



Valsts kanceleja

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Information for the media
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Address by Prime Minister Laimdota Straujuma at the opening event of the European Year for Development

Highly esteemed Excellences, Ministers and Commissioners,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It's a great honour for me to open the European thematic year for development today in Rīga.

This thematic year is unique, symbolic and inspiring for several reasons.

The European Year for Development is unique because:

This is the first time that the European thematic year is devoted to foreign policy issues.

The year 2015 is a point of reference to assess the progress made since 2000 when all countries committed themselves to achieving the Millennium Development Goals aimed at poverty alleviation, health, education and environmental issues. We have made great progress.

In this period, by joint effort, we have reduced the number of people living in hunger by 700 million, we have reduced maternal mortality (during delivery) by almost a half, almost equal number of girls and boys attend elementary school; we have provided access to drinking water to 2.3 billion people.

The Millennium Development Goals have always been an important priority for the European Union!

Opening of the European Year for Development in Rīga is symbolic because:

Latvia is one of the most visible examples of effectiveness of development cooperation and sustainability of results.

After the restoration of independence, Latvia together with a number of other already longstanding European Union Member States received the support from other countries.

Currently, Latvia is one of the fastest growing economies in the European Union, a NATO Member State, and is on the way to joining the OECD. This successful transition experience

would not have been possible without assistance of the European Union and other countries.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Everyone needs such success stories!

Latvia with its expertise and experience particularly supports the development of the Eastern Partnership and Central Asian countries. Therefore, I am delighted to see here Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Garibashvili and Minister of Education and Science of Kyrgyzstan Elvira Sarieva. It is our duty to strengthen the paths of development chosen by these countries, to help them achieve their goals faster and more sustainably.

The European Year for Development is inspiring because:

The citizens of the European Union are obliged to know and to be proud of the progress made, of the support provided by the EU in exercising the fundamental human rights – in democratic public administration, education, gender equality, provision of decent work, water and food.

Therefore, I am glad that during this this year, we will speak about the results achieved in rural areas, as well as in the cities, schools and businesses, libraries, cinemas and sports grounds.

Ladies and gentlemen, friends,

May this year contribute to activity and involvement of our population in building a better world!

Development cooperation is an obligation of each country and every individual - it is an expression of solidarity and humanity.

We are a part of the global ecosystem – our interests lay in peace and stability in the world, care for environment and the fight against climate change, sustainable economic growth and the eradication of poverty and epidemics.

May this year serve as an opportunity for every European to assess his or her contribution, his or her country's and the European Union's joint contribution to our world, our dignity and, especially, our future!

Prime Minister
Laimdota Straujuma