

## Edgars Rinkēvičs: The United Kingdom is a close ally to Latvia

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On 11 October 2021, in Chevening, the South East of England, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Latvia, Edgars Rinkēvičs, met with the new Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs of the United Kingdom, Elizabeth Truss. The officials discussed the bilateral relations between the two countries, including the fight against disinformation, security policy and current issues in international relations.

During the meeting, Edgars Rinkēvičs noted that the United Kingdom is a close ally to Latvia. Latvia is interested in seeking new solutions to building as close as possible cooperation with the United Kingdom, including in the areas that are not covered by agreements on future relationship, the Latvian Foreign Minister underlined.

The officials discussed the planned bilateral declaration intended to highlight priority areas for cooperation between Latvia and the United Kingdom and a common understanding of key global issues. The ministers were in agreement that such a declaration is highly important and symbolic in the context of both the centenary of the Latvian-British diplomatic relations, and the present-day challenges including the pandemic. I am certain, Edgars Rinkēvičs underlined, that the meeting of NATO Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Riga later this year will be a good backdrop for signing a declaration on our bilateral cooperation.

The United Kingdom is a very important export market for our goods, Edgars Rinkēvičs said. He noted that regardless of the additional administrative burden and costs brought about by the final stages of the transition period, Latvian businesses are still interested in the United Kingdom's market. Their special interest lies in promoting cooperation in the field of new technologies. Latvia is a suitable base location for British businesses who want to operate in the Baltic markets and those of the north-eastern Europe, the Latvian Foreign Minister underlined.

Foreign Minister Rinkēvičs said he was convinced that close cooperation with the United Kingdom is also vital in multilateral formats, especially in view of global challenges. The Minister praised the format of cooperation between NB8 and the United Kingdom and he underlined the importance of its continued strengthening at both political and expert level. Edgars Rinkēvičs

expressed appreciation of the UK's interest in participating actively in the Three Seas Initiative.

The officials also discussed countering of disinformation. Edgars Rinkēvičs welcomed the close cooperation between Latvia and the United Kingdom in the field of strengthening the media and fighting disinformation and he also thanked the United Kingdom for its support to the new multimedia platform for national minorities established by *Latvijas Televīzija*. We are happy about the close cooperation with the United Kingdom in order to strengthen independent media in the Eastern Neighbourhood region, including by jointly chairing the group for the coordination of donors to the Eastern Partnership media. We appreciate the UK's interest in a training project for Belarusian journalists proposed by the Stockholm School of Economics in Riga, the Latvian Foreign Minister noted.

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