

**JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ
OF THE MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE**

24th November 2018

Vilnius, 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),

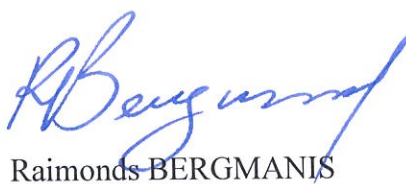
Having met on the occasion of the 100-years anniversary of the Lithuanian Armed Forces Day on 23-24th November 2018 in Vilnius, Lithuania

1. Noted the solid state of the Baltic defence cooperation and underlined the determination to continue this fruitful cooperation.
2. Highlighted the role of NATO as the cornerstone of collective defence in Europe and the whole transatlantic area and reaffirmed the decisions taken at the NATO Brussels Summit that will further strengthen NATO's defence and deterrence posture to adapt to the changed security environment.
3. Reaffirmed Baltic states' unwavering support to the Defence Investment Pledge and their achievement to allocate at least 2 per cent of GDP to defence spending in 2018. Baltic states aspire to move beyond the 2 percent to ensure robust national capability development and implementation of international commitments in the current security environment.
4. Underscored the close coordination of Baltic states' efforts in strengthening NATO collective defence.
5. Stressed the need to fully implement the decisions to enhance NATO's deterrence and defence posture in the Baltic region, as agreed at NATO Brussels Summit.
6. Underlined the need to continue developing NATO's reinforcement strategy and capabilities, and reiterated support to NATO Readiness Initiative with the aim to enhance NATO's ability to rapidly reinforce Allies in case of aggression.
7. Emphasized the success of the enhanced Forward Presence battlegroups in demonstrating the solidarity and unambiguous resolve to trigger Alliance response to any aggression, and the vital coordinating role of NATO's Force Integration Units, expressing sincere appreciation to the contributing Allies.
8. Underlined the importance of initiating a series of realistic and robust live exercises to test NATO's reinforcement to the region.
9. Welcomed the ongoing efforts of Estonia, Latvia and Denmark to establish a divisional level Headquarters Multinational Division North (MND N) within NATO Force Structure, which together with Multinational Division North-East (MND NE) will enhance the Command and Control capability, as well as contribute to deterrence and defence of the whole Baltic region.
10. Stressed the need for Allied forces' freedom of movement in light of Russia's air power and Anti-Access/Area Denial capabilities, in order to reinforce the Baltic region by land, sea and air.
11. Emphasized the critical role of the existing arrangements of the enhanced NATO Baltic Air Policing Mission in safeguarding the NATO airspace.

12. Underlined the significance of the strong transatlantic link for the European and global security, emphasizing the United States' role in deterrence against Russia.
13. Commended the Baltic-United States Summit and stressed the importance of the United States' sustained security assistance to Baltic states to enhance their force readiness and capabilities.
14. Stressed the continued need for the United States military presence in the Baltic region.
15. Expressed support to the EU security and defence initiatives, that are complementary to and not duplicating NATO.
16. Highlighted the significance of transatlantic relationship and EU-NATO cooperation to our overall security and emphasized the importance of strong ties with our strategic partners, especially with the non-EU NATO members.
17. Expressed strong support for the inclusive approach and openness of PESCO projects to third countries.
18. Emphasised the need to improve military mobility and underlined the necessity for the sufficient funding for dual-use infrastructure to be adjusted to the military mobility requirements, stressing the importance of coordinated efforts to ensure the appropriate military mobility on national, EU and NATO level.
19. Underlined the necessity for strong and comprehensive security and defence relationship between the EU and the United Kingdom after Brexit.
20. Condemned the aggressive cyber-attacks recently orchestrated by Russia and other actors against the Allies and expressed the commitment to enhance national cyber defence capabilities and contribute to NATO cyber defence.
21. Recognized systematic and constant hostile propaganda efforts of Russia's state and non-state actors to intervene in informational environments of Baltic states as well as to influence their societies, emphasizing the need to strengthen regional cooperation between Baltic states and Poland in the field of Strategic Communication.
22. Expressed the need to continue strengthening national resilience against hybrid threats, especially against influence operations, information and cyber-attacks, and welcomed the progress made in NATO and the EU in this area.
23. Agreed to continue supporting Ukraine and Georgia's Euro-Atlantic integration aspirations, as well as their efforts to strengthen security and defence, and interoperability with NATO nations and agreed to further support Eastern Partners' engagement in Common Security and Defence Policy of the EU, particularly focusing on three Associated Partners – Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.
24. Reaffirmed Baltic states' role as contributors to the international security and underlined the increased contributions to international missions and operations.
25. Expressed gratitude to Lithuania for chairing the Baltic military cooperation in 2018 and welcomed Estonia as the new chair for 2019.



Jüri LUIK
Minister of Defence
Republic of Estonia
24th November 2018



Raimonds BERGMANIS
Minister of Defence
Republic of Latvia
24th November 2018



Raimundas KAROBLIS
Minister of National Defence
Republic of Lithuania
24th November 2018