

**Saeimas priekšsēdētājas Ināras Mūrnieces uzruna  
Eiropas Savienības dalībvalstu parlamentu Savienības  
un Eiropas lietu komiteju konferences (COSAC) Priekšsēdētāju sanāksmē  
2015. gada 2.februārī plkst. 9:00 Rīgā**

Mr Vice-President of the European Commission,  
Speaker of the Riksdag,  
President of the Chamber of Representatives of Belgium,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished guests,  
and Europeans!

It is a pleasure and an honor to be here with you all today!

I am glad that the opening event of the parliamentary dimension of Latvian EU Council Presidency is marked by the Meeting of the Chairpersons of the COSAC<sup>1</sup>. As politicians, and first and foremost as citizens, it is our responsibility to join the debate on the future of Europe. Continent that stands for the competition between ideas, not between people or countries.

National parliaments play an increasingly important role in the EU's decision making. With this in mind, Latvian presidency is committed to the call for more parliamentary involvement.

Today delegations will have a chance to discuss the priorities of the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union after the election of the new European Commission as well as the future challenges of the Eastern Partnership.

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<sup>1</sup> *Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of the Parliaments of the European Union.*

The parliament is the place where like-minded people meet and talk about the issues of strategic significance. We need brave and enlightened political leaders with a sense of positive vision for Europe.

With a military conflict and war atrocities on EU's doorstep, the situation in Ukraine is as dire and grave as never before in the post-World War II era. We are content with recent Foreign Affairs Council discussion and its outcome to continue economic sanctions and to enlarge the list of targeted persons.

European political leaders have recognized Russia's role behind rising armed escalation in the Eastern Ukraine, and the veil of deceit has been wiped away. We should not compromise on the EU's firm and united position to bring stability and peace to Ukraine, as well as condemning the real aggressor.

Killing of civilians is a war crime and time will come when criminals and corrupt statesmen behind them will have to face justice. The EU's moral obligation is to maximize all efforts leading to so-called People's Republics of Donetsk and Lugansk being called in their real names – terrorist organizations.

We need to put all efforts to support Ukraine that faces not only military aggression, but also so many socio-economic problems. The EU should define where we can work together and in which fields separate national contribution would deliver best results.

Ladies and gentlemen!

History shows that security does not come from separation and building walls, but from continuous engagement. The European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), with its Eastern and Southern dimensions, is a priority of EU's external relations. During the Riga Eastern Partnership Summit, a strong signal reaffirming long-term EU strategic support based on the differentiation for the neighboring countries should be sent.

Last year artists, scientists and intellectuals presented the Declaration on the ‘New Narrative for Europe’. The message was clear: Europe as a political body must deploy fully its “soft power” not only across the continent, but also beyond its borders to make it a respectful and respected international partner, promoting a new global model of society based on ethical and sustainable values.

Here I would like to rephrase the famous statement by Jacques Delors: ‘we need to cultivate the European identity since you cannot fall in love with the digital single market.’

Latvia is ready to share its vision on the future of the whole of Europe in order to address the needs of its citizens in a determined and constructive manner.

Let me wish you an atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect, so that we can continue our dialogue on finding common solutions for a successful European policy!