



**Seul le discours prononcé fait foi**

**Visite d'État de S.A.R. le Grand-Duc  
en république de Lettonie  
du 12 au 14 2023**

**Discours de table et toast prononcé par  
S.A.R. le Grand-Duc  
à l'occasion du dîner de gala au château de Riga  
13 mars 2023**

Mr President,

First and foremost, allow me to warmly thank you for your kind hospitality. I very much hope that the many years you and your family have spent in Luxembourg, during your term as judge at the European Court of Justice, have left you with a positive impression of the Grand Duchy and its people.

This State visit could not be more timely: it was only last year that we celebrated hundred years of bilateral relations. An exchange of official letters in autumn 1922 led Luxembourg to formally recognise Latvia as a sovereign and independent State. Three years later, Mr Jan Lasdin was nominated as Consul general of Latvia in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, by my grandmother Grand Duchess Charlotte.

Last year also marked the 30th anniversary of the reestablishment of diplomatic relations with Latvia, after the restoration of its independence in 1991.

We do have reasons to celebrate Mr President, but at the same time, our thoughts are with the people of Ukraine and their terrible sufferings, following the brutal attack by Russia. Your country shares a border with the aggressor. Experiencing this proximity gives us an even better understanding of your deep preoccupation with the current situation.

Mr President,

These last hundred years bear testimony to a very similar history of our Nations: two small countries between powerful neighbours in an ever-changing security environment. This, I believe, has led our two countries to become strong advocates of a stable and rule-based international system, guaranteeing safe borders, peace, democracy, rule of law and human rights. We have been promoting these values over the last decades, be it within the UN, the European Union, the Council of Europe and NATO. We both know how painful it is to lose these fundamental values. That is why we defend them so hard.

Within the EU, our two countries are part of the revolving presidency's Troika, with our Italian friends. Our next term will take place in 2028-2029, and I am convinced that together, we will do our utmost to steer the EU through the challenges ahead of us. In the near future Latvia will be called to chair the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers. Luxembourg will follow in 2024. I am convinced that both our countries will seek to contribute actively to a better and safer environment for all our citizens.

At the UN, Luxembourg is glad to support Latvia's bid to join the Security Council; and we are grateful for your backing of our future candidature.

As the world's primary body with responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council is facing its most difficult challenge since its creation: one of its permanent members has launched a military aggression against one of its neighbours.

Russia's brutal war against Ukraine, the crimes committed against the civilian population, the awful bloodshed in an area that already suffered beyond imagination during and after both World Wars, have deeply shocked all of us, and reminded us that peace and justice are by no means guaranteed. This is not a mere territorial struggle, it is our democratic system that is at stake.

Both our countries have made enormous efforts to contribute to the defence of Ukraine and to the defence of our common values. Our strong cooperation among NATO partners is essential.

Mr President,

Let me end on a positive note. This State visit is a token of our friendship with a very similar country. We have many common interests and beyond our shared vision of the world, we should bring our economic and commercial relations to the same level of excellence and exploit their full potential.

Over the past years, Luxembourg has consistently invested in new technologies, in particular in the sectors of ICT, Space and Green Finance. I do believe that the Luxembourg business actors, present here today, are ready to offer strategic partnerships to their counterparts in Latvia and I am convinced that further cooperation in these and other sectors would greatly benefit both our countries.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Please raise your glasses and join me in a toast to the health of the President of Latvia, and to a bright future of our friendship for the good of our two countries and their citizens.