

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ
OF THE BALTIC DEFENCE COOPERATION MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE

21 December 2021

Kaunas, 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 December 2021 in Kaunas, Lithuania,

1. Condemned Russia's attempts to establish spheres of influence in Europe and deny sovereign countries' right to determine their own future. Any decision on possible dialogue with Russia cannot be based on Russia's demands or preconditions. European and especially Baltic security has gravely suffered from such agreements and ultimatums in the past.
2. Condemned Russian suggestions to limit Ukraine's sovereignty as well as to put restrictions on Ukraine's and Georgia's aspirations towards NATO membership as completely unacceptable.
3. Expressed concern over Russia's continued violations of arms control agreements and selective implementation of security and confidence building measures in Europe. Called for Russia to return to confidence and security building measures and instrumentalize verifiable transparency as a first step for Russia to return to de-escalation.
4. Expressed the greatest concern over ongoing Russia's concentration of military forces on the borders of Ukraine and reiterated the unwavering support to national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, called on Russia to start respecting international law by ending its illegal occupation of Crimea as well as terminating the military support to Luhansk and Donetsk separatist regions.
5. Given the urgency to strengthen Ukraine's defence capabilities, expressed readiness to provide immediate support for Ukraine, including all available non-military and military instruments of power, including lethal weapons.
6. Called for continuous unity, shared situational awareness and joint approach to counter Russian and Belarusian attempts to destabilize European security, including Belarusian hybrid attack using illegal migrants. Acknowledged that total Belarussian integration into Russia significantly changes the assumptions for national as well as NATO defence planning.
7. Highlighted that in response to the deteriorating security situation in the region amid the ongoing hybrid attack by the Belarusian regime and Russia's hostile military activities on the Ukrainian borders, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are raising readiness and conducting national planning activities to respond to any escalation.
8. Highlighted the importance of speedy mutually supportive military activities in ensuring security of our region and agreed to develop a trilateral legal framework to enable rapid cross-border employment during peace time and crisis.
9. Reiterated the commitment to building up credible national defence capabilities through continued increase of existing defence budgets and allocation of more than 2 percent of

GDP to defence spending, and stressed the importance of long-term commitment to the NATO Defence Investment Pledge.

10. Declared their intent to engage in a joint development of regional interoperable Multiple Launch Rocket System capability.
11. Stressed the importance of the United States' continued and increased military presence in the Baltic region and reiterated the commitment to provide all necessary support for the deployment of U.S. forces.
12. Underlined the importance of the United States' assistance in capability building in the Baltic States through the Baltic Security Initiative, and expressed appreciation for the United States' decision to allocate funding for development of Baltic military capabilities.
13. In response to deteriorating security situation, stressed the need for additional NATO and Allied deterrence and defence measures, including longer term adaptation of NATO's deterrence and defence posture on the Eastern part of the Alliance. Emphasize that the substantial deterrence and defence package should be agreed at the upcoming NATO Summit in Madrid.
14. Acknowledged the necessity to continue full implementation of the Concept of Deterrence and Defence of the Euro-Atlantic Area to ensure development of necessary capabilities and ability to address Russia's aggressive military posture in the region.
15. Agreed to coordinate Baltic States' common efforts in development of the new NATO Strategic Concept adequately depicting the contemporary strategic environment and defining Russia as a military threat to the security of the Alliance. Highlighted NATO's collective defence based on Article 5 responsibilities as the major core task of the Alliance, and affirmed continued support to further strengthening the Alliance's deterrence and defence posture.
16. Underscored the importance of development of defence plans and review of NATO's force structure as significant elements of NATO's military adaptation for ensuring NATO's ability to act swiftly in crisis and conflict.
17. Highlighted the importance of continued and strengthened 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.
18. Welcomed the discussions on EU's Strategic Compass for Security and Defence. Reiterated the importance of a balanced and inclusive text, especially as regards the accurate definition of strategic environment, emphasizing strategic partnerships, notably with NATO while avoiding duplication of efforts and adopting a 360 degree approach for the EU's activities.
19. Expressed support to Ukraine's defence sector reforms and emphasized the significant role of continued strong cooperation with Ukraine, including through the establishment of an EU advisory mission in Ukraine, tasked with assisting in reforming professional military education system, and expressed readiness to contribute to this initiative with military personnel and experts.
20. Welcomed the adoption of assistance measures under the European Peace Facility (EPF) in support of Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. Emphasized the importance of these measures in strengthening the military and defence capacities and

increasing resilience of beneficiary countries, and called for the continued EPF support in 2022 and onwards.

21. Discussed the growing challenge of People's Republic of China (PRC) to the world politics as well as to the Baltic Sea region, including political and economic pressure to Lithuania, and reiterated the need to maintain constant exchange of information and coordination in approaching challenges posed by PRC.
22. Highlighted that every country is free to decide on the development of its economic and cultural partnerships. Agreed that the actions of third countries to apply excessive measures as well as political, diplomatic and economic pressure to influence foreign policy decisions are to be condemned.
23. Reaffirmed the commitment of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to strengthen international security through contributing to international missions and operations.

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Dr. Artis PABRIKS

Dr. Arvydas ANUŠAUSKAS

Minister of Defence
Republic of Estonia
21 December 2021

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

Minister of National Defence
Republic of Lithuania
21 December 2021