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Latvian EU Presidency: Russian must become an official language in EU

Press Release from EFA MEP Tatjana Ždanoka

Latvian MEP **Tatjana Ždanoka** has called on the incoming Latvian Presidency of the European Union to show tolerance to multilingualism and cultural diversity.

Ms Ždanoka was speaking in the debate in the European Parliament in Strasbourg with Latvian Prime Minister Laimdota Straujuma about priorities for Latvia's EU Presidency.

Latvia took over the six-month, rotating Presidency of the EU Council on 1 January 2015.

Russian is the native language of around 40% of people in Latvia and Tatjana Ždanoka has called for Russian to become an official language of Latvia, and one of the EU's official languages.

Speaking in Latvian in the European Parliament, **Tatjana Ždanoka** said:

"I as a Latvian citizen would like our EU Presidency to be a success.

"I would like the Latvian Presidency to maintain the multiplicity of languages and cultures in the European Union.

"We have to consider that all the cultures in the European Union deserve to be respected and that the multitude of languages and their diversity concerns not only the official languages but also regional languages and those not officially recognised in the Member States.

"I would like the Latvian governing parties to be inspired and to reconsider their policy which up until now has included linguistic discrimination and segregation.

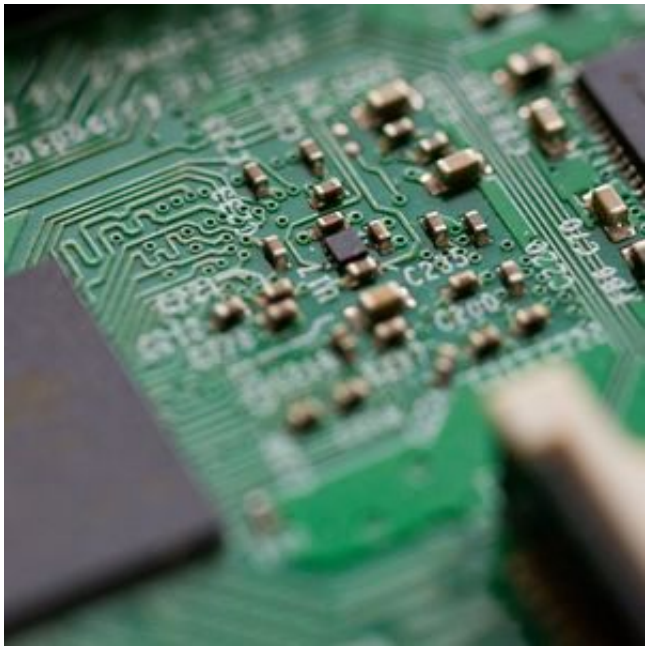
"And I call upon them to assure official status for the Russian language, which is the native language of about 40% of the population of Latvia. I would like to see this happen because only a society which guarantees respect for cultural diversity can truly face up to the challenges we face today. We have seen this quite clearly in the recent tragic events in France.

"I wish the Latvian Presidency every success."

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