

Address by Prime Minister Krišjānis Kariņš on the New Year's Eve

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[State Chancellery](#)



Good evening dear people of Latvia!

The passing year has proved to be the year of tenacity and challenges. The Covid-19 pandemic is one of the greatest challenges we have faced since the restoration of independence. This has required a particularly high degree of patience, responsibility, understanding and foresight. For some of us, it has given rise to confusion, while the vast majority of people were brought closer for a common fight.

We began the year with a plan and action on major changes that are vital to the national development and growth in the system of health, education, taxation and administrative territorial system, with a view to making life better and public services more equitable and accessible to every citizen. These were the necessary changes, which will bear fruit to all of us over time.

The year 2020 will, however, remain in the world history as the time of the Covid-19 pandemic that has affected all of us – the young and old, the families and lonely people, those who are aware of risks and those who find it difficult to understand them. This unusual situation has shown that we can accomplish a lot when we act together, and arrive at a poor outcome when we think only of ourselves.

The passing year has changed our daily habits and relationships with people around us. Within a short period in spring, we were able to react and reorganize our daily lives, and, consequently, we were recognized as one of the most successful in Europe and in the world. However, it should be acknowledged that the good results of spring and relatively peaceful summer hindered a common understanding of the threat and preparation for the second wave of the spread of virus in a sufficiently timely manner.

This year, the government has more clearly heard the voices of different social and professional groups. I would like to thank the social partners, non-governmental organisations and civil initiative activists for their cooperation and dialogue. The diversity of views is a value, especially in times of crisis. Latvia needs all people, all opinions and respectful discussions – among family and

friends, politicians and institutions.

Our strength lies in cooperation – both at national and international level. It is only by making a joint effort that we can overcome all the difficulties. This year's cooperation with partners in the European Union and allies in NATO has also demonstrated the importance of joint and coordinated action.

Regardless of the difficulties, our economy has shown clear endurance and the entrepreneurs have been able to prove themselves on an international scale – on export markets. We can be proud of our talented people who have bright minds and outstanding capacities. Human creativity, ambition and willingness to cooperate are the beginning to a path towards all achievements.

Dear friends,

We are a strong nation. We have proven that we are able to confront any enemy. Together we must ensure that our own concerns, fears and fatigue do not become an enemy. It is easy to get lost in torrents of information we receive every day, however the wisdom of our people and the ability to distinguish the truth from fiction will enable us to win this battle.

We have a common goal – to return to a normal daily life as soon as possible. The vaccine is the door to it. However, we must be prepared to remain vigilant for a long time yet. The voluntary vaccination process will be gradual across Europe, and it will last for at least half a year. I know we're ready for it.

In order to overcome today's difficulties, we need to look further and more broadly and continue the path of development. The direction is clear – the welfare state in northern Europe. Crises, wars and also pandemics have had the most direct impact on the dynamics of development of states and nations as they change human thinking and motivation to act. This may be a turning point for the development of our country, however, it requires a united and resolute response.

Therefore, on the New Year's Eve, let us reflect on our individual and common objectives; how we will pursue them; what kind of person do we want to be towards ourselves, our fellow people and country; what are we trying to achieve and what kind of country do we want to live in. The story of the year 2021 lies in our hands. It can be a year of growth, fulfilment and new horizons for every individual and society as a whole.

I call on everyone to remain cautious and act responsibly, thereby avoiding a situation where the virus can take away our nearest and dearest. On this festive evening, let us say a kind word to our loved ones, contact those who are lonely tonight and send get well wishes to those who are currently in the hospital.

On behalf of all of us, I would like to express gratitude to the medical practitioners and services who keep working to ensure health and save lives of our fellow people. However, you're all heroes of this year – both families where children's distance learning required a great deal of attention and effort, and teachers, as well as employers and employees affected by the virus, for whom we will continue to provide the necessary support.

I would like to thank you all for your patience, tolerance and strength in 2020! May the New Year strengthen the faith in ourselves and our country! I wish everyone good health and to keep the spirits up. God bless Latvia!

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