
MEDIA RELEASE

Prime Minister: We need an active civil society as an enabler of progress and guardian of democracy

Rīga, 20 May, 2015. Today, Prime Minister Laimdota Straujuma opened the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Conference at the National Library of Latvia, stressing that the Civil Society Conference, the Conference on Freedom of the Media, and the Business Forum to be held tomorrow are all aimed at promoting regional economic integration: "They are all important pillars of the Eastern Partnership, reflecting not only its reach, but also its ambition – to create an area of peace, stability, development and prosperity, and to bring partner societies closer to the European Union".

She mentioned that the Eastern Partnership events in Rīga provide an opportunity to build on agreements signed last year with Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova and to advance the mobility agenda that opens up new possibilities for cooperation in business, science and education. "It is an opportunity to tailor each Eastern Partnership relationship to the specific needs of the country in question," affirmed Laimdota Straujuma.

According to the Prime Minister, civil society is composed of citizens who demand reforms and hold their leaders to account, whose hopes guide governments' decisions. She went on to mention that events in Ukraine last year illustrated the vital role of civil society in promoting peace and stability, and the risks that arise if it does not, or is not allowed to, play that role. This, she explained, is why we need an active civil society that is fully engaged in the Eastern Partnership process – a dynamic civil society that enables progress and safeguards democracy.

Laimdota Straujuma said that the Riga Summit was an occasion to raise issues such as the strategic role of civil society in the Eastern Partnership or civil society's role in promoting better governance, social inclusion and sustainable growth.

Opening remarks: http://www.mk.gov.lv/sites/default/files/editor/civil_society_speech_05202015.pdf

Photos: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/valstskanceleja/sets/72157652728729360>

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