



## Latvijas Republikas Valsts prezidenta kanceleja Prezidenta preses dienests

Pils laukums 3, Rīga-50, LV-1900, tālr. 7092122, fakss 7320404,  
prese@president.lv, www.president.lv

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### Address of the State President Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga in the opening of the exhibition Three Stars Three Crowns

*Jsu Majestte,  
Jsu ekselences,  
Zviedrijas un Latvijas muzeju direktori,  
godtie mkslinieki,  
viesi!*

*Latvija ovasar laists trs zvaigu mirdzum. Tautas atjaunot Brubas pieminēka trs zvaigznes lepnum mirdz par Rgu, kura pirmo reizi sav simtgades jubilej ir neatkargas valsts galvaspilsta un svin savas valsts atjaunots neatkarbas desmit gadus. Ms varam priecgi svint ar tpc, ka mums ir tik daudz labu draugu. odien redzam visapkrt, cik rados un dzi izdevies Latvijas un Zviedrijas draudzbas darbs, atkljot abu valstu kopgs kultrvstures lappuses.*

*K gargs ceojums izstde izveds ms cauri latvieu zviedru laiku lokiem, no vikingu un kuru laivm, cauri Vidzemes zviedru gadiem, cauri starpkaru draudzbai, kas vainagojs ar pirmo karaa vizti neatkargaj Latvij, un t bija Zviedrijas karaa Gustava V vizte. odien, kad atkljam izstdi, ar patiesu prieku sveicu Rg Zviedrijas karali Krli XVI Gustavu un esmu gandarta, ka msu valstis sasaista kop simtiem tkstou draudzbas saiu no valstiski oficilm ldz cilvciski sirsngm.*

*Ar Rga un Stokholma k divas msas ir s kopgs vstures dalbnieces. Svinot savas apas jubilejas, ts viena pie otras ciemojas ogad pie 800dgs Rgas ciemojas Stokholma, nkamgad pie Stokholmas 750 gadu svinbs klt bs Rga. Trs zvaigznes un trs kroi tik tuva un tik skaisti atirga ir ajos simbolos ietvert Latvija un Zviedrija.*

I am very pleased that the opening of this Three Stars Three Crowns exhibit coincides with significant dates in the history of both Latvia and Sweden. This year Riga celebrates the 800th anniversary of its official foundation. And this year, for the first time in its long history, Riga celebrates a centenary anniversary as the capital city of an independent Latvian nation. This is a momentous event not only for Riga, but for the entire country, and I extend a most hearty welcome to all of Riga's guests, who have come from both near and afar to pay tribute to this great city along with us.

We are particularly honoured by the presence of Carl XVI Gustav, the King of Sweden, at the opening of this exhibit.

Next year this exhibit will travel to Stockholm, which is preparing to mark its 750th birthday. Over the centuries Stockholm and Riga have grown like sister cities on opposite shores of a shared Baltic Sea. Both cities have evolved into noteworthy and modern metropolises, and both have placed a great deal of emphasis on the maintenance of their historical heritage. Anniversary celebrations such as these provide a reference point for reflecting on the past and planning for the future.

This month Latvia is also celebrating another significant anniversary. Ten years ago, Latvia re-established its independence from the Soviet Union and regained the right to forge its own fate. Sweden was one of the very first countries to recognize our independence

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and to renew diplomatic relations with us, and for this Latvia is truly grateful. Latvians will always remember that for 79 uninterrupted Mondays in succession, Swedish inhabitants gathered to express their support for Baltic independence in public demonstrations.

The 800th anniversary of the founding Riga, the 750th anniversary of the birth of Stockholm, and the 10th anniversary of the renewal of diplomatic relations between Latvia and Sweden provide a splendid opportunity for our two countries to strengthen their excellent relations as neighbours, as friends and as allies.

The monumental Three Stars, Three Crowns exhibit provides a fascinating insight into the history, religious traditions, and cultural evolution of Latvia and Sweden. It will highlight that which our countries share in common, and simultaneously indicate where our paths of development have diverged. This exhibit will help us get to know each other better and to strengthen our ties of friendship and cooperation.

Latvia and Sweden are close neighbouring countries. The west coast of Kurzeme is located a mere 150 kilometres from the east coast of Gotland. However, the closing of the Iron Curtain severely limited the contacts between our two countries for five entire decades. As a result, many people in Sweden know very little about Latvia even today. I am pleased that since the reestablishment of my country's independence, the people of both of our nations have been displaying an increasing interest in learning more about each other. This Three Stars Three Crowns exhibit and other significant projects will continue to strengthen the bridge of friendship that is developing between our two like-minded nations on the shores of the Baltic Sea.

The Baltic Sea, which for so long had kept our people separated, is now bringing us closer together in the consolidation of a common Northern European regional identity. I am also pleased that Swedes can now read translations of Latvian literature and Latvian folk songs in their own native language, and gain an understanding of the values and insights that Latvians have passed on in oral form for centuries, from generation to generation. Latvians, for their part, now have access to Latvian translations of well-known Swedish literary works, including Swedish poetry. I hope that the Culture Festival of the Baltic States in the Nordic Countries, which will take place in September and October of this year, will continue to raise the interest of Scandinavians in the beauty and diversity of the three Baltic countries.

Once again, I would like to thank all those who helped to realize this magnificent gift to Riga on its 800th anniversary, and hope that this *Three Stars Three Crowns* exhibit inspires the creation of similar noteworthy projects in the future.