

**WCC's 33rd Award Ceremony
14th October in Ziedonis Hall, National Library of Latvia in
conjunction with the celebrations of the 154th anniversary of Riga
Technical University.**

Welcome Speech

Leonīds Ribickis, Rector, Riga Technical University

Dear Excellencies, Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. I'm honoured to welcome you today in the 33rd World Cultural Award Ceremony, which is also the day of Riga Technical University 154th Anniversary.

This is a notable day for the international organisation, World Cultural Council, which created this event in order to highlight outstanding personalities whose work has had a significantly positive impact in the cultural legacy of human.

The objective of the World Cultural Council is to promote culture, values and goodwill throughout the world. Means by which it strives to do so is by granting the Albert Einstein World Award of Science, the José Vasconcelos World Award of Education and the Leonardo da Vinci World Award of Arts. And today we have gathered here in the National Library of Latvia to celebrate the nominees with two of those outstanding awards.

In 1984, the first World Cultural Council Award Ceremony took place. And now more than 30 years later, this event has raised us to an honourable position by coming to Latvia and to Riga Technical University. We are highly grateful and happy for this World Cultural Council decision. We are also delighted that this World Cultural Council ceremony takes place at the same time as our university celebration.

This year Riga Technical University celebrates our 154th anniversary, and we are the oldest technical university and the largest university not only in Latvia but also in Baltic States by number of students. RTU is driving force of Engineering and Applied Sciences, Education in Latvia, and the main mission of our university is excellence in research, sustainable valorisation and high quality study approaches.

Together currently we have more than 15,000 students, including 2,000 foreign students, and this number each year became larger. It proves that we can and we will continue our development. What is relevant this year, Riga Technical University cooperation with industry and companies was highly evaluated in the prestigious international ranking. The Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2016-17, well, in industry

income section, we ranked in 2 top 500 universities. We are proud of this fact and we'll continue to do our best.

This evening we are honour to welcome such guests as our Minister of Culture, Dace Melbārde, Magnificences Rectors, Excellencies ambassadors and, of course, our priza nominees, Professor Edward Witten from U.S.A. and Professor Kalevi Ekman from Finland. And many others who have showed respect to the event.

I wish all the award receivers much of success, and I celebrate every name mentioned in the evening for their achievements and work. I'm also very proud of my colleagues, promising Latvian researchers from Riga Technical University, who will be presented this special recognition, Diplomas of World Cultural Council. I would like to express my gratitude to the leaders of the World Cultural Council, President Sir Colin Blakemore, Executive Director Dr. Esteban Meszaros Wild, Secretary General Lily Hernandez, and everybody who was involved in the organisation of this event. And thank you also for the possibility to organise a ceremony in the National Library of Latvia, which is our symbol of knowledge, the Castle of Light, and one of the greatest cultural projects of the 21st century in Latvia. May the Light of Knowledge lead all of you to further outstanding achievements and moments. I greet everybody in this important day of World Cultural Council, Riga Technical University and Latvia. Thank you very much for your attention.