10TH RIGA AVIATION FORUM TO BRING TOGETHER BALTIC AND EUROPEAN AVIATION INDUSTRY LEADERS

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The leading aviation industry conference in the Baltic region, the Riga Aviation Forum, will bring together top-level aviation leaders, policymakers, experts, and business executives from the Baltics, the Nordics, and across Europe on 10 September 2026 at Hanzas Perons in Riga. Participants will discuss the future of aviation and related industries, and their role in driving regional economic growth, strengthening connectivity, and fostering manufacturing and innovation.

Organized by the Latvian Aviation Association in cooperation with its partners, the Riga Aviation Forum is celebrating its milestone anniversary this year. Over the past ten years, it has become the foremost meeting place for aviation decision-makers in the Baltic region and the leading platform for strategic dialogue between the aviation industry, government institutions, tourism stakeholders, and international organizations.

The 2026 Riga Aviation Forum programme, which will be opened by Minister of Transport of Latvia Rihards Kozlovskis, reflects the most pressing trends and challenges shaping aviation

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development regionally and globally. The Forum's keynote discussion, moderated by Raimonds Grunti?š, Regional Director Europe at the International Air Transport Association (IATA), will feature **Sanders Salmu**, Deputy Secretary General of the Estonian Ministry of Climate; **El?na Šimi?a-Neverovska**, Deputy State Secretary at Latvia's Ministry of Transport; **Erno Hildén**, CEO and President of Latvia's national airline airBaltic and experienced industry professional from Lithuania **Gediminas Almantas**. The discussion will focus on aviation policymaking at the national, regional, and European levels.

Another major topic of the Forum will be the importance of collaboration between government institutions, tourism organizations, and aviation industry stakeholders in driving economic growth. Participants in this session will include **Laila Odi?a**, CEO of RIX Riga Airport; **Ieva J?gere**, Director of the Investment and Development Agency of Latvia (LIAA); **Olga Gon?arova**, Head of Lithuania Travel; and **Mari Saloniemi**, representative of Visit Tampere.

The pressing challenge of workforce development and talent attraction will be examined by leading industry experts, including international aviation specialist **Jane Hoskisson**, **Iluta Savicka**, Head of Norwegian's Riga Base, **Aivars P?c?tis**, Board Member of Latvijas Gaisa Satiksme, and other experienced HR and talent management professionals.

A further key topic, the transition from traditional infrastructure development to integrated and intelligent aviation ecosystems in the development of Baltic airports, will be explored in depth by industry experts representing SITA, one of the world's leading air transport communications and information technology companies, as well as executives from Latvijas Gaisa Satiksme and Lithuania's aviation industry association CAVIA.

A dedicated Forum session will focus on businesses operating "behind the runway" - sectors closely linked to aviation that are playing an increasingly important role in industry growth as airports evolve into new forms of urban environments. Leading experts including Walter Seib, Chairman of Avolta; Borga Dincler, Business Development and Marketing Director at Turkish airport advertising operator Media Port; Aude Ferrand, Chairwoman of TAV Operation Services and Chief Commercial Officer of TAV Airports; and other distinguished speakers will share their vision for innovative services and future passenger experiences in airport cities of tomorrow.

The Forum will also address the critical topic of manufacturing and supply chains, their resilience, and their ability to adapt to sustainability challenges and rapid industry transformation. Insights will be provided by experts including J?nis Kisiels, CEO of sustainable aviation fuel producer NorSAF; Gytis Leonavicius, CEO of Lithuania's Skyco; as well as leaders from companies AM Craft, Axon Cable, and Artex Latvia.

"We are particularly pleased that, in this anniversary year, the Riga Aviation Forum will gain a broader regional dimension by connecting the Baltics and the Nordics through a live discussion linking the Riga Aviation Forum with the Tampere Business Forum and Tampere Aviation Forum in Finland. During this session, Baltic and Nordic experts will discuss regional connectivity, economic cooperation, investment opportunities, and cross-border business development," says Zigm?rs Vestf?ls, Head of the Latvian Aviation Association.

In addition to the conference programme, RAF 2026 will offer extensive networking opportunities for aviation professionals, business leaders, public sector representatives, investors, and representatives of international organizations from across Europe.

Further information and the full programme are available at **RAF website**.

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The Riga Aviation Forum is organized by the Latvian Aviation Association in cooperation with the Investment and Development Agency of Latvia (LIAA) and the Tampere Business Forum.

Media Accreditation

Media representatives wishing to attend the **Riga Aviation Forum 2026** are invited to contact the organizers by emailing **info@laa.aero**.

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