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**RESULTS**

## Egils Levits elected president of the Republic of Latvia

Egils Levits was elected President of the Republic of Latvia on 29th May. He succeeds Raimonds Vejonis who chose not to run for a second term in office as head of State. Supported by the government coalition parties – National Alliance (All for Latvia Union (VL) and the Homeland Union and Freedom (TB/LNNK)), the New Conservative Party (JKP), For the Development of Latvia/For (PAR), New Unity (JV) and To Whom does the Country Belong (Kam pieder valsts?) (KPV) – Egils Levits won 61 of the 100 votes of the members of the Saeima, the only house of Parliament.

Juris Jansons, ombudsman, supported by the opposition parties, i.e. the Greens and Farmers Union, won 8 votes, and Didzis Smits (KPV-LV), MP supported by some of the members of his own party won 24 votes.

The election for the presidency took place for the first time with open voting slips.

"I will be president to all Latvians, those who live in the country and those who live abroad, the president of the poor and the rich alike, the president of those living on the fringe of society and those who are well established," declared the new head of State, who aim to attract people who have left the country, back to Latvia.

Aged 63 and from Riga, Egils Levits is a graduate in political science and law from the University of Hamburg. He spent part of his youth in Germany,

the country to where his parents, Latvian Jews, were deported by the USSR in 1972 by the KGB. Egils Levits took an active part in the Baltic Republic's independence movement at the end of the 1980's. He returned to Latvia in 1990 and he was the co-author of Latvia's declaration of independence on 4th May 1991 and also of the country's Constitution. Elected MP in 1993 under the banner of the Latvian Way (LC), Egils Levits was Deputy Prime Minister and Justice Minister (1993-1994) in the governments of Ivars Godmanis (LC) and Valdis Birkavs (LC), then he was Ambassador for Latvia in Switzerland, Hungary, Germany and Austria between 1994 and 1995, the year when he was appointed judge at the European Court for Human Rights. Four years' later in 2004, he joined the European Union's Court of Justice.

Egils Levits will enter office on 8th July next.

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