

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ
OF THE BALTIC DEFENCE COOPERATION MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE
11 January 2023
Tallinn, 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 10-11 January in Tallinn, Estonia,

1. Reaffirmed the steadfast support to Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, as it continues to face Russia's unjustifiable war.
2. In the strongest possible terms, condemned Russia's war against Ukraine, and the escalatory actions it has taken, such as the military mobilization, the annexation of Ukrainian territories, the massive intentional attacks against civilian population and civilian infrastructure in Ukraine, and the reckless nuclear rhetoric. Emphasized that Russia bears full responsibility for the war against Ukraine and the suffering it brings along. Stressed that Belarus is complicit in Russia's war of aggression.
3. Highlighted the Baltic States' long-standing commitment to providing comprehensive military aid to Ukraine. Outlined the significant contributions made by all Baltic States thus far. Called on all members of NATO, the EU and like-minded partners to further contribute to this effort, as it is crucial to continue to meet Ukraine's military momentum with the capabilities that it needs to fight and win the war.
4. Recognized that there are no grounds for expecting positive change in Russia's behaviour. Russia remains the most dangerous, immediate and long-term threat to NATO. Underestimating it and sinking into complacency is a strategic mistake. Russia's offensive military posture, its war against Ukraine and imperialist goals beyond Ukraine, pose a major threat to the security of the Baltic States and the Alliance as a whole.
5. Emphasized that the current security environment demands increased defence investment to sustain support for Ukraine and to ensure that we have robust military capabilities to defend the Euro-Atlantic area. Noted that the Alliance should agree on a more ambitious defence investment commitment by the Vilnius Summit.
6. Highlighted the historic decisions of the Madrid Summit to set a new baseline of NATO deterrence and defence posture and to substantially strengthen NATO's deterrence and forward defences of whole eastern flank, and stressed that a swift implementation of those decisions with tangible progress by the 2023 Vilnius Summit is of utmost importance.
7. Stressed the significance of the Madrid Summit commitment to deploy additional robust in-place combat-ready forces on NATO eastern flank and decisions to scale up the existing battlegroups to brigade-size units where and when required, underpinned by

credible rapidly available reinforcements, prepositioned equipment and enhanced command and control. Emphasized the importance of establishing division-level structures as steps towards ensuring defence of every inch of NATO's territory. Commended Allies, including the enhanced Forward Presence framework nations – Canada, Germany and the United Kingdom – for their contributions to achieve those goals in the Baltic States.

8. Underlined that the ongoing development of NATO's defence plans, adaptation of NATO's Command and Control, NATO's force structure organisation and capability development must be driven by the forward defence thinking and overarching objective to defend every inch of Allied territory and fully reflect the Madrid Summit decisions.
9. Discussed the future of NATO's regional Command and Control and the requirement to establish a dedicated NATO Regional Maritime Headquarters for the Baltic Sea.
10. Reaffirmed the full support to the accession of Finland and Sweden to NATO as it significantly increases the security of the Baltic Sea region and the Alliance as a whole.
11. Emphasized the urgency to strengthen NATO's integrated air and missile defence through regular deployment of aircraft and ground-based air defence systems to the Baltic States, and underlined the importance of NATO's preparedness to transition rapidly and seamlessly from peacetime to crisis and conflict, as well as the imperative to regularly exercise such transition.
12. Highlighted the importance of the strong transatlantic bond and significant enhancement of the U.S. rotational forces in Baltic States, constituting a persistent, heel-to-toe U.S. presence in the Baltic region. Noted that this important decision demonstrates the U.S.' long-standing commitment to the security of the region and greatly strengthens NATO's posture.
13. Commended the EU military support to Ukraine through the European Peace Facility as well as for launching the European Union Military Assistance Mission in support of Ukrainian Armed Forces.
14. Welcomed the Council of the EU agreement on general approach of the proposed regulation establishing the European Defence Industry Reinforcement through common procurement act. Reiterated urgent need to finalize the negotiations of the Act.
15. Highlighted the Baltic States' intent to increase the defence investment toward three percent of GDP in upcoming years. Took note of the national and joint efforts in military capability development, including long-range fires and air defence capabilities.
16. Stressed that the NATO's Baltic Air Policing (BAP) is an excellent example of collective efforts for regional security and requires adequate Host Nation Support. Agreed to raise the rate of fixed expenditures for the NATO Air Policing in the Baltic States by 25 percent from the next BAP rotation in April 2023 to provide all necessary conditions for receiving Allied forces.
17. Reiterated the importance of continued U.S. defence assistance and investments that greatly benefits Baltic States in developing national and regional defence capabilities, particularly with regard to procurements and investments in infrastructure.

18. Stressed the importance of continuing the work on enhancing cooperation on regional cross border employment both at political and military levels.
19. Agreed on the importance of Baltic States' common efforts in naval cooperation and capability development.
20. Expressed gratitude for Estonia for chairing Baltic Defence Cooperation in 2022 and welcomed Latvia as the new Chair for 2023.

Hanno PEVKUR



**Minister of Defence
Republic of Estonia
11 January 2023**

Ināra MŪRNIECE



**Minister of Defence
Republic of Latvia
11 January 2023**

Arvydas ANUŠAUSKAS



**Minister of National Defence
Republic of Lithuania
11 January 2023**