

A Spectacle of Culture and Technology: Latvia Celebrates National Day at Expo 2025

On May 20, Latvia celebrated its National Day, “Voice and Echo,” at EXPO 2025 Osaka—the world’s largest international exhibition. The celebration featured a rich, specially curated cultural program and a strategically significant business forum. Visitors had the opportunity to experience Latvia’s voice on the global stage—discovering the diversity of its culture, national values, and creativity in a modern and unique way, while also learning about Latvia’s technological achievements and global innovation potential.

The event welcomed a Latvian delegation including President of Latvia Edgars Rinkēvičs, Minister of Economics of Latvia Viktors Valainis, musicians, dancers, business leaders, and more. A variety of cultural and economic exchange programs between Latvia and Japan took place throughout the day.



Official Opening Ceremony and Cultural Program

At the official opening ceremony held in the National Day Hall “Rei Garden,” President Edgars Rinkēvičs addressed the audience:



“This year marks the 100th anniversary of Latvia’s first participation in an international exposition. I am pleased that this symbolic milestone is drawing increased attention to the Baltic region. Latvia’s participation in the Osaka-Kansai Expo is a significant step forward in advancing our economic diplomacy and a valuable opportunity to strengthen our

international presence. I hope the Baltic Pavilion will serve as a catalyst for new partnerships between Latvia and Japan by showcasing our cultures and technologies to the world.”

The highlight of the ceremony was the specially created multimedia performance “ECHO / ATBALSS.” This 40-minute production told Latvia’s story through the rhythm of the day and the changing seasons, brought to life through music, dance, and stunning visual effects. Created in collaboration with artists from both Latvia and Japan, the performance highlighted shared cultural values and demonstrated the harmonious coexistence of nature and technology, tradition and innovation.



The creative concept was developed by Guntis Ērglis-Lācis, together with musical director Reinis Sējāns, choreographer Dagmāra Bārbale, costume and set designer Anna Heinrihsone, and Japanese musician and producer Yoshiaki Okawa. Performers included the folk dance ensemble Vektors, the Sinfonietta Rīga string quartet, and musicians Reinis Sējāns, Edgars and Kristīne Kārklī, Ilona Dzērve, Mārtiņš Miļevskis, Yoshiaki Okawa, among others.

“While working on this piece, I was amazed to discover how much Latvia and Japan have in common in terms of tradition. I chose that shared thread as the foundation for both the musical direction and instrument selection,” said Reinis Sējāns.

“From classical and choral music to electronic and contemporary sounds, we created, together with our colleagues from Latvia and Japan, a vivid and emotional story—one that resonates deeply between our two cultures. It shows that while we may be geographically distant, in music, traditions, and values, we are close. This performance is proof that culture can become a bridge between nations, people, and nature, affirming that the Baltic Pavilion’s theme ‘We are one!’ is not just a phrase—it’s a living philosophy.”

National Parade: “Voice and Echo”

Following the ceremony, a colorful parade took place under the Grand Roof Ring at the Expo site. Participants in traditional Latvian attire, including the renowned folk dance group Vektors, marched proudly with national flags. The parade brought the theme “VOICE and ECHO” to life through vibrant costumes, instruments, and rhythmic movement. The sparkling visuals and joyful music captivated the audience and filled the Expo with the spirit of Latvia.



Business Forum: Driving Innovation and Collaboration

Held at the EXPO Salon, the Latvian Business Forum brought together thought leaders and industry professionals from Latvia and Japan to discuss innovations in smart cities, mobility, and energy. The keynote address explored the impact of 5G, IoT, and smart grids on the cities of the future, followed by two panel discussions on AI, blockchain, fintech, and renewable energy, highlighting successful applications and commercialization cases.

A memorandum of understanding for industrial cooperation was signed between Latvian company Fortes and Japanese company Ichigo Eco. A technology showcase was also held, creating valuable opportunities for networking, investment, and collaboration. The forum attracted participants from various sectors including tech, investment, policy-making, and academia—demonstrating the potential of international cooperation to address global urban challenges.



Viktors Valainis, Minister of Economics of Latvia, stated:

“With 158 countries and regions participating and an expected 28 million visitors, Expo 2025 is an important opportunity for Latvia to establish itself as a trusted partner in technology and innovation in Japan. We aim to build long-term, sustainable partnerships with Japanese businesses and investors, attract new investments, and open new markets for Latvian exporters. Interest in the Baltic region is growing in Japan, and with over 200,000 visitors to the Baltic Pavilion in just the first month, this strong response confirms Latvia’s rising global profile and potential for deeper collaboration.”

Cultural Workshop: Latvian “Puzuri” Ornament Making

A hands-on workshop invited visitors to craft Puzuri—traditional Latvian straw ornaments based on octahedral geometry. Symbolizing the cycles of nature—heaven and earth, past and future, the four seasons—Puzuri reflect Latvia’s harmonious relationship with the environment. Through this activity, guests experienced a meaningful part of Latvian heritage and artisanal tradition.



Strengthening Bilateral Ties

Lāsma Līdaka, Commissioner General for Latvia at Expo 2025 Osaka, commented:

“Today was Latvia’s most significant day at Expo 2025. We showcased both our rich cultural heritage and our modern, innovative capabilities. Through the diverse events of Latvian National Day, we were able to convey Latvia’s creativity and expertise. We are delighted that Japanese visitors enjoyed the performances and were deeply moved by them. This day will surely become a foundation for deepening future cooperation and strengthening the friendship between Latvia and Japan.”

Latvia and Japan share a long-standing relationship in both economic and cultural spheres. Japan is one of Latvia’s most important strategic partners in the Far East, with strong cooperation in sectors such as woodworking, IT, pharmaceuticals, tourism, and design. The partnership is marked by growing trade, regular political dialogue, collaboration in international organizations, and close ties between cities, institutions, and parliaments. For Latvia, Japan remains a key strategic partner in Asia, with shared ambitions to foster a secure, stable, and economically advanced Baltic and Indo-Pacific region.

<本件に関するお問い合わせ>

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