



EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA
IN THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

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Dear Mr Amess,

Thank you for your letter of 14 February in which you shared your concerns about 16th March events in Riga.

Latvia, like United Kingdom, is a democratic country and ensures all fundamental human rights and freedoms, including the freedom of assembly. If some former soldiers choose to pay their respects to their fallen comrades, they are entitled to do so, provided it is in accordance Latvia's laws and regulations. Latvian courts subsequently on several occasions have overruled the decision by the authorities to ban these commemorative events.

I find that your description of events in Riga, using 'heroism', 'celebration' and 'Neo-Nazis are allowed to march so freely' is misguided and inappropriate. Any display of totalitarian ideology – either Nazi or soviet – is strictly prohibited by Latvian law and would entail immediate prosecution. Ms Monica Lowenberg herself was in Riga last year and personally observed the events, so I believe she would be able to confirm, that no Nazi uniforms, symbols or slogans appear on 16th March.

May I also refer to my letter to you last year, where I tried to provide my considerations on controversial history of World War II in Latvia, including Latvian Legion and 16th March? Let me reiterate, that Latvia has always condemned the crimes committed during World War II – the crimes of Nazism and Stalinism. Latvia is committed to the values of democratic and open society and we will endeavour to facilitate true consolidation of the people and countries who suffered under totalitarian regimes during World War II.

In the meantime, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Eduards Stiprais', written over a horizontal line.

Eduards Stiprais
Ambassador