of the wise-men group of 12 experts headed by the US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, whose recommendations are fed into the NATO Strategic Concept document

2016 8–9 July



Photo: NATO

At the **NATO summit in Warsaw**, in response to Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and aggression against Ukraine, the allies decide on the enhancement of their military presence in the eastern flank of the Alliance. A decision is taken to deploy a battalion-size multinational battle group in each of the Baltic States and Poland. Canada assumes the role of the framework nation for the battle group in Latvia

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2004 2 April



Photo: NATO

The flag of Latvia is raised at NATO Headquarters in Brussels

2010 28 May – 1 June



Riga hosts the **NATO Parliamentary Assembly** session. The Session is addressing the following topics: drafting of the NATO's new Strategic Concept, relations between the Alliance and Iran and Russia, NATO-led military operation in Afghanistan

2014



The NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence is established in Riga; on 1 September 2014, it is accredited as an international military organisation, its head is the former State Secretary of the Ministry of Defence, **Jānis Sārts**

2017 19 June



Photo: Ministry of Defence

In an official ceremony, the **NATO enhanced Forward Presence** battle group is welcomed to the Ādaži military base

2018 1 June



Photo: R. Bambals

The Latvian Delegation to NATO moves to the new NATO Headquarters in Brussels

2018 11–12 July



Photo: I. Apine

The NATO Summit in Brussels. Its decision on the establishment of Headquarters Multinational Division North of NATO in Latvia is of special importance for the country

2018 20 August – 2 September



Photo: Ministry of Defence

Latvia holds "Namejs 2018" military exercise, the largest since the restoration of independence of Latvia

2019 14 February



Photo: R. Bambals

At the meeting of NATO Ministers of Defence in Brussels, a Memorandum of Understanding is signed on the establishment of Headquarters Multinational Division North of NATO in Latvia

2018

2019



Photo: Ministry of Defence