

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ
OF THE BALTIC DEFENCE COOPERATION MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE

17 May 2023

Jēkabpils, Latvia

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 16-17 May, in Jēkabpils, Latvia,

1. Reaffirmed dedication to a close Baltic State' defence cooperation as a tool for strengthening regional defence, as well EU and NATO's Eastern flank.
2. Noted that Russia is and will remain the most immediate and long-term military threat to the Baltic and Allied security.
3. Expressed steadfast solidarity with Ukraine in its fight against Russian aggression and condemned Russia's war crimes committed against Ukraine. Emphasized that the Baltic States will continue to support Ukraine, as long as necessary, for its victory by continuing to provide military aid.
4. Stressed the importance to use all international frameworks to speed up and enhance military support to Ukraine, where EU plays crucial role. Acknowledged that EU should increase the EUMAM ambition and continue investments in military supplies to Ukraine.
5. Stressed that, at the upcoming NATO Summit in Vilnius, progress must be made in providing Ukraine with a political path and a clear roadmap towards its NATO membership.
6. Underlined the importance to strengthen NATO's Forward Defence in the Eastern part of the Alliance. Agreed that the approval of NATO's regional defence plans, at the Vilnius Summit, is a crucial milestone in the implementation of Forward Defence. The regional plans have to integrate national defence plans with NATO defence plans. The regional plans have to be underpinned with the assigned forces to ensure executability of the plans.
7. Highlighted the requirement for a strengthened forward deployment of Allied combat troops and enablers as a fundamental part of NATO's deterrence and defence posture in the Baltic region, and reaffirmed the need for the ongoing work on prepositioning of equipment, ammunition and logistic assets.
8. Stressed the need for enhancement of NATO's Integrated Air and Missile Defence (IAMD) posture and establishment of Rotational Model for NATO's Eastern part through regular deployment of aircraft and ground-based air defence systems. This Model, in combination with Baltic states' national efforts, will be the first phase in addressing capability gaps in the region, and helping to enable smooth transition of IAMD posture from peacetime to crisis and conflict, thus ensuring credible deterrence and defence in time of need.

9. Stressed the need to agree on a more ambitious Vilnius Defence Investment Pledge, of at least 2.5% of GDP by 2030, that reflects the necessity to invest significantly more in defence today and in the upcoming years.
10. Welcomed Finland's accession to NATO as it notably increases the security of the Baltic Sea region, and reaffirmed the full support for the accession of Sweden as a matter of priority.
11. Emphasized the importance of continuous U.S. heel-to-toe military presence in the Baltic States beyond 2025.
12. Reaffirmed the importance of Baltic States' major joint capability projects, which include long-range rocket artillery (HIMARS), long range Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR), Maritime Situational Awareness, and Air Defence capabilities.
13. Emphasized the enhancement of already ongoing efforts to strengthen national defence capabilities, and reconfirmed the intent to increase the defence investment towards 3% of GDP in the upcoming years.
14. Reaffirmed commitment to make additional investments in Host Nation Support in order to provide all necessary conditions for receiving Allied troops.
15. Decided to significantly increase Host Nation Support, for the nations contributing to the NATO Air Policing in the Baltic States, by signing updated "Arrangement of the Baltic States' on Financing and Cost Sharing of the Expenditures for the NATO Air Policing".
16. Agreed, in the light of growing national and Allied training needs, to explore new approaches to joint military training, and stressed the need to share experiences about development of military training infrastructure in the Baltic States.
17. Reiterated the importance of continuing the work on Baltic States' Enhanced Defence Cooperation Agreement.
18. Highlighted the importance of the work carried out at the Baltic Defence College at the forefront of professional military education for almost 25 years. Expressed gratitude for Brigadier General Ilmar Tamm for his dedicated work as the Commandant of the College, in the past three years, and welcomed Brigadier General Alvydas Šiuparis as the new BALTDEFCOL Commandant from Summer 2023.

Hanno PEVKUR

Ināra MŪRNIECE

Arvydas ANUŠAUSKAS

Minister of Defence

Minister of Defence

Minister of National Defence

Republic of Estonia

Republic of Latvia

Republic of Lithuania

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