



Regeringskansliet

Tal från Näringsdepartementet

Swedish Business Awards 2014, Lettland

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Riga Art Space, Lettland 2 december 2014 Excellences,
Entrepreneurs and representatives of business in Latvia
and Sweden, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour for me to be here in Riga and to take part in the fifth Swedish Business awards in Latvia. I would like to thank the organizers for gathering so many dynamic companies and organisations from our two countries.

Swedish-Latvian relations are better than ever. Sweden and Latvia have close relations at all levels: between our governments, in business, civil society, culture and not least between people.

Considering the developments in our common neighbourhood, our relations are also more important than ever. Together, we should work to make our partnership even stronger and cooperate at all levels.

Sweden and Latvia are key partners in the EU. I am happy to note that Latvia this year celebrates its 10th year anniversary of membership to the European Union. Latvia will also take over the presidency in the EU in the spring of 2015. I would like to express my best wishes to Latvia in this important task.

Free and open trade is vital for economic development and growth. The ongoing negotiations between the EU and the United States – for a free trade and investment agreement, could open up new possibilities for European business – not least in our Nordic Baltic region. It also serves as an opportunity to make the transatlantic link in general even stronger, which is very important given the developments in our common neighbourhood. Let us together take advantage of this opportunity.

We already have well-functioning trade and investments between our countries but, there is still a lot of untapped potential. That is why events like these are important. Establishing contacts and meeting in person is still important for making decisions to enter into new markets.

Generating ideas and investing in education is needed for economic development. I am happy to note that this year, a successful cooperation between our two countries: The Stockholm School of Economics in Riga celebrated its 20th year anniversary. A school from which many highly skilled businesswomen and men have graduated. Graduates from SSE Riga have made important contributions to the promotion of business leadership and entrepreneurship.

The significance of today's awards is that your business, your ideas and the jobs you create matter for the Latvian society, the environment, for people and for the sustainable growth of our region.

I look forward to this afternoon in Riga Art Space and I hope that you will all be inspired by the Swedish-Latvian businesswomen and men.

Together, we can make sure that the friendly ties and business partnerships between Sweden and Latvia will grow. Even stronger and even closer. For sure, the necessary conditions and the motivation is already here. Let us do it together!

Thank you!