

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ
OF THE BALTIC DEFENCE COOPERATION MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE

21 May 2021

Šiauliai, Lithuania

The Minister of Defence of the Republic of Estonia, the Minister of Defence of the Republic of Latvia, the Minister of National Defence of the Republic of Lithuania, as the Ministerial Committee (MC),

Having met on 21 May 2021 in Šiauliai, Lithuania,

1. Reaffirmed full dedication and commitment to close Baltic cooperation in security and defence in order to strengthen our security on NATO's Eastern flank.
2. Pledged to further strengthen Baltic defence cooperation in capability development to ensure interoperability and cost-effective use of resources dedicated to defence.
3. Emphasized the key role of NATO and a strong transatlantic bond in ensuring security of the entire Euro-Atlantic area, including the Baltic Sea region, and underlined the importance for NATO to remain a strong military Alliance with a clear focus on collective defence.
4. Reiterated the commitment to building up credible national defence capabilities through continued increase of existing defence budgets and allocation of at least 2 per cent of GDP to defence spending, and stressed the importance of long-term commitment to the NATO Defence Investment Pledge.
5. Agreed to conduct a further analysis on the possible common acquisition of Multiple Launch Rocket System capability post 2025.
6. Agreed to coordinate efforts in preparing for the NATO Summit with an aim to emphasize the importance of a strong transatlantic link and affirm continuing support to further strengthening the Alliance's deterrence and defence posture.
7. Acknowledged the necessity to continue implementation of the Concept of Deterrence and Defence of the Euro-Atlantic Area, the NATO Warfighting Capstone Concept and the NATO Military Strategy to ensure development of necessary capabilities and ability to address Russia's aggressive military posture in the region.
8. Highlighted the importance of the continued Allied military presence in Baltic States as an integral part of NATO's deterrence and defence posture in the region and commended NATO and Allies for their continued contribution to the enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) battlegroups and the enhanced NATO Baltic Air Policing Mission (BAP) in demonstrating Allied solidarity and unity despite challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.
9. Welcomed eFP's unambiguous resolve to respond to any aggression, and highlighted the need for rapid and viable reinforcement and development of necessary measures to counter Russian military posture, including A2/AD threats in the region.
10. Highlighted the importance to increase force readiness, expressed strong support for NATO Readiness Initiative to ensure a credible pool of high readiness forces, and underlined the need to review NATO's force structure to ensure Alliance's ability to respond quickly to any crisis and conflict in the region.

11. Discussed NATO's air defence vulnerabilities in Baltic states and reiterated the commitment to continue efforts to improve regional and Allied air defence posture.
12. Welcomed the further strengthening of regional Command and Control (C2) structure and the progress made in the further development of Headquarters Multinational Division North. Together with Multinational Division North East, it contributes to deterrence and defence of the Baltic Sea region.
13. Reaffirmed the great value of deep and wide-ranging defence cooperation with the United States, emphasizing enduring Baltic commitment to strong Allied relations.
14. Welcomed the consultations between the U.S. and its Allies regarding U.S. Global Force Posture Review, underlining that U.S. military presence in the Eastern flank of NATO is one of the main and most viable means of deterrence against aggressive and revisionist Russia.
15. Welcomed the United States' military presence in the Baltic region and reiterated the commitment to provide all necessary support for the deployment of US forces.
16. Underlined the importance of the United States assistance in capability building in the Baltic States, including through the newly established Baltic Security Initiative, and expressed appreciation for the United States' decision to allocate funding for development of Baltic military capabilities.
17. Highlighted the progress that the European Union has made in the area of security and defence cooperation, and called for an appropriate reflection of security threats and available EU instruments in the Eastern neighbourhood during EU's strategic discussions and drafting of the Strategic Compass.
18. Welcomed the decision of the Council of the European Union that allows for the participation of the U.S., Canada and Norway in PESCO project for Military Mobility. Reaffirmed readiness to further strengthen cooperation with the U.S., Canada and Norway, as well as with other NATO Allies in the framework of PESCO and other EU defence initiatives.
19. Emphasised the need to improve military mobility on a national, EU and NATO level and underlined the necessity to effectively utilise opportunities and coordinate efforts in implementing dual-use infrastructure projects from Military Mobility funds in the Connecting Europe Facility.
20. Highlighted the importance of ensuring that EU defence initiatives, in particular PESCO and EDF, remain open and inclusive to the participation of our strategic partners.
21. Welcomed the endorsement of the European Peace Facility and underlined the need to substantively utilise this instrument for supporting EU partners – Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova.
22. Called upon the EU, NATO and all member states to strengthen their support for Ukraine.
23. Reiterated the continued support for Ukraine's and Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity as well as their Euro-Atlantic aspirations and efforts to strengthen their security and defence, and increase interoperability with NATO nations.
24. Acknowledged the need to increase international assistance provided to Ukraine and Georgia in order to enhance the defence and resilience of these countries, and decided to strengthen Baltic states' common efforts to assist Ukraine and Georgia in defence capacity building.

25. Conveyed regret that Russia has refused to use any arms control and confidence and security building measures to dispel concerns over its unusual military activities near the Ukrainian border, disregarding its arms control obligations and contributing to the lack of transparency.
26. Called upon Russia and Belarus to demonstrate military transparency when conducting military exercise "ZAPAD 2021".
27. Expressed concern over Russia's announcements regarding their planned withdrawal from the Open Skies Treaty; and assessed that Russia's continued violations of the Open Skies Treaty further diminish military transparency, jeopardize effective viability of the Open Skies Treaty, and negatively affect the implementation of security and confidence building measures in Europe.
28. Condemned the recent malicious cyber activities orchestrated by Russia and other actors against the Allies, and committed to enhance national cyber defence capabilities.
29. Reaffirmed the commitment to cooperate in cyber defence and highlighted the importance of ensuring secure and resilient communication infrastructure, including 5G networks.
30. Reaffirmed the commitment of Baltic states to strengthen international security through contributing to international missions and operations.

Kalle LAANET

Artis PABRIKS

Arvydas ANUŠAUSKAS



Minister of Defence
Republic of Estonia
21 May 2021

Deputy Prime Minister
Minister of Defence
Republic of Latvia
21 May 2021

Minister of National Defence
Republic of Lithuania
21 May 2021