

Riga hosts a historic meeting of the ministers of foreign affairs and defence of the Baltic States and Poland

Published: 13.09.2021.

News



On 13 September 2021, the ministers of foreign affairs and of defence from the Baltic States and Poland gathered for their first joint meeting in Riga. During the meeting, the ministers discussed security policy issues of immediate importance and regional challenges, and the decisions taken at the meeting of NATO Heads of State and Government this past June in Brussels. Views were also shared on the development of NATO's new Strategic Concept and NATO partnerships policy.

The officials also underlined that the NATO Brussels Summit had reaffirmed transatlantic unity and commitment to the strengthening of the Alliance over the next decade. The decisions taken at the Summit provide a solid basis for the further adaptation of the Alliance. One of the current tasks for the Alliance is the review of the NATO Strategic Concept expected to be approved at the NATO Summit Meeting of Heads of State and Government in Madrid in 2022. Edgars Rinkēvičs noted that the central role of NATO's defence and deterrence should be retained in the concept; nevertheless, it is no less important that the strategic security environment is presented in the concept in accordance with the present-day reality, while mapping the lines of action such as strengthening resilience, challenges posed by new, cutting-edge technologies, the importance of the EU-NATO cooperation, among others.

The Baltic States and Poland have many shared interests both in NATO and in the context of a broader regional security policy; however, the officials were in agreement that NATO's collective defence and deterrence is a priority. From the perspective of regional security, the participants recognised that solidarity demonstrated by the Allies through their presence in the region is essential for transatlantic relations and an indispensable precondition of defence.

In a separate working sessions, the foreign ministers discussed NATO partnership issues. In view of the geopolitical location of the Baltic States and Poland, it is important to ensure security and stability in the region thereby contributing to the stability of partners and strengthening resilience. The foreign ministers also discussed the strategic level military exercise ZAPAD-21 taking place in the region, which they had been following closely, given that the exercise is causing additional concerns due to the

complicated situation in Belarus and circumstances related to the hybrid attack by Belarus on the external border of NATO and the EU.

The Belarusian regime is using migration as a hybrid weapon, Edgars Rinkēvičs noted. Further work is needed with NATO Allies and EU partners on specific solutions to enhance our region's resilience, including through financial support for the strengthening of infrastructure at the EU's external border, the Latvian Foreign Minister underlined.

In conclusion of the meeting the ministers were in agreement that in order to enhance the vector of common interests, coordination among the four countries in NATO's eastern flank is essential and should also be continued in the future.

The press conference and the ministers' statements can be followed on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website or Facebook account.

More photos [flickr.com](#).

<https://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/article/riga-hosts-historic-meeting-ministers-foreign-affairs-and-defence-baltic-states-and-poland>