

**JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE
BALTIC DEFENCE COOPERATION MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE
20 June 2019
Tartu, Estonia**

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),

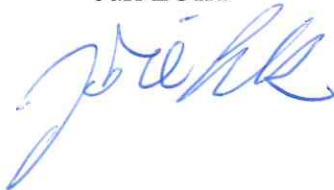
Having met on the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of Baltic Defence College on 19-20 June 2019 in Tartu, Estonia

1. Marked the 70th anniversary of NATO as the Alliance remains the cornerstone of the transatlantic framework and European security.
2. Highlighted the increased security and stability that 15 years of NATO membership has brought to Baltic states and emphasized the significance of a strong transatlantic bond for Baltic states.
3. Welcomed the election of Estonia as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council 2020-2021.
4. Committed to further deepening and broadening Baltic defence cooperation through actions ranging from policy coordination to cooperation in capability development.
5. Reaffirmed the commitment to building up credible national defence capabilities through allocating a minimum of 2 per cent of GDP to defence spending and adhering to the Defence Investment Pledge.
6. Stressed that increased defence spending is vital for all Allies in the years to come, as it enables to deliver critical modern capabilities and improve readiness, deployability, sustainability and interoperability of our forces.
7. Commended Denmark, Latvia and Estonia on the establishment of Headquarters Multinational Division North (HQ MND N) in Ādaži, which significantly improves NATO's regional Control and Command (C2) and brings value for the whole region.
8. Stressed the importance of close coordination and cooperation between Baltic states and Poland to improve regional security and strengthen the overall NATO deterrence and defence posture.
9. Commended NATO and all contributing Allies for the success of the enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) battlegroups in demonstrating Allied solidarity and unambiguous resolve to respond to any aggression.
10. Emphasized the crucial role of the enhanced NATO Baltic Air Policing Mission in safeguarding the airspace of the Alliance.

11. Underscored that NATO's ability to respond to threats has improved since the Wales, Warsaw and Brussels Summits, but further work remains ahead to improve NATO's deterrence and defence posture, particularly in the Eastern flank of the Alliance.
12. Highlighted the importance of increasing the readiness of Allied forces, expressed strong support for NATO Readiness Initiative (NRI), its swift implementation and committed to contributing to NRI.
13. Stressed the importance of developing a NATO reinforcement strategy to ensure that Allied forces are prepared and trained in peacetime through regular deployment exercises, including in the Baltic region.
14. Discussed NATO's air defence vulnerabilities in Baltic states and underlined the significant requirement to improve the Alliance air posture through capabilities and exercises in order to address Russia's aggressive posture, including anti-access and area denial capabilities.
15. Emphasised the serious impact of the collapse of the INF Treaty to the Alliance's deterrence and defence posture due to Russia's undeniable and clear violations, underlining the need for a united and firm NATO's response as the Alliance continues to assess and consider further coordinated measures.
16. Underlined that the commitment of the United States to NATO and its leadership in the Alliance continues to be irreplaceable.
17. Commended the signing of the 5-year Roadmaps for Defence Cooperation between the United States and Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, and committed to cooperate in order to implement them in a way that would bring most value to the region.
18. Emphasized the importance of the United States' sustained security investments in Baltic states, and underlined the great value of the European Deterrence Initiative.
19. Stressed that maintaining and potentially increasing visible United States' presence in Baltic states is the best deterrence against an aggressive and unpredictable Russia.
20. Welcomed the increased United States' military presence in Poland, noting that rotating these troops to Baltic states would strengthen the security of the whole region.
21. Highlighted the progress that the EU has made in the area of security and defence cooperation and called for the focus to now be on implementation and consolidation of the defence initiatives.
22. Emphasized that the development of EU defence initiatives must support and strengthen the transatlantic Alliance and NATO.
23. Welcomed the European Defence Fund (EDF) initiative and the completion of the first annual PESCO cycle.
24. Stressed the importance of ensuring that EU defence initiatives, in particular PESCO and EDF, remain open and inclusive to the participation of our strategic partners, noting that a relevant agreement on PESCO should be reached in an expedited manner.

25. Reiterated support for improving Military Mobility through increased EU-NATO cooperation and through EU instruments such as the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) which will allow to co-fund civilian-military dual-use transport infrastructure projects.
26. Stressed the importance of NATO's and EU's enhanced focus on emerging technologies such as cyber, autonomous systems, and Artificial Intelligence.
27. Reaffirmed the commitment to cooperate in cyber defence to enhance our resilience through information sharing, joint training and exercises and contribute to reinforcing EU and NATO cyber defence.
28. Welcomed the progress made in strengthening national resilience against hostile propaganda efforts and information operations, and committed to continue relevant international cooperation.
29. Agreed that continuing to support the Euro-Atlantic aspirations of Ukraine and Georgia remains a priority for Baltic states.
30. Reaffirmed the commitment of Baltic states to strengthen international security through contributing to international missions and operations.

Jüri LUIK



Minister of Defence
Republic of Estonia
20 June 2019

Artis PABRIKS



Minister of Defence
Republic of Latvia
20 June 2019

Raimundas KAROBLIS



Minister of National Defence
Republic of Lithuania
20 June 2019