

Future of Work in the Age of AI

Dear colleagues, friends, ladies and gentlemen!

It is inspiring to see so many leaders from government, business, technology, education and civil society here today, together in one place.

In Riga, Latvia, the place where it all happens. A place where knowledge, ideas, plans, and growth come together. A place where artificial intelligence meets people's ability to understand it and use it.

The future of work is not a question of one sector. It is a shared responsibility. And it is very important that we are here to discuss one of the most important transformations of our time. Artificial intelligence.

Technology is already transforming our economies and societies. And it is happening fast. We must be agile. We must think ahead. So that we don't stay behind.

Just a few weeks ago, together with other European leaders we met to discuss Europe's competitiveness. And the message was clear.

Europe must innovate faster. Invest more in technology. And most importantly, invest in people. Because technology alone will not determine our future. People will. We will. Together as politicians, educators, innovators, business people. We are the ones who are making this future happen.

Latvia is a small country. If we compare ourselves to larger economies. But in the digital world, size can be an advantage. We can move a lot faster and be more agile. Make decisions faster. Cooperate more closely. And test new ideas more easily.

Latvia is one of the digitally advanced countries in Europe. Internet access is high. Digital services are widely used by citizens. And interacting with the state online has become a normal part of everyday life.

And we also have innovative companies that are already applying artificial intelligence in practice. For example, I am proud that a Latvian company “Tilde” is helping people and institutions across Europe use AI for translation and communication between many different languages, especially smaller ones. This is an excellent

example of how AI can make Europe more connected. And Tilde is not the only example. Latvia has a vibrant and innovative technology sector, supported by a highly digital society.

One example is our centralised digital government platform – the TAP portal. It allows citizens to follow the law-making process online and participate in it.

Another example is the electronic signature. Latvia recently became the first country in the world to legally recognise Ukraine’s e-signature.

Also – my goal as the prime minister has been to reduce bureaucracy. And as a result, you can now register a company completely online. And start building right away. It takes very little time.

This shows how digital solutions can support trust and cooperation, and make things move faster. Which is good for the economy.

Artificial intelligence is already affecting our economies, public services, security and competitiveness. But even as AI becomes more capable, the human role becomes more important. Not less. Skills are changing. But technology cannot replace human judgment, responsibility or values. Algorithms can support decisions. But they cannot decide what is fair. What is ethical. Or what kind of society we want to build. That responsibility remains with people. With our democratic values, our way of doing things.

And as policymakers we must think carefully about how societies adapt to this change. Some jobs will transform. Some tasks will disappear. But many new opportunities will also emerge. Our responsibility is to help people move from old jobs to new ones through education, lifelong learning and reskilling.

This is why future skills are not only technical. They include critical thinking. Ethical reasoning. Creativity. And the ability to work with others in this, so to say, technology jungle.

In Latvia, artificial intelligence is one of our national priorities. Together with industry and academia we have established national Artificial Intelligence Centre. Its goal is simple. To build skills.

Support innovation. And strengthen cooperation between science, business and government.

The Centre has also launched an AI regulatory sandbox. This allows organisations to safely test and develop new AI solutions.

We have also introduced faster procedures for large-scale investments and defence innovation. Because in today's world, speed matters. The state must enable innovation.

At the same time, people must not feel that technology is something distant. But something they can understand and shape.

Tomorrow Latvia will organise its first national Artificial Intelligence Day. Across the country teachers and students will learn about AI. More than 500 teachers and 10,000 students will take part in the first year alone. Because the future of work starts in schools with building proper skills.

Education is one of the areas where AI raises the most questions.

Students already use AI widely. So the real question is not whether AI will be used in education. The real question is how we use it responsibly.

In Latvia we are preparing to introduce new artificial intelligence tools into our education system. The exact solutions I cannot still announce publicly, but our direction is clear: We want our schools, teachers and students to have access to modern AI technologies. And we are ready to make significant investments in this area.

We must support teachers to improve learning quality. And strengthen students' cognitive abilities. AI should help students think more deeply. Not think less.

As I already mentioned, Latvia's size gives us another advantage. We can test new solutions quickly. We can bring together government, startups, universities and companies in the same room. And we can scale solutions nationally much faster than larger countries. This is why Latvia can serve as a testing ground for ideas that later scale across Europe. And that is also my invitation to you today.

Come to Latvia. Test ideas here. Develop solutions here. Build partnerships here. The future of work will be shaped by the choices we make today. If we manage this transformation wisely, then we will not simply adapt to technological change. We will lead it.

Thank you!