



PRIORITIES OF THE NORDIC-BALTIC COOPERATION SHAPING FUTURE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT LATVIA 2023

Russia's brutal war against Ukraine has shattered the basic premises of European security architecture. It directly affects regional security. However, it has implications far beyond our region and far beyond military security alone. It has exacerbated some of the pre-existing security related challenges, revealed vulnerabilities of our economies, fuelled inflation, created energy crises, increased risks of global food crises. Russian readiness to use military force to pursue its imperial ambitions is the most direct challenge to the rules-based international order.

Our initial response to Russia's unprovoked aggression was swift, strong and united. We adapted our institutions; we invested in our deterrence; we refined and put to use our response instruments. Yet, shaping our future security environment requires a more systemic, comprehensive and long-term approach to the threats and challenges we are facing. Clearer than ever, every decision we make, every action we take is a contribution to the security environment we will live in tomorrow.

Accession of Finland and Sweden to NATO provides even greater possibilities for discussing and coordinating regional defence efforts within the Nordic-Baltic cooperation framework. The like-mindedness of our countries also creates opportunities to share ideas and take joint actions to enhance the resilience of our region.

Strengthening the rules-based international order, enhancing our own deterrence and resilience, along with political, military, financial and humanitarian assistance to support Ukraine's ability to push back against Russia's aggression should be our guiding principles.

STRENGTHENING RULES-BASED INTERNATIONAL ORDER

Directly tied to our security is our ability to deny Russia any of its aims in Ukraine. Viability of the rules-based international order, however, also depends on our ability to hold Russia accountable for the crime of aggression and atrocities of its military forces. In addition to invaluable and instrumental NB8 exchanges on human rights and international organisations, and our coordination efforts within the international organisations, we will propose to hold consultations of legal experts to discuss issues related to Russian accountability.

STRENGTHENING MILITARY SECURITY / DETERRENCE

Our security is interlinked and we see the need to enhance our efforts aimed at strengthening our collective deterrence. Each of our countries have undertaken important pledges with regard to strengthening military security. While the Baltic States host NATO's enhanced Forward Presence battle groups, Nordic countries are part of the multinational force as contributing allies. 5G next generation wireless technologies and other innovations open new opportunities, particularly when developed

together. NB8 events throughout the year will give us a chance to explore the convergence of interests and build on it further.

STRENGTHENING RESILIENCE

Russian aggression has added urgency to our common efforts at eliminating internal vulnerabilities in our societies. Not only enhancing our strategic communication skills and fighting disinformation, but also mapping critical infrastructure to prevent disruptive actions and improving response of our civilian protection institutions all fall within the realm of resilience building. With a view to further broadening the scope of resilience, it is pertinent to discuss regional approaches to tackling climate challenges and increasing security of supply and energy independence, including through green transition.

Civil and military fusion and correlation also vividly manifests itself in the comprehensive defence and security concepts aimed at strengthening national resilience.

As important as ours is the resilience of Ukraine to withstand Russian aggression. We see the NB8 playing a greater role in coordinating support for Ukraine, particularly in coordinating immediate reconstruction efforts in Ukraine.