

The Foreign Ministry's Parliamentary Secretary takes part in the annual board meeting of the World Federation of Free Latvians

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On 6 December 2021, the Parliamentary Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Zanda Kalniņa-Lukaševica, took part in the annual board meeting of the World Federation of Free Latvians (PBLA) and delivered an address to representatives from the central organisations of the diaspora.

In her remarks to the participants, the Parliamentary Secretary expressed acknowledgement and gratitude for the invaluable contribution by the PBLA and its constituent members worldwide, for their tireless efforts and support to Latvia on a daily basis in dealing with vital issues.

Appreciation was expressed of the traditional cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the PBLA in organising of the World Latvian Economics and Innovations Forum, which demonstrates a successful trend in joint activities. On 4 December 2021, the forum was already held for the 7th time, inspiring an exchange of views this year on the development of Riga as an innovative and sustainable city. The Parliamentary Secretary also voiced hope that continued successful cooperation and the involvement of diaspora organisations in both the customary and quite new formats will also take place next year, for instance, in the forum of Latvians working for international organisations scheduled to be held in Riga the coming summer.

The Parliamentary Secretary also made note of contribution by the diaspora to the strengthening of Latvia's security, which is of key importance in these times abundant in challenges and complexities in view of developments at the European Union's border with Belarus, the hybrid attack by Belarus, and the build-up of Russia's forces at the Ukrainian border.

Active preparations are under way for Latvia's candidacy for the elections to the United Nations Security Council in 2025. Everyone who puts their hand and mind to helping Latvia achieve success in elections to a non-permanent member seat in the UN Security Council will be of great importance, the Parliamentary Secretary said. She noted that support and involvement of the Latvian community abroad will also be essential.

Zanda Kalniņa-Lukaševica also informed the participants about the implementation of the Diaspora Law through improving legislation for it to address matters important to the diaspora, for instance, the possibility of declaring an additional place of residence. Alongside global issues it is important to persist in the strengthening of the Latvian language, culture and democracy, the Parliamentary Secretary pointed out.

The funding of 3,071,626 euros has been allocated to the diaspora policy in the recently approved state budget, including for the strengthening of the Latvian language, culture and the media offer to the diaspora. Funds have also been earmarked for support measures and projects of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – a total of 226 238 euros.

Background information

The World Federation of Free Latvians (PBLA) is the central umbrella organisation for overseas federations of Latvian organisations. The constituent members of the PBLA are: the American Latvian Association, the South American and Caribbean Latvian Association, the European Latvian Association, the Russian Latvian Congress, the Latvian Federation of Australia and New Zealand, and the Latvian National Federation in Canada.

The PBLA was established in 1956 and its main mission is to unite the Latvian community worldwide in continuing to strengthen Latvia's independence and security, sustaining Latvian education and culture among the diaspora, and contributing to the promotion of Latvia's development and growth.

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