

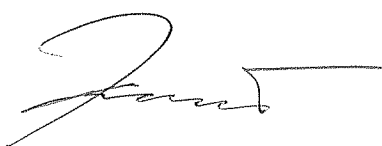
JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ
OF THE MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE
December 17, 2010
Tartu, Estonia

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 in Tartu, Estonia on December 16-17, 2010,

1. Welcomed the new NATO Strategic Concept approved by the Alliance at the Lisbon Summit in November this year. The Concept meets the security interests and concerns of all three Baltic states by ensuring that NATO remains the transatlantic framework for strong collective defence and the essential forum for security consultations and decisions among Allies;
2. Emphasised the importance of regular NATO and multilateral exercises in the Baltic region as a part of NATO's commitment to its three essential core tasks – collective defence, crisis management and cooperative security;
3. Expressed their content with the planned implementation of a more effective, leaner and affordable NATO's Command Structure aimed at addressing regional security needs in more detail. Throughout this process it is crucial to maintain the current NATO Level of Ambition;
4. Highlighted the NATO Air Policing mission in the Baltic states as a clear demonstration of solidarity and commitment among the Allies. The Air Policing mission allows the Baltic states to contribute their own resources to other tasks undertaken by NATO. The Baltic states call upon the Allies to agree upon a permanent NATO Air Policing solution;
5. Underlined their commitment towards substantially improving the Baltic states' Host Nation Support (HNS) to the Air Policing mission. A comprehensive Air Policing HNS package will be introduced to the Allies as soon as possible;
6. Reaffirmed their long-term commitment to Afghanistan and NATO-led International Security Assistance Force mission and welcomed the beginning of a new phase in the mission. The process of transition to full Afghan security responsibility and leadership in some provinces and districts is a sign of the progress made by the Afghan government and the international community;
7. Reiterated the need for further strengthening of defence co-operation among the three Baltic and five Nordic countries addressing common regional and global security interests and challenges;
8. Reiterated the importance of willingness of all NATO Allies to continue to strive for the NATO benchmark of 2% of GDP allocated to defence expenditures, while current economic and budgetary readjustment is carried out, as stated by Prime Ministers of the Baltic states on 24th of September 2010.

Jaak AAVIKSOO



Minister of Defence
Republic of Estonia

Date: 17.12.2010

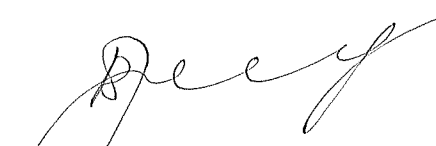
Artis PABRIKS



Minister of Defence
Republic of Latvia

Date: 16.12.2010

Rasa JUKNEVIČIENĒ



Minister of National Defence
Republic of Lithuania

Date: 2010 12 17