

**Opening address by Giedrė Purvanekienė, President of the Baltic Assembly,
at the Baltic Assembly Prize Awarding Ceremony and
the Baltic Assembly Medal Awarding Ceremony**

19 November 2015
Vilnius

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome you to the Baltic Assembly's Prize and Medal Awarding Ceremony, here in beautiful *Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania*.

We have gathered here to honour people who with their endeavour advance and facilitate the development of literature, the arts, science and innovation in the Baltic States. People who with their creative ideas bring the name of the Baltic States beyond borders of our region.

Nations culture resides in our hearts and in souls of our people. Importance of culture is invaluable. Because, it makes people more united and helps to understand each other better. And if our people understand each other better it is easier to overcome difficulties and make our nations even more united.

Prizes of the Baltic Assembly are an important tool that reveals the cultural identity of the Baltic nations, honours national heritage and shares the cultural values among the Baltic States. Our region's future growth relies on skills, innovation and productivity by bright minds of the Baltic people.

We are here tonight also to praise people awarded with the medals of the Baltic Assembly. People who with their work and input have uphold the unity of the Baltic States and have promoted the interstate cooperation.

On behalf of the Baltic Assembly, I sincerely congratulate those who are awarded with Baltic Assembly' Medals and Prizes!