

RESOLUTION
of the 43rd Session of the Baltic Assembly

The Baltic Assembly,

having convened for its 43rd Session on 17–18 October 2024 in Vilnius, the Republic of Lithuania,

having discussed the results of the Lithuanian presidency of the Baltic Assembly, current affairs and cooperation of the Baltic States, as well as the role of the Baltic States in the development of artificial intelligence,

reiterating the unequivocal condemnation of unprovoked and unjustified Russian aggression against Ukraine, marked by complete disregard for international law and the sovereignty of a peaceful nation, and **reminding** the international community about Russia causing unimaginable suffering for the Ukrainian people, destabilising the region, and threatening global peace and security,

appreciating the Baltic States signing the bilateral Security Agreements with Ukraine and joining the Ukraine Compact initiative, as part of the commitment to long-term support of Ukraine in the field of security and defence, and **highly valuing** the reiterated minimum 0.25% of GDP commitment to security and defence of Ukraine,

calling for immediate and unwavering action of other democratic countries in the region to ensure the victory of Ukraine in Russia's war of aggression that threatens innocent lives, destabilizes the region, and undermines global peace,

restating the importance of enhancing and expanding defence cooperation among the Baltic States and with partners in the Benelux and Nordic countries to address the security challenges posed by conventional, cyber, and hybrid warfare, and **underscoring** the crucial role of allied deterrence and defence strategies in the region, particularly stressing the importance and need for a permanent US presence,

drawing attention to a dangerous rise in authoritarianism, a decline in respect for universal human rights, and a troubling backsliding of democracy across the globe that threatens the very foundations of freedom and justice, and **highlighting** the need to defend these core values through collective action and steadfast cooperation,

celebrating the 35th Anniversary of the Baltic Way, a peaceful protest held on 23 August 1989, where over two million people from Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia formed a human chain, and **reminding** the world about this timeless example of how unity, peace, and hope can overcome oppression and inspire change,

appreciating the efforts of the Baltic States in bolstering both national and regional security, along with their ongoing commitment to fostering close and consistent relations with like-minded nations dedicated to peace, stability, and regional development, and **emphasizing** the crucial importance of the European Union and NATO in safeguarding peace, enhancing international security, and reinforcing regional resilience,

reaffirming the crucial role of the Baltic States as free and democratic nations in promoting the principles of freedom, democracy, the rule of law, and civil society, and advocating for a plurality of information with a special focus on the current situation in Ukraine and Belarus, and **expressing** a commitment to persist in working towards positive transformations throughout the Eastern Partnership region,

valuing the collaborative efforts and close partnership among the Baltic States during the difficult and uncertain periods, and **acknowledging** the proactive and regular coordination between the Baltic Assembly and the Baltic Council of Ministers focused on enhancing regional security, resilience and development,

urging the Baltic States to intensify their cooperation and commitment to ensure the successful realization of the Rail Baltica project, and **calling for** renewed focus and unity that would allow the region to overcome challenges, streamline efforts, and unlock the full potential of this vital infrastructure project,

calls on the parliaments and governments of the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia, and the Republic of Lithuania, as well as the Baltic Council of Ministers:

regarding the defence cooperation of the Baltic States:

- to start trilateral discussions about the necessary steps to facilitate creating a strong, competitive and financially successful defence industry of the Baltic States;
- to join forces with other like-minded EU Member States and work towards increasing the EU funding for military mobility projects;
- to facilitate the NATO Energy Security Centre of Excellence in Lithuania, the NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence in Latvia and the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence in Estonia holding a joint table-top exercise with the aim of developing the concept for a comprehensive security model of crisis preparedness coordination in the Baltic States;
- considering the membership of NATO and bordering with Russia and Belarus, to extend the cooperation of the Baltic States with Finland on issues related to comprehensive defence;

- considering capabilities of NATO and synchronisation opportunities in defence sectors of the Baltic States, to facilitate intergovernmental negotiations and continue the work on establishing a common and well-functioning system for joint military procurements;

- to continue investing substantially in strengthening the medium-range and developing long-range air defence capabilities as well as in improving coastal and maritime defence capabilities of the Baltic States;

- to support initiatives for strengthening the single airspace corridor from Poland to Finland and solving military mobility challenges in the Suwałki Gap;

- to improve cross-border coordination between the Baltic States to effectively enhance cooperation in cyber security and to speed up the evaluation process of the possible joint Baltic project, connecting the existing state intranets into a joint secure connection throughout the territory of the Baltic States;

regarding cooperation in the field of civil defence, disaster prevention, preparedness and response, and crisis management:

- to jointly find a solution for comparing policies, re-evaluating systems and addressing vulnerabilities in the protection of the critical infrastructure in the Baltics States;

- to strengthen the transparency and accountability of critical infrastructure protection systems in the Baltics States, emphasizing vital functions of protection rather than specific infrastructure objects;

- to implement joint cross-border measures for the protection of the critical infrastructure in the Baltics States;

- to develop an institutional model for regional emergency planning and management in the Baltic States paying particular attention to the preparedness of healthcare facilities and the provision of the necessary reserves;

- to start work on joint exercises and training for emergency planning and preparedness in the Baltic States;

- to actively involve the Baltic States in different disaster management and civil-military exercises to ensure the transfer of knowledge and best practices;

- to start discussions about creating a joint course of civil defence designed to educate the general population of the Baltic States about their role in an emergency;

- to define the algorithms for assistance and to identify in which cases, by what means and what services each of the Baltic States provide help to its neighbouring countries;

- to assess areas in which each of the Baltic States could become a centre of excellence to support other countries in wartime or emergency;

- to support initiatives in the Baltic States under the EU Interreg Programmes by fostering resilience, civil protection and preparedness measures for society, municipalities and state institutions;

- to design and implement joint training exercises for healthcare workers of the Baltic States for emergency preparation and disaster response in the region;

- to assess the preparedness of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia in providing healthcare services in the event of war or an emergency;

- to start work on establishing the national plans of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania for wartime civil defence through close consultations and coordination between the Baltic States;

regarding external border control and management:

- to explore the possibility of joint procurements of the Baltic States for obtaining material for the construction of the Baltic Defence Line;

- to strengthen cooperation between the Baltic States in the context of security, investment, and growth on the EU's Eastern external border, and draw the attention of EU partners to the necessity of drafting a common EU-level strategy and support instruments for the development of the EU's Eastern border area;

- to agree on a single Baltic position and to join efforts in ensuring the best possible result for the Baltic States regarding the amendments to the Schengen Borders Code;

- to agree on a single Baltic position and to join efforts in ensuring the best possible result for the Baltic States regarding the reform of the migration and asylum rules of the European Union;

- to harmonize the border systems and decision-making procedures of the Baltic States to ensure an effective response to future cross-border challenges;

regarding the economic cooperation of the Baltic States:

- to jointly agree on legal obstacles to be removed and support instruments to be introduced for improving the start-up environment in the Baltic States;

- to implement a common project of the Baltic States for creating a concrete set of measures aimed at reducing bureaucracy in the European Union;

- to start working on a common platform for investments in the Baltic States to combine the efforts and expertise, as well as pooling resources in the region;

- to coordinate and share best practices of the national port development plans in the Baltic States;

- to join forces with other like-minded countries in the Three Seas Initiative and encourage the establishment of a permanent secretariat for supporting and facilitating the work of the forum and serving as a central contact point for stakeholders;

- to create a shared electronic vignette system for the Baltic States;

- to create an interactive water tourism map (inland and marine) of the Baltic States with the main attractions and tourism destinations;

- to agree on a joint position of the Baltic States regarding the reform of the European Union's electricity market design that prioritizes regional interests;

- to jointly impress the Member States to introduce a unified approach to sanctioned assets in the European Union;

- to create a format for the cooperation of the Baltic States within the Three Seas Initiative, improving energy, transport and digital connectivity of the region as well as contributing to Ukraine's recovery;

- to continue highlighting the importance of EU funding in the completion of the large-scale strategic projects of the Baltic States, such as Rail Baltica, and the synchronization of the electricity networks with the continental European network;

- based on the approach of the Nordic countries, to start work on an international marketing and communication strategy for the Baltic region;

regarding fostering regional innovation ecosystem:

- to remove legal and practical obstacles in the Baltic States impeding innovations being transferred from universities to the private sector;

- to jointly work towards a solution for fostering university-industry collaborations in the Baltic States, such as introducing an umbrella organization or network for the universities in the region;

- based on the positive experience and results of the Baltic Innovation Fund I and II, to perform an analysis and start negotiations about the development of the Baltic Innovation Fund III and widening the scope of the national partners;

regarding the digital cooperation of the Baltic States:

- to jointly agree on the first national registers to be synchronized for more effective data exchange in the Baltic States;

- to create a common solution, e.g. institution, for improving and maintaining digital interoperability in the Baltic-Nordic region;

- to start negotiations about building strategic digital cooperation between the Baltic States and African countries;

- to start negotiations about developing a joint Baltic network of business incubators of the European Space Agency;

regarding the common electricity and gas market of the Baltic States:

- to start discussions about a common Baltic energy security strategy that would contribute to the cooperation framework and align measures for increasing the security of the energy supply;

- considering that energy infrastructure should be considered a default target for the adversary, jointly agree on measures for the protection of energy infrastructure, paying particular attention to the physical protection of critical energy infrastructure in emergencies;

- to improve cooperation in energy security of the Baltic States through preventive and emergency action plans and table-top exercises;

- to prioritize work towards more interconnection capacity in the Baltic States;

- considering the potential offshore energy production expansion in the Baltic Sea, to pay particular attention to the physical security of ports;

- to agree on a format for sharing the experience and best practices of the Baltic States in the implementation of the EU Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism;

- to agree on the role of nuclear energy as a potential energy source in the future energy production of the Baltic States and return to the Baltic Assembly with a common vision on nuclear energy opportunities;

- to continue the coordination of activities towards a common regional electricity and gas market of the Baltic States;

- to continue the technical implementation of the synchronization of the Baltic electricity networks with the continental European network;

regarding the implementation of the Rail Baltica project:

- to jointly agree on a strategy for ensuring necessary funding for the completion of the Rail Baltica project, including emphasizing the goal of increasing military mobility in the region and considering alternative financing to fill the funding gaps;

- to endorse the implementation of the Rail Baltica project through the necessary legislative changes, including improving the conditions for construction, environmental procedure execution, expediting the land acquisition and deforestation process, as well as allowing simplification of planning and construction permit issuing;

- to continue the implementation of the Rail Baltica project by ensuring timely implementation, efficient infrastructure management and preventing an increase in the total expenditure of the project;

regarding cooperation in clean energy transition and development of renewable energy projects:

- to prepare technical, cost-benefit, and legal analyses of the feasible options to introduce a solution for packaging returns in the Baltic States;
- to introduce a joint import control of second-hand goods in the Baltic States;
- to jointly improve the electric vehicle charging network in the Baltic States, paying particular attention to regional coverage;
- to conduct a study about combining the national plans and other policy documents regarding hydrogen in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania into a single Baltic hydrogen strategy;
- to intensify discussions on a regional approach of the Baltic States regarding the development of renewable energy projects;
- considering the analysis of the possibilities of establishing a joint waste packaging system in the Baltic States, to agree on a solution for packaging returns in the Baltic States;

regarding cooperation in protecting the environment and biodiversity in the Baltic States:

- to coordinate and harmonise Natura 2000 management plans of the Baltic States in border areas;
- to initiate discussions about creating a common transboundary water management and protection plan for the Baltic States;
- to establish cooperation with the Nordic Genetic Resource Center aiming to conserve and promote the sustainable use of genetic diversity among animals, forests and plants in the region;
- to facilitate cross-border cooperation and projects for the promotion of precision agriculture in the Baltic States;
- to jointly work on a comprehensive plan for responsible and sustainable peatland conservation, restoration and management in the Baltic States;
- to create a format for ensuring regular cooperation of the Baltic States in the implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030;
- to jointly develop proposals on shifting the implementation of the green transition from a mostly industry-centred approach to a more human-centred approach in the Baltic States;

- considering the vital role of education in encouraging people to change their attitudes and behaviour, to start discussions on incorporating knowledge on climate change, ecology and biosphere into all national curriculums of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania;

- to intensify cooperation of the Baltic States to reverse the decline in bird species in the region;

regarding animal welfare and food security:

- to launch an investigation into the possibility of introducing a Pan Baltic food labelling system;

- to agree on a harmonized approach in animal welfare assessment methods, tools, and data collection activities for domestic animals in the Baltic States;

- to introduce a regional strategy for prevention, detection and control of African swine fever in the Baltic States;

- to find a solution for connecting the national databases of veterinary antibiotic prescriptions;

- to find a solution for exchanging information on the registers and the interconnection of the databases of microchipped animals in the Baltic States;

- to ensure a policy dialogue and exchange of practices while implementing the fur farming ban in the Baltic States;

regarding cooperation in the health care sector:

- to explore an initiative of creating an innovative medicines fund for funding and improving access to novel therapies in the Baltic States;

- based on the renewed Partnership Agreement between the Baltic States on Joint Procurements of Medicinal Products and Medical Devices, to agree on new objects for joint procurements;

- to jointly evaluate the impact of the proposal for Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down procedures for the authorisation and supervision of medicinal products for human use and establishing rules governing the European Medicines Agency on the Baltic States;

- to task the Lithuanian State Medicines Control Agency, the Latvian State Agency of Medicines and the Estonian State Agency of Medicines to resume publishing the Baltic Statistics on Medicines for promoting active exchange of information and more coordinated policy planning in the Baltic States;

- to secure the funding necessary for the implementation of a full-scale feasibility study of the joint initiative of the CERN Baltic Group and CERN on the Advanced Particle Therapy Center for the Baltic States;

- to engage the corresponding ministries, national agencies and relevant stakeholders and to jointly apply for co-financing from the European Union for implementing the joint initiative of the CERN Baltic Group and CERN on the Advanced Particle Therapy Center for the Baltic States;

- considering the successful example of the Beneluxa Initiative, to examine possible scenarios for ensuring sustainable access to innovative medicine at an affordable cost in the Baltic States;

- to plan and develop a Baltic cancer registry for collecting and exchanging data about cancer patients in the region;

- to eliminate obstacles for the Baltic States to ensure the compatibility of e-Health systems and proper health data exchange;

regarding cooperation in education, science and research:

- to actively encourage the teaching of Baltic languages in schools in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, especially in cross-border regions;

- to complement national school curriculums with cultural heritage elements from the Baltic States;

- to support the development of a joint interdisciplinary master's study programme of the Baltic States targeting high-energy physics and its instrumentation;

- to work towards other countries in the European Higher Education Area joining the Treaty on the Automatic Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications signed in September 2021 between the Baltic and Benelux countries;

- to start work on an implementation plan, management mechanism and budgetary framework for establishing a Baltic Science Fund to finance and facilitate regional research cooperation;

- considering the international nature of the challenges in the STEM field, to create a format for coordination of the implementation of policy initiatives to address the shortage of graduates, skills mismatch and gender imbalance in the STEM field;

- to continue discussions about a joint Baltic space strategy, defining areas and actions of cooperation in the long term;

- to encourage the cooperation of the Baltic States within the European Space Agency and its projects;

– to continue efforts to establish the CERN Internship Programme for students in the Baltic States;

regarding cultural cooperation of the Baltic States:

– to support and improve the efforts made by the Baltic States to introduce a new initiative to develop a ‘Song of the Border’ route, based on the Song and Dance Festival tradition in the region;

– to create a cultural leadership programme in the Baltic States that provides an opportunity for artists and creative professionals in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to meet with each other and contribute to the delivery of new joint projects, strengthening of cultural resilience and cultural heritage of the region;

– to jointly agree on common goals and create a list of best practices for minimising the environmental footprint of joint bilateral or trilateral cultural events of the Baltic States;

– to allocate additional funding for the BCF in 2027 in the amount of 100% of the existing funding to ensure the continuity and quality of the cultural projects funded by the BCF, demonstrating the unity, solidarity and close cultural ties of the Baltic States;

– to re-evaluate the existing practice of the Baltic Culture Fund of granting funding and to provide an opportunity to fund projects implemented in the Baltic States;

– to make a decision regarding the Appeal of the Estonian Broken Cornflower Society, the Lithuanian Union of Political Prisoners and Deportees and the Latvian Association of the Politically Repressed Persons to the Baltic Assembly signed on 29 June 2023 that urges to recognise March 25 as the International Day against the deportation of nationalities and agree on the plan of action towards the realisation of the initiative;

regarding the information area and media cooperation of the Baltic States:

– to harmonize the methodology of the public opinion polls to regularly measure and compare the social resilience and social temperature in the Baltic States;

– to jointly agree on a white paper about the strategic goals to fight disinformation and increase the social resilience of the Baltic States through increasing media competencies and media literacy in the Baltic region;

– to jointly agree on a plan of action for improving the quality and diversity of news about events and developments in the Baltic region in the Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, and English languages with an emphasis on strengthening public media broadcasters;

– to develop a Baltic plan of action aiming to introduce an effective EU-level mechanism for the protection of the European information area.

Vilnius, 18 October 2024