



**Report of the
the 33rd Session of the Baltic Assembly and 20th Baltic Council
23 – 24 October 2014 Tallinn, Estonia**

1. Presiding officers of the Session:

- **Laine Randjärv**, President of the Baltic Assembly, Estonia
- **Giedre Purvaneckienė**, Vice President of the Baltic Assembly, Lithuania
- **Jānis Vucāns**, Vice President of the Baltic Assembly, Latvia

2. Agenda of the Session:

- Opening of the 33rd Session of the Baltic Assembly;
- Awarding of the Winners of the Baltic Way 25th Anniversary Essay Competition;
- 20th Baltic Council;
- Signing of the Joint Statement of the 20th Baltic Council;
- Digital signatures – as a tool of removing borders in the Region;
- Development of transport and infrastructure in the Region;
- EU Eastern Partnership;
- Safe societies and regional security;
- 10 years of the Baltic States in NATO: defence capabilities, pooling and sharing;
- Defence and security at a time of fiscal, operational and strategic transition;
- Soft power – can we jointly respond to it?
- Addresses by foreign delegations and guests;
- Report of the Presidium;
- Report of the Budget and Audit Committee;
- Adoption of the Final Document of the 33rd Session of the Baltic Assembly;
- Election of the President and Vice Presidents of the Baltic Assembly for 2015;
- Election of the Chairpersons and Vice Chairpersons of the committees;
- Address by the newly elected President of the Baltic Assembly;
- Signing of the Final Document of the 33rd Session of the Baltic Assembly.

Opening of the 33rd Session of the Baltic Assembly
Awarding of the Winners of the Baltic Way
25th Anniversary Essay Competition

President of the Baltic Assembly **Laine Randjārv** opened the 33rd Session of the Baltic Assembly.

After the welcoming address of the President of the Baltic Assembly, the national anthems of the three Baltic Republics were played.

President of the Baltic Assembly **Laine Randjārv** informed that the Baltic Assembly organised an essay competition to mark the 25th anniversary of the Baltic Way. The aim of essay competition for the youth was to motivate young people to get involved into political, economic and social processes, to raise their interests and collect values on historical heritage. Competition was very tense, pupils from different regions and towns of the Baltic States took participation.

President of the Baltic Assembly **Laine Randjārv** introduced to the winners of the Baltic Way 25th Anniversary Essay Competition.

Form 10: Katre Kärner, Estonia; Gabrielė Vitkauskaitė, Lithuania; Līga Kone, Latvia;
Form 11: Kadi Lõhmus, Estonia; Viktorija Vaičekauskytė, Lithuania; Madara Višņova, Latvia;
Form 12: Indrek Valgma, Estonia; Kazimieras Tičkus, Lithuania; Inese Muceniece, Latvia.

Winners of the essay competition were awarded with diplomas of the Baltic Assembly.

President of the Baltic Assembly **Laine Randjārv** underlined that the world has changed dramatically. During the Estonian Presidency, nations of the Baltic States have experienced both - positive and negative developments. On 1 January 2014,

Latvia joined the Eurozone. Later in spring, the Baltic States marked the 10th anniversary of joining to the European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). On 3 July 2014, the EU General Affairs Council of Ministers adopted the final decision on Lithuania's membership and euro area from the 1 January 2015. Month later, on 23 August 2014, the Baltic States celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Baltic Way. Besides these positive events, the Baltic States have experienced the profound changes in the global security situation. The geopolitical situation has changed. Aggression of Russia against Ukraine has showed that agreements and commitments do not matter. Russia repeatedly ignores and manipulates international opinion. These actions can only be qualified as a threat to global peace and security.

Current geopolitical developments have clear reflection on the agenda of the Baltic Assembly's Session. Beside debates on cooperation in transport and infrastructure, health care and research, energy sector and digital market the focus of parliamentary debates will be put on regional security, defence capabilities, soft power and EU Eastern Partnership.

President of the Baltic Assembly **Laine Randjärv** welcomed all participants of the 33rd Session of the Baltic Assembly, and on behalf of the Baltic Assembly expressed special gratitude to H.E. Eiki Nestor, President of the Riigikogu, H.E. Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas and H.E. Solvita Āboltiņa, Speaker of the Saeima.

President of the Riigikogu **H.E. Eiki Nestor** underlined that the Baltic Assembly was established at the same time when the independence of the Republic of Estonia was restored in 1991. The situation was still intense in the region. Nevertheless, the darkest days were left in past and new opportunities were already waiting. The Baltic States managed to restore their independence to found the Baltic Assembly as well as to join other cooperation organizations. Foundation of the Baltic regional organisation was the first serious step towards security of the region. At that time foreign army was still based in territories of the Baltic States and no defence structures were created. Western democracies were silent.

If the Baltic States would use opportunities after Second World War, many lines in the history would be different. Security situation in Europe again is intense. By occupying and annexing Crimea and starting war in Eastern Europe and Ukraine, Russia has seriously challenged western democracy.

The Baltic States should be cautious about what has happened before and what may happen in future. It is important that now the Baltic States are not alone. The Baltic States are bound by the membership in UN and NATO, thus having possibility to contribute to the Western position about Russia's aggression.

The agenda of the Baltic Assembly such includes issues as, development of transport and infrastructures, adoption of cross border digital signatures, improvement of joint defence capabilities and cooperation with Eastern Partnership countries. Cooperation in these areas can significantly improve the competitiveness and security of the Baltic States. The Baltic States want to be modern, capable and efficient. The quick implementation of decisions, agreements and cooperation mechanisms confirms the cooperation capability between the Baltic States. In the 1990's and the first years of the 21st century, EU and NATO were attractive goals that encouraged the Baltic States to cooperate actively and efficiently. Currently, the Baltic States are members of the EU and NATO for more than a decade and are leaders of innovation and technologies. Many new technologies can be first implemented in the Baltic States. The Baltic States can serve as a model for other countries, therefore the Baltic States need to go along the time and maintain status of modern states. Several organizational sectors, including the Baltic Assembly, need improvements.

Speaker of the Seimas **H.E. Loreta Graužinienė** underlined that the Baltic Assembly has not only 20 years old history, but is also initiator and developer for politically significant activities. More than a quarter of century, the Baltic States joined efforts for restoration of independence. Today, the Baltic States are united by the aim to build a safe and secure future for their inhabitants. Therefore, today there is a need for discussions not only about historical and geographical highs of the past but also about future prospects and challenges.

Currently, geopolitical developments are not comforting. The Baltic States - both individually and regionally, feel a cold economic and political “wind” blowing from the East. Ukraine has chosen the way of European integration and signed the Association Agreement with the EU. This decision has led Ukraine to face challenges and threats with regard to its territorial integrity. The bloodshed in Ukraine needs to be ceased and aggressors need to be stopped. Since Russia takes no concrete actions to resolve the conflict in line with the cease-fire agreements signed in Minsk, the EU sanctions remain valid. While the peaceful result of conflict resolution is to be found, the Baltic States need to provide all necessary support to Ukraine, including humanitarian, technical and financial aid. The Baltic States need to encourage Ukraine to carry out necessary reforms. The Baltic States are ready to share their experience not only with Ukraine, but also with other Eastern Partnership countries.

Speaker of the Seimas underlined the importance of programme of the upcoming Latvian Presidency of the European Council, in which the Eastern Partnership is one of the main priorities. Priorities of the Lithuanian Presidency confirm the support for strengthening of the security of the whole region.

Safe societies is one of the key priorities of the Baltic Assembly for 2014 and one of the priorities in the Lithuanian Presidency programme in the Baltic Assembly. Clear defence policy, strong military cooperation and increased share of GDP allocated for defence budget are the key priorities that need to be enforced.

In March 2014, political parties of the Seimas developed strategic guidelines on foreign security and defence. The 2014 budget for national security has been increased and it is planned to increase it also in the following years. In Lithuania, rapid response forces are being formed and NATO exercises are taking place. In the face of threats, citizens of Lithuania demonstrate support and understanding for security and defence issues. The key state government authorities of Lithuania - the Seimas, the President and the government - are united in their efforts in maintenance of security goals.

On 27 October 2014, the floating storage and regasification unit, vessel named Independence floated in the port of Klaipeda. The liquefied gas terminal in Klaipeda

gives real prospects not only for Lithuania, but also for the whole region to secure an alternative gas supply and at the same time to maintain energy independence from Russia. Following this example, other regional projects need to be implemented.

The next step is to establish a common regional energy market and to continue development and join electricity grids as well as to integrate the gas market of the Baltic States into the EU system. There are also no doubts for the need of the common transport infrastructure and specially the need to implement the *Rail Baltic/Rail Baltica* project. It is of utmost importance to involve Poland and Finland in the *Rail Baltic/Rail Baltica* project.

On 1 January 2015, Lithuania will join the Eurozone that will guarantee economic security, financial stability and open better opportunities for development of trade and financial possibilities with other members of the Eurozone.

The Baltic region is an open, dynamic and competitive partner for other countries. 25 years ago, the human chain joined three Baltic nations demonstrating power and determination to be independent and united. The strength of the Baltic States lies in ties of the past and future cooperation in the EU.

Speaker of the Saeima **H.E. Solvita Āboltiņa** noted that year 2014 is special to the Baltic States. In summer, the 25th anniversary of the Baltic Way was celebrated. It was a beautiful and festive moment that inspired to assess achievements in the course of a quarter of a century and outline the future prospects and common challenges. Life stories of the Baltic States can be written as one due to common history and joint decisions. It is worth to assess the past by analysing what the first decade of the EU membership has given to the Baltic States. A view from a distance gives an opportunity to see the whole picture. One of the conclusions is that during ten years the internal security and welfare has increased in the Baltic States.

The Baltic States have become more active and visible. Diplomacy has reached beyond the European and transatlantic partners. The officials from EU, NATO and other organizations, more frequently visit the Baltic States. Common values and deep sense of partnership accumulated during past years should be protected and upheld.

The Baltic Assembly makes a great contribution in the process of coordination of the Baltic States parliamentary cooperation. Its role has not decreased over the years. The Baltic Assembly has acted as a tool for the Parliaments of the Baltic States and has increased the common solidarity and mutual ties.

The next year will mark the 25th anniversary of restoration of independence of the Baltic States. The time has not changed the priorities of the Baltic States: 1) economic development; 2) political competitiveness; 3) increase of security; 4) strengthening of transatlantic ties and cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region.

Introduction of euro in Lithuania will provide stability for further economic growth and ensure better life for inhabitants of the Baltic States. Therefore, the Baltic States need to look for rational and strong position as well as support each other on international level. The Baltic States need to work jointly in fulfilment of the duties during the Presidencies in the EU Council. Long-term stability and economic growth of the region can be ensured only through joint efforts. Beside economic dimension, the Baltic States should actively act in the sphere of energy. The key to closer cooperation of the Baltic States in the EU is developed transport infrastructure and availability of transport connections. Latvia fully support the implementation of the *Rail Baltic/Rail Baltica* project and other infrastructure projects, because they are needed not only for development of the Baltic States' infrastructure but also for full inclusion into European transport network.

Alarming and controversial titles of the newspapers oppresses the world. Peace and understanding among nations is tested every day. Therefore, the firm voice of the Baltic States is an example to other European countries. The strength of the Baltic States lies in the unity and weakness in separation.

The Baltic States have walked a long way towards independence and democracy. The restoration of democracy restored self-esteem of the Baltic States and regained strengths to achieve significant achievements over a short period of time.

Speaker of the Saeima extended appreciation to the winners of the Baltic Way 25th Anniversary Essay Competition, who managed to grasp the crucial role of the Baltic Way in the restoration of independence of the Baltic States.

The 20th Baltic Council

President of the Baltic Assembly **Laine Randjärv** opened the 20th Session of the Baltic Council. The Baltic Council was established on the basis of parliamentary initiative of the Baltic Assembly back in 1992. On 13 June 1994, an agreement by the governments of the Baltic States on establishment of the Baltic Council of Ministers was signed. Close coordination among parliaments and executive branch is important for successful and efficient cooperation of the Baltic States. Under the Estonian Presidency the Baltic Assembly and Council of Ministers cooperated on the following priority fields: 1) enhancement of cooperation in IT policy, especially with regard to digital signature; 2) development of the regional energy market; 3) improvement of transport infrastructure connections; 4) promotion of cohesion process between Nordic-Baltic cooperation.

Estonian Minister for Foreign Affairs **H.E. Urmas Paet** noted that the Baltic States have been in EU and NATO for already 10 years. In 2013, security situation in Europe has worsened and the Baltic States should contribute increasing security stability. In 2012, Lithuania's Presidency in the EU Council was successful and a good example for other countries.

When Lithuania will join the Eurozone, the influence of the Baltic States is assumed to increase. Recently, Latvia has received the accession invitation to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and it is expected that Lithuania will also receive it in future.

In 2013, Estonia has chaired meetings in several regional cooperation formats: 1) Baltic cooperation; 2) Baltic-Nordic cooperation and 3) Council of the Baltic Sea States. Therefore, this year was called "the Baltic Sea Year".

Cooperation in information technology, development of energy sector and transport infrastructure were main priorities for the Estonian presidency in the Baltic Council of Ministers. With regard to relations between Baltic and Nordic countries there is a need to continue mutual integration based on common economic and security interests.

Unfortunately, increased aggression by Russia has made a negative shade on international area. The Baltic States together with the EU and NATO partners have explicitly condemned Russia's aggression in Eastern Ukraine and annexation of Crimea. EU and NATO have unanimously agreed that violations of international laws and agreements by Russia are not acceptable for the rest of the international community. Joined sanctions and pressure in regard to Russia need to be continued until tangible results will be reached. Withdrawal of Russian troops and restoration of Ukrainian control over its borders and territory is strongly supported. The Baltic States have already experienced negative measures used by Russia. For example, Russia has several times violated air space borders of the Baltic States, opened more than 20 years old court cases against Lithuanian citizens who have refused to serve in Soviet army as well as detained Lithuanian fishing boats.

NATO is the key security guarantee for Europe and the Baltic Sea region. On 6 September 2014, the annual NATO summit took place in Wales. Together with NATO allies, a significant progress with regard to security of the Baltic States has been reached. During the summit, the NATO "Readiness Action Plan" has been adopted. "Readiness Action Plan" will work as a security frame for the Baltic States, therefore its implementation is crucial for the regional security. During 2013, several NATO trainings were held. In Lithuania, number of Baltic air-policing plains has been increased and several missions have been made in Estonia.

Special attention should be devoted to regional military preparation. For many years the Baltic Defence College has provided good training and drilling. In 2015, military troops from the Baltic States will participate in NATO trainings, which will be held in Spain. It is also important to implement the Nordic-Baltic training programme and establish regional defence centre.

Estonia is spending 2% of GDP for national defence and security policy. Minister of Foreign Affairs H.E. Urmas Paet expressed hope that other Baltic States will reach the same GDP share for national defence and security. The Baltic States are considered as active contributors to NATO actions. Performance of the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (CCD COE) in Tallinn has been also highly assessed by international partners. NATO Energy Security Centre of Excellence, which in Lithuania and NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence (STRATCOM) in Latvia play an important role in increasing security in the region.

Several high level meetings on cybersecurity and defence with participants of US experts have been held in Tallinn. It gave a possibility to develop the cybersecurity dialogue among US, Nordic and Baltic countries. As a result, joint Baltic-US initiative to protect infrastructure of cybersecurity has been launched.

Protection of power stations and transmission networks need to be increased, therefore, the Baltic States are interested in participation of joint trainings.

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are successfully cooperating on the EU level. Digital single market and full fundamental liberties are important for the economies of the Baltic States. It is necessary to convince EU that in the framework of Digital single market the E-Estonia, E-Latvia and E-Lithuania are reliable partners. A Working Group of the Baltic States on Digital Single Market has been established and in December, joined Agreement on Digital Single Market will be signed.

International agreements will be successful, if the Baltic States will continue to cooperate effectively among themselves and with other EU neighbours.

The *Rail Baltic/Rail Baltica* project needs to be implemented. There are no doubts about necessity of the project in the Baltic region. Therefore, the *Rail Baltic/Rail Baltica* joint venture needs to start as soon as possible. Estonia has already signed documents in regard to joined venture. It is important that the Baltic States demonstrate joint position and readiness to allocate necessary funds to implement the project. The Baltic States need to join efforts and act in order to be ready to apply for the EU funding for the *Rail Baltic/Rail Baltica* project.

Crisis in Ukraine has highlighted the necessity to continue strengthening of the security of energy market. It is important to promote connection of the Baltic Energy Market with European market. Monopoly and dependence from foreign suppliers need to be decreased and new connections need to be built. Currently, the Baltic region is 100% dependent on one natural gas supplier – Russia. It is highly important to continue work on agreement that would reduce the possible risk of disturbance of gas supply. Therefore, opening of LNG terminal in Klaipėda is a very positive step. It is expected that import of gas through the terminal will increase the energy security of the Baltic region.

Raise of capacity of the regional power transmission lines and synchronization of electric frequencies with European markets will be beneficial to the Baltic States. Due to the effort done in energy network connection plan of the EU, the Baltic States have made a long step towards connecting energy market of Europe. Development of the EstLink1 interconnection with Finland has increased level of the regional electricity situation. Nevertheless, the third connection between Estonia and Latvia, Nord-Balt connection between Lithuania and Sweden as well as the Polish connection need to be finished.

With regard to the Estonian Presidency in the Baltic Council of Ministers, the “Baltic Sea Year” has been successful. Nevertheless, several goals still need to be achieved.

Lithuanian Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs **H.E. Neris Germanas** noted that the Baltic Council of Ministers is held for the 20th time. Extensive experience has been accumulated during the years of cooperation.

In 2015, Lithuania will join the Euro zone. The growing household consumption will ensure stable hold of economic development within the Baltic States. According to forecasts, the growth of the region is going to remain the highest in the EU.

Russia’s embargo on Lithuanian goods has affected the market. Therefore, Lithuania is looking for the new markets. Stable growth of economy will help to become member of the prestigious OECD. Latvia has achieved excellent results with regard to accession to the OECD. Lithuania is determined to harmonize economic policy within

the OECD standards. Membership of the Baltic States in the OECD will contribute to regional economic stability and attracting more. The Baltic States are progressively integrating within the EU and Western community.

Security guarantees of NATO are important for the Baltic States, nevertheless the Baltic States should remain unified withstanding the security challenges. Russia's aggression in Georgia back in 2008 and the current military actions against Ukraine are proofs of Russia's ambitions and violation of basic principles of international law and peaceful coexistence. To decrease future challenges there is a need to reinforce measures for security and ensure military presence in the Baltic States. The Readiness Action Plan needs to be implemented. Moreover, there is a need to defend not only from physical threats but also from increased information attacks that come from Russia on a daily basis. These information attacks are shattering trust of the Baltic States societies as well as the whole EU's. Therefore, the Baltic States should undertake joint actions to cope with information threats and strengthen information security in the region and the entire EU. Firstly, trust worth information, which is an alternative in Russian language for Russian-speaking minorities, needs to be established. Secondly, society needs to be encouraged to critically assess information and avoid manipulations from media. Thirdly, more extensive use of the NATO competence centres in the Baltic States should be made. These centres are important sources for NATO strategic communication for whole Europe. Capabilities of joint actions should be strengthened. The Baltic States need to deepen cooperation in energy security, information security and military security fields at the same time.

Additional support should also be devoted to the EU Eastern Partnership by providing necessary assistance in political and social reforms and EU integration. Unanimous position of the EU member states and new leadership of the EU could facilitate further integration of Eastern countries in to the EU.

Lithuania highly supports Latvia to continue Lithuania's work on further integration of Eastern countries into the EU by arranging meetings, ensuring common events and discussions on topics related. Good practices of the Baltic States should be shared with other EU member states.

In the nearest future Ukraine will experience a difficult period determining its further future. Relations with Russia are one of the biggest challenges for the future. Due to historic events, the Baltic States have experience of close cooperation with Russia; therefore the Baltic States should assist and lead other EU member states.

On 1 January 2015, the new LNG terminal will start to operate in Klaipėda. This will be the first alternative energy source in the Baltic States and it will eliminate reliance on sole gas supplier from Russia. Issues raised by the Baltic States are discussed on the EU level.

Adequate responses to the climate changes need to be carried out. Close cooperation and unified performance of the Baltic States on the international area is needed. The borders of the Baltic States are not only of national significance but also of European. Borders of the Baltic States mark the EU external border line, therefore unified actions of the Baltic States border guards in securing borders are needed. Possibility to form joint EU border guard cooperation should be considered.

Lithuania's priorities in the Baltic Council of Ministers for 2015 have been set: 1) strengthening measures together with NATO allies; 2) implementation of Readiness Action Plan; 3) cooperation to implement EU Eastern Partnership policy; 4) acceleration of the Baltic States integration and connection to the EU markets; 5) strengthening of the Baltic States security, information and energy market; 6) cooperation in the field of information security.

Latvian Minister for Culture **Dace Melbārde** noted that several important events marked the year of 2014. Extensive programme and festive events to mark the 25th anniversary of the Baltic Way were organized. In Saločiai, Speakers of the Baltic States unveiled the monument devoted to the Baltic Way. In Riga, a foundation stone for a monument devoted to the Baltic Way was laid. In 2015, the Baltic States will celebrate the 25th anniversary of the adoption of Declaration of Independence.

The strength of the Baltic States lies in unity. Lithuania held its EU Presidency in 2012; Latvia will hold it in 2015 and Estonia in 2018. Cooperation and exchange of

information is needed on a daily basis and in relations with the EU. Joint actions will help to achieve higher results in regard to security and geopolitical matters.

This year Riga is a European Capital of Culture. This year the new National Library of Latvia was opened. As a part of festive events to celebrate Riga as the European Capital of Culture, Latvians of all ages formed a 1,2 kilometres long human chain and passed books from the building of old library to the new. In summer, during the World Choir Games, more than 25 000 choir participants visited Latvia. Celebrations devoted to Riga as the European Capital of Culture will conclude with the European Film Awards Ceremony that will bring together internationally known filmmakers.

The Baltic States have taken the lead in economic growth in the EU. Estonia and Lithuania are Latvia's largest and most active economic and tourism partners for several years. Joint participation of the Baltic States in the largest and important tourism conferences gives impression of unity and attractiveness for foreign tourists on international area.

The Baltic States need to continue cooperation on establishment of the digital single market that will bring progress in modern areas of economic policy. Authentic authorization system and digital signatures need to be established.

On 1 January 2015, Lithuania's accession to the Euro zone will deepen the mutual economic relations of the Baltic States and will make the Baltic States more attractive for investments as a unified region. It is expected that cooperation and mutual economic integration will increase the amount of concluded deals that would boost economic activities and raise level of income and welfare level. The next step will be unified incorporation within the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Despite achievements, the Baltic States are still vulnerable with regard to sanctions imposed by Russia in regard to the agricultural producers and outbreak of African swine fever. In order to overcome these challenges, the Baltic States need to act jointly, exchange information and express joint position. Good example of joint action

is the procurement of medicaments. All stakeholders need to act constructively in order to finalize the procurement documents in the nearest future.

Regional energy project policy needs to be supplemented with element of security. Latvia supports the Gas Interconnection Poland – Lithuania (GIPL) project that in future will end the isolation of the gas market. This project and the Third Energy Package for energy and gas markets need to be implemented. In April 2017, it is planned to fully liberalize Latvia's energy market. In nearest future Latvia's underground gas storage will be modernized and its capacity will be increased.

Development of integrated transport infrastructure is prerequisite for deeper EU integration. Therefore, the *Rail Baltic/Rail Baltica* project is very significant for the Baltic States and the whole EU transport network. Work on the joint of the *Rail Baltic/Rail Baltica* venture will be completed and soon the agreement will be signed.

Current geopolitical situation and Russia's aggression against Ukraine urge to reconsider security and defence policy of the Baltic States. Information war initiated by Russia, essentially affects security of the Baltic States. Therefore, appropriate response should be made. Appropriate information should be translated through the existing mass media. It is necessary to consider possibility to establish alternative channel in Russian language. NATO Centres of Excellence in the Baltic States play a significant role in maintaining the necessary support and analysis.

Military presence, cooperation and air policing of NATO allies should be continued.

Crisis in Ukraine has facilitated closer cooperation between Baltic and Nordic countries. Cooperation has become more target-oriented by aiming on resource consolidation and closer economic integration.

There are three main priority fields for Latvian Presidency of the European Council: 1) growth facilitation; 2) maximum use of digital potential in promoting EU growth; 3) strengthening of EU role on international arena. In order to strengthen the EU role on international level, the following events will be organized: 1) "European Year of Development"; 2) the Fifth Meeting of the Ministers of Education of the Asian-

Europe Meeting (ASEM) on 27-28 April 2015; 3) celebrations of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Press Freedom Day event in May 2015; 4) Eastern Partnership Summit in May; 5) the Digital Agenda Assembly in June 2015; 6) the Conference of European standardization; 7) high level e-health summit. Overall, the Latvian Presidency will hold around 200 meetings and events on different levels.

Debate

Member of the Economics, Energy and Innovation Committee of the Baltic Assembly **Linus Balsys** informed that Lithuanian people held a referendum during which the idea to promote establishment of Visaginas NPP was rejected. He asked Ministers of the Baltic States whether the debates on the development at Visaginas NPP should be continued.

Estonian Minister for Foreign Affairs **H.E. Urmas Paet** underlined that the nuclear energy is one of many possibilities that could strengthen energy security of the Baltic States. Lithuanian people do not have clear conviction that the Visaginas NPP project should be carried out quickly. Another important factor is the economic viability to implement the project.

Latvian Minister for Culture **Dace Melbārde** noted that in the BCM all important energy projects are discussed. The Visaginas NPP could have a significant role in ensuring the Baltic States energy's independence. Latvia supports the Visaginas Power Plant project and would be ready to participate in the project. Nevertheless, the final Latvian response will depend on whether the project will be proved as economically viable.

Vice Chairman of the Economics, Energy and Innovation Committee of the Baltic Assembly **Atis Lejiņš** informed that three years ago an agreement on establishment of the regional LNG terminal was reached. This agreement was a fiasco. There is no regional LNG terminal and there will be no regional LNG terminal in the future.

However, a high possibility exists that there will be national LNG terminals. It needs to be admitted that sometimes Resolutions of the Baltic States are not fully implemented due to several obstacles and reasons.

With regard to recent security threats, full reliance on NATO assistance is not relevant. There is a need to have regional security measures.

Atis Lejiņš, asked about process of implementation of the GIPL project and about problems which need to be addressed on the parliamentary level.

Lithuanian Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs **H.E. Neris Germanas** underlined that in the following days the new LNG terminal in Klaipeda will be opened. This terminal will produce 5 million cubic meters and will be able to respond to regional electricity demands. With regard to GIPL, the work is ongoing and full implementation of the project could be reached in the future.

Session 1

Digital signatures – as a tool of removing borders in the Region

Vice Chairman of the Estonia delegation to the Baltic Assembly **Aivar Riisalu** underlined that digital revolution has already changed the world. However, the totality of changes, that information technology will bring, cannot be assessed. Opportunities, that the digital environment offers, are limitless. Development of digital economy has already started and will continue to create new jobs, offer the opportunity to work away from the actual work place. Main direction of IT-related cooperation among the Baltic States should be directed towards the adoption of cross-border digital signatures. Digital signatures are already being used in all of the Baltic States. The Baltic States must work to take advantage of this opportunity and use it across borders. There are already many national-level IT-solutions in Europe. However, the limitations imposed by differences between European countries prevent cooperation and the spread of those solutions. The Baltic States can be flexible and clever trendsetters in the creation of a digital single market in the European Union. Moreover, the actual adoption of secure cross-border electronic identification and digital signatures would be very profitable for the economy of the EU.

Head of Interoperability Section, Architecture Department, Estonian Information System Authority **Hannes Kiivet** informed that in February 2014 Prime Ministers of the Baltic States noted that digital identification (ID) cards for cross border digital signatures should be used. ID cards will increase the amount of cross border business activities and will ensure smooth operation. Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian ID cards should be accepted in all Baltic States and other EU member states. The goal of the Estonian Information System Authority is to have access to different Baltic States government services and sign the services provided by foreign countries. Long-term road map on mutual cooperation and development should be made.

Estonia has developed national software, which is able to recognize ID cards of different countries. Nevertheless, some improvements of the software are being made.

Estonia is actively working on worldwide programme Secure Identity Across Borders Linked (STORK) and implementation of the programme will be finished in 2015. However, some obstacles have been seen. Currently, Latvia and Lithuania have also developed their own programme file formats and the outcome is that formats of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are not fully compatible. Therefore, common compromise and technical solutions should be found. Lithuania has also adopted national additional requirement for receiving digital files, which is an obstacle for cross-border digital progress. Cross-border different file formats are forbidden in Lithuania and this means that if Estonian digital document is made, it is not usable in Lithuania.

Nevertheless, in the end of 2014 Estonian citizens will be able to sign for different Lithuanian government E-services and visa versa. Latvia will implement this possibility in the beginning of 2015. Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians are able to sign cross border documents within the Baltic States with their own digital ID cards. The possibility to use document in one country even if it is signed in another exists only in private sector. Further development plan foresees the establishment of unified document format that is accepted in all governmental sectors of the Baltic States.

Debate

Chairman of the Saeima Foreign Affairs Committee **Ojārs Ēriks Kalniņš** informed that recent report underlined some difficulties within the new electronic system in Estonia and asked weather it is connected with digital ID card system and are there security problems in regard to E-voting in national elections.

Head of Interoperability Section, Architecture Department, Estonian Information System Authority **Hannes Kiivet** informed that electronic system in Estonia is directly connected with digital ID cards, because they are used in electronic voting. In order to avoid security problems, some technical improvements and new solutions have been made. Nevertheless, during the six years of electronic ID cards use no real

security violations have been observed. The process of E-voting is highly monitored and secured. Only threats that have been observed are those of theoretical basis.

Vice Chairman of the Economics, Energy and Innovation Committee of the Baltic Assembly **Atis Lejiņš** informed that in Latvia for already two years discussions on electronic voting system are going on. There was a situation when a group of American experts came to Estonia and for several days penetrated the Estonian electronic system and Estonians were not aware of it. Afterwards, Americans informed on actions taken and Estonian centres were surprised. Atis Lejiņš asked to elaborate on this information.

Head of Interoperability Section, Architecture Department, Estonian Information System Authority **Hannes Kiivet** informed that there is no information about this situation. However, during previous Estonian elections a group of foreign scientists and experts were evaluating the E-voting system. This system is made in an open format, and it enables all interested persons to look on source code and analyse the system or inform on possible system holes. Theoretical threats exist if a person is using virus-infected computer during E-voting process. Therefore, people are being informed and educated about the existing risks and promotion of anti-virus computer protection is performed.

Session 2

Development of transport and infrastructure in the Region

Vice Chairman of the Lithuanian delegation to the Baltic Assembly **Rytas Kupčinskas** underlined that in the scope of cooperation and integration into EU markets the land transport has essential impact. The transport line Via Baltica is used on high intensity level. Overlooking the Resolutions of the Baltic Assembly the main focus is put on the *Rail Baltic/Rail Baltica* project. This project would facilitate the internal movement and number of flights. Prime Ministers of the Baltic States have agreed on the inclusion of Vilnius connection in the *Rail Baltic/Rail Baltica* project.

Director of Development and International Relations Department of the Lithuanian Ministry of Transport and Communications **Arenijus Jackus** underlined that it is important to take into consideration provisions and instruments of the European Transport Policy. The implementation of policy foresees establishment of transport corridors. Key transport elements of the Baltic States transport infrastructure fall under the Baltic –Nordic sea transport corridor and it connects the ports of the Nordic sea with ports of the Baltic States and connects capitals. Ports of the Baltic States produce significant share of GDP, therefore improvements in order to achieve maximum benefits should be made.

The *Rail Baltic/Rail Baltica* project is the most important Baltic seas project, which the Baltic States are jointly implementing. Inclusion of Vilnius will benefit economic indicators of the Baltic States. Common consensus on all essential project matters has been reached. Lithuania has already established national company and has allocated funding for the share of the joint venture implementation. On 22 October 2014 in Riga, a Task Force meeting between the Baltic States was held. During the meeting Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania expressed readiness to sign documents on establishing of a joint venture. On 28 October 2014, Ministers of Transport of the Baltic States will take part in the ceremony of signing documents on establishment of joint venture. The task of the joint venture is the actual implementation of the *Rail Baltic/Rail Baltica* project by 2024 and providing railway up to 240 km/h speed.

Actual plans on establishment will depend on the EU position and available funding for the project. All political documents affirm the implementation of the *Rail Baltic/Rail Baltica* project, however by a condition that the EU financial support will provide 85% funding of total costs. Otherwise, the economic burden to cover expected expenses is to be considered too high for the Baltic States. Therefore, joint venture will play a crucial role in the process of application for the EU funds.

Several actions should be taken to ensure the implementation of *Rail Baltic/Rail Baltica*: 1) coordination of actions; 2) detailed territory planning; 3) nationalization of necessary land plots; 4) conduction of other necessary procedures. The most important work should be done by the national governments; it is necessary to ensure that all necessary conditions are met in order to be applicable to receive the EU funds.

Lithuania is ready to complete the first stage of the *Rail Baltic/Rail Baltica* project. The *Rail Baltic/Rail Baltica* project will develop larger integration of services; improve accessibility and development of sustainable mobility in the Baltic region.

Debate

Member of the Natural Resources and Environment Committee **Aurelija Stancikienė** informed that issue concerning railway line from Mažekiai (Lithuania) by municipalities, companies and other shareholders was raised for several times. She asked about current development with regard to railway line from Mažekiai.

Director of Development and International Relations Department of the Lithuanian Ministry of Transport and Communications **Arenijus Jackus** noted that he is not the relevant person to answer about railway line Mažekiai. Nevertheless, the recent argument from the involved shareholders underlined the lack of funds available for renovation of the railway line.

Vice Chairman of the Economics, Energy and Innovation Committee of the Baltic Assembly **Atis Lejiņš** informed that the next *Rail Baltic/Rail Baltica* needs to be funded from the present EU budget and not from the following. Continuously, the next EU budget is expected to cover funding for inclusion of the Vilnius-Kaunas and railway line extensions in Poland. Lithuania has completed the *Rail Baltic/Rail Baltica* project up to Polish border. He asked about the current position of Poland in regard to *Rail Baltic/ Rail Baltica* project.

Director of Development and International Relations Department of the Lithuanian Ministry of Transport and Communications **Arenijus Jackus** clarified that taking into consideration the practical implementation of the whole *Rail Baltic/Rail Baltica* project, all issues and preparation works related to it will need the funds of the current EU budget 2020 and most likely the next one, after the EU 2020.

With regard to Vilnius connection, the possibility that it will be funded during this period of budget exists. Ministers of the Baltic States may take appropriate actions and refer the issue to the EU responsible institutions to be revised during current budget period.

Poland has expressed strong commitment to invest in the Warsaw – Bialystok railway line and to develop railway line approximately up to 160 km/h and from Bialystok – Vilnius develop railway line by up to 120 km/h. However, it is not clear whether these goals will be implemented during this financial period. Current speed limitation in several Polish railways lines is 40 km/h, therefore the Prime Ministers of the Baltic States are committed to discuss and improve operational issues of railway connection with Poland.

President of the Benelux Parliament **Marcel Oberweis** informed that there is no common transport link connecting Luxembourg, France, Germany and Poland. It would be fruitful to join forces of Benelux and Baltic States to develop common initiative on railway line and present this commitment to the EU Commission.

Director of Development and International Relations Department of the Lithuanian Ministry of Transport and Communications **Arenijus Jackus** informed that the EU transport infrastructure is linked through the corridors and it could be possible to develop joint initiative with Benelux countries. This issue should be brought to parliamentary level and common discussion need to be made with Poland.

Session 3

EU Eastern Partnership

Vice Chairman of the Economics, Energy and Innovation Committee of the Baltic Assembly **Atis Lejiņš** noted when European politicians – Carl Bildt and Radoslaw Sikorski - suggested the idea of the EU Eastern Partnership to the European colleagues; nobody believed that a closer partnership between the EU and these six EU Eastern Partnership countries would immediately change the world. The main goal of the EU Eastern Partnership was to establish a more ambitious framework for European integration and European reforms for eastern neighbours who genuinely wanted to move forward in the direction of democracy, prosperity and the rule of law. The Eastern Partnership was finally launched at a summit in Prague in 2009, where the EU agreed with the six Eastern European partner countries to promote a process of

ever closer relations, based on shared interests and a community of values. Since then, some of Eastern Partnership partner countries have made progress. Ukraine was the frontrunner, but Georgia and, even more so, Moldova are catching up, and perhaps even moving ahead. Other partners are standing still or falling behind. The continued absence of any form of democracy in Belarus is disappointing in this respect. A mixed record is no reason to give up. It is rather a call to all who believe in the vision of the Eastern Partnership to try harder. Over the five years that have passed since the Prague Summit, development of relations has been observed. Cooperation in a wide range of areas, bilaterally as well as through regional projects is made. The EU has increased the assistance. Obstacle by obstacle and the remaining barriers are being removed. Through the adoption of new legislation, through complex bureaucratic processes and through the unification of regulations and standards, gradual conditions for free travel and free trade are made. Since a year or more back, the Eastern Partnership has run into challenges. The massive external pressure directed against closer cooperation between the EU and the countries of Eastern Europe is visible. The Russian Federation seems intent on using all instruments at its disposal to persuade Eastern partners to abandon European path. What Russia has done is unacceptable from the point of view of European security and global stability. The next EU Eastern Partnership Summit will take place in the first half of 2015 under the Latvian presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Chairman of the Saeima Foreign Affairs Committee **Ojārs Ēriks Kalniņš** informed that since its inception the programme has been often debated, questioned and sometimes criticized. However, until last year it was never challenged as in the situation made by Russia with respect to Ukraine. In terms of security, everyone has reconsidered the rules and international relations. Actions by Russia have changed the policy with regard to Eastern Partnership and divided Russia from Europe and NATO. Several discussions about the Third World War have been raised. The ironic aspect of this situation is that the NATO member states and Europe have become more united than ever before. Eastern Partnership remains one of the most important elements of the EU common foreign policy goals and challenges.

The main aims for Latvian upcoming EU Presidency will be the following: 1) to keep high Eastern Partnership on the agenda; 2) to send strong signals to the Eastern

Partnership members; 3) to achieve high participation of the stakeholders in the Eastern Partnership Summit; 4) to redefine the purpose of the Eastern Partnership. One-size fits all approach should be avoided, every Eastern Partnership country needs particular approach and support policy.

Countries like Belarus, Azerbaijan and Armenia need to be on focus. These countries are still sending strong signals to continue cooperation and contacts. These opportunities need to be used. President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko indicates an interest to open broader dialogue; this interest needs to be supported in order to keep regional contact and dialogue.

Association Agreements are the key on further development with Eastern Partnership countries.

All possible support to Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Moldova and Georgia should be given. Moldova is the front-runner in terms of Association Agreements, and Georgia has implemented everything with regard to foreign policy indications. In Georgia, several problems exist in regard to internal policy. Ukraine is the most complex case that needs particular attention. There exists a possibility that next year a Ukraine-EU Summit will be held.

In the scope of the upcoming Latvian Presidency of the European Council, a proposal to organize Ministerial meeting together with Eastern Partnership countries is made. Ministerial meeting is not yet approved by the EU headquarters, however the aim of meeting would be improvement of economic relations and visa free travel.

An important point in Riga Summit will be the Second European Youth Forum, which is important for addressing the issues about youth employment and future possibilities in the EU. Another initiative is to hold a Free Media Day and address free media in broad perspective. The way in which Russia manipulates the media in West is a pure presentation of tyranny and information warfare by means of democracy. It is not likely, that people in America know that Russian stakeholders control “Russia Today” channel. This channel operates with the means commonly accepted in America, nevertheless information is provided from particular point of view. Transparency of

media, transparency of stakeholders, aspects of information warfare and concerns of stakeholders need to be discussed.

Vice Chairman of the Economics, Energy and Innovation Committee of the Baltic Assembly **Atis Lejiņš** noted that the US, EU, Australia have made strong commitment and are engaged to take sanctions against Russia. The impact of the war in Ukraine is global.

Chairman of the Azerbaijan delegation to the GUAM PA **Elton Mammadov** informed that Azerbaijan follows all processes of the EU interactions and actions by the Baltic States. Recent events in Ukraine show the fragility of the international system and process of fast escalation of a problem. The EU should demonstrate its will in all conflicts of the Eastern Partnership countries. As a result of Armenian aggression, 20% of Azerbaijan was occupied; more than 1 million Azerbaijani people became refugees. More than 20 years Azerbaijan community tolerates situation despite number of international documents which are demanding withdrawal of Armenian forces from Azerbaijan territory. European colleagues should not use selective approach in dealing with problems. The EU applies unequal approach when imposes sanctions about one country, but ignores fact of occupation of another country.

Vice President of the Nordic Council **Phia Andersson** noted that with regard to Ukrainian crisis, Nordic Council delegation visited Poland and the Baltic States to demonstrate support and learn about concerns. After intervention in Crimea a different international system and different international relations exist. Closer cooperation between the Baltic and Nordic countries should contribute to find common solutions. The Nordic Council is focused on promotion of democracy and establishment of cooperation with GUAM countries.

Safe societies and regional security

President of the Baltic Assembly **Laine Randjärv** underlined that security environment has substantially changed. Everything that is happening should remind that security cannot be taken for granted.

During the years since the Baltic States regained the independence, enormous efforts to guarantee the security of citizens have been made. The decisions made in favour of democracy, the rule of law and membership of the European Union and NATO represent the best protection that currently could be achieved. NATO is and will remain a source of stability and security in transatlantic area.

Decisions of the NATO Summit in Wales 2014 and Statement of the President Barack Obama in Tallinn clearly and directly indicate that Tallinn, Rīga and Vilnius are just as protected as London, Berlin and Paris.

As the security situation has changed, the Baltic States have to redefine concrete aims and tasks to implement in the future. Therefore, the issues of the safe societies and regional security are in the agenda of the Session to discuss joint actions and to increase security of people. This session is divided into three sub sessions. Firstly, focus will be put on NATO membership, defence capabilities, pooling and sharing. Secondly, defence and security at a time of fiscal, operational and strategic transition will be analysed. Thirdly, the focus will be put on the soft power and joint responses to it.

Session 1

10 years of the Baltic States in NATO: defence capabilities, pooling and sharing

Minister of Defence of Latvia **Raimonds Vējonis** noted that the Baltic States admission to NATO more than 10 years ago has been a great success not only for the Baltic States, but also for NATO as the most powerful security organization in the world. Today's security situation, changes in the international order and emerging threats once again confirm that this was a critical and wise decision.

Accession to NATO was one of the Baltic States primary strategic foreign policy goals symbolizing re-joining to the family of Western nations after more than half a century of occupation. During last 10 years, the Baltic States have grown from security receivers to providers. Together with allied countries, the Baltic States have played a significant role in helping to deal with international crises. Participation in NATO-led operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and EU-led operations ATALANTA, EUFOR as well as participation in the NATO Rapid Response Forces and EU Battle Groups show the Baltic States contribution to global security and commitment to NATO's collective defence. At the same time current events make clear that NATO as an Alliance should re-focus its attention on self-defence and re-engage in the territorial defence of Europe.

Multinational cooperation for the Baltic States has been on the political agenda since the restoration of independence in 1991. Through cooperation with allies the Baltic States have developed a number of contemporary military capabilities: special operations forces, joint terminal attack controllers, EOD specialists, as well as training, mentoring and provincial reconstruction teams have been valued highly by allies. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are well known for the development of so called 'niche' capabilities such as cyber defence, energy security and from this year also for strategic communication.

Smart Defence, as well as Pooling & Sharing appeared on the political agenda of NATO and the EU only 3 years ago. However, the Baltic States have successfully used the same principle already for more than 20 years. Cooperation on capabilities development has resulted in well-established common Baltic projects leading to arguably the most enhanced cooperation format in Europe. The Baltic Air Surveillance Network BALTNET, the Baltic Defence College BALTDEFCOL, the Baltic Battalion BALTBAT and the Baltic Naval Squadron BALTRON are only the most visible cooperation projects. Joint procurement projects such as the common procurement of Carl Gustav ammunition is another area of cooperation.

While a lot has been done, there are still challenges to be addressed, especially now when Russia's invasion in Ukraine earlier this year has changed the global security order. Notwithstanding many different challenges and priorities, the current situation forces to pay more attention to self-defence and to improving cooperation in order to address emerging security threats.

Military cooperation between Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia can be characterised as effective and well established. However, the biggest security crisis since the end of the Cold War forces to adopt a long-term vision for cooperation. In this case political decisions are crucial.

Further cooperation and closer integration can't be implemented without political will. Therefore, the Baltic Assembly should be the right place to initiate the development of common defence planning for the Baltic States. Moreover, it is not only a question of military planning and cooperation. Stability and security are the pre-requisites for long-term economic growth and welfare. Without investing, the appropriate level of resources in defence and security exists a risk of losing everything that has been achieved, including statehood.

A long-term vision of security and political will to implement it are crucial in order to move forward with improved cooperation. The focus should be put on increasing interoperability by enhancing current projects and developing new ones. On the basis of successful cooperation in situational awareness of the air space above the Baltics, improvement of information sharing on sea surveillance and the situation near and

within the Baltic States borders should be carried out. Long-term vision should include not only cooperation, but also common elements of command and control. If the Baltic States will have to defend independence then coordinated command and control will be vital.

The current security situation shows that military capabilities do matter and countries should do more to explain this on the EU level. Quite often EU officials try to reduce the importance of issues related to military development, for example, border protection and its military dimensions. But now is the right time to bring this to the fore.

Improved military capability can't be achieved without an adequate level of resources allocated to defence. Latvia's defence budget has been increased and the Law on State Defence Spending now stipulates a gradual yearly increase to the defence budget reaching 2% of GDP by 2020.

The Baltic States geo-political situation and limited capacity to act separately show that the Baltic States can be secure only by working together. Self-defence capabilities depend on ability to cooperate; therefore there is no place for complacency or rivalry.

With regard to green men strategy, Ministers of Interior had two meetings in September. On 5 September, Ministers of Interior decided to establish joined interior forces to respond on any internal threat, including green men. Memorandum of Understanding to establish special commission that will coordinate responsible authorities in the Baltic States was signed.

Undersecretary for Defence Policy in Estonian Ministry of Defence **Sven Sakkov** reminded that in a statement issued on December 1993, the President of the Baltic States declared that NATO membership will be the main guarantee of the Baltic security. Ever since, NATO has remained the most important security and defence policy outside. NATO has guarded European security for more than 65 years. Looking on the situation in Ukraine, this decision was right.

In 2004, NATO began air space missions over the Baltic States. In 2012, air-policing missions were continued without any deadline. Knowledge, expertise and information of the Baltic States should be shared. The contribution of the Baltic States through the work performed in the research centres is important for NATO to cope with the current and future challenges. The Baltic Defence College is an example of the Baltic States pooling and sharing abilities. The Baltic forces are also preparing the Baltic battalion to be part of NATO response forces in 2016 and preparations to support UK expeditions in future are being made. A huge potential for the Baltic and Nordic defence cooperation exists.

During the last eight months, a fundamental change in security environment has been viewed. In 2008, the war in Georgia should have served as an alarm clock for Europe. The war in Ukraine is already a fire alarm. On 21 October Russian aircraft, IL 20 intruded into Estonian airspace. This was the sixth intrusion within the year. To compare there were only two intrusions in 2013 and none in 2011. Moreover, Russian military training near to the Baltic States borders were nothing near to friendly.

NATO presence in the Baltic States has become a norm. Article 5 trainings are being exercised often. Therefore, the Estonian government recently approved extra funds for hosting support. Today, only three NATO members spend at least 2% of GDP, those are United Kingdom, United States and Estonia. At the main time Russia spends around 4,5% of GDP and this amount seems to increase. Estonia welcomes Latvia's and Lithuania's decision to increase the budget for security and defence matters by 2020.

Session 2

Defence and security at a time of fiscal, operational and strategic transition

Lithuanian Vice-Minister of National Defence **Antanas Valys** noted that security and defence is vitally important both for the Baltic region as well to the transatlantic community in order to ensure lasting stability and prosperity.

The recent events have proved that Russia has achieved full readiness to provoke a conflict and act in targeted places. Everyone should acknowledge that Russia has already reached full capacity and capability to bring a chaos to any region of its interest. It is becoming more difficult to predict and anticipate the further actions and scope of this power. Alliance is forced to reconsider its strategy in relations with Russia and firmly commit on full range defence of its members. This will require the Alliance's reorganization and improvement of military capabilities. From Lithuanian point of view, Wales Summit has marked a new chapter in the ongoing story of Alliance. Long expected and essentially strategic transition in regard to security concerns has been achieved. Leaders of NATO member states approved a new, practical plan for dealing with challenges and a new approach in regard to Russia. The Baltic States need to be strong, united and demonstrate unfailing commitment to collective defence.

Threats to the Baltic States national security are heavily determined by current geopolitical conditions. Foreign countries desire to control and influence decisions of the Baltic States invokes policy and processes that threatens energy, economic, social and information security. Moreover, new types of threats have been emerged: integration on national minorities, provocations, violations of military transit procedures, unrest in neighbouring countries. Threats can emerge quickly without advance indications. Therefore, national armed forces of the Baltic States should be capable to respond without delay and have the right capabilities in place.

In today's rapidly evolving security environment, the need for further efforts in security and defence is increasing. Parliamentarians of the Baltic States should demonstrate political will to defend the Baltic States and allies. Readiness means expensive capabilities, well trained personnel that costs and a firm support of society. Parliamentarians of Lithuania voted unanimously to increase the defence budget in 2014 by EUR 38 millions. Strong commitment to increase the defence budget by 2% of GDP has been expressed.

Moreover, new legal and practical measures for response to possible unconventional threats have been developed. Firstly, a draft project on more efficient activation mechanism of armed forces and broader limit of using and authorizing military

armaments is introduced. Secondly, Lithuanian armed forces are looking to concentrate certain capabilities and form a response force that could react at short notice and have sufficient combat capacity to prevent hostile actions.

Lesson from the recent situation in Ukraine is that not only the right capabilities to protect stability, but also the right relationship is needed. The Baltic Assembly provides possibility to reassess unity and exceptional friendship, to develop cooperation and discover new ideas. The Baltic States are one region that faces common challenges, internal cooperation and joint action is essential.

Session 3

Soft power – can we jointly respond to it?

Director of the NATO STRATCOM Centre of Excellence **Jānis Kārklīņš** informed that Centre of Excellence was established on 1 September 2014. Main aim of the centre is to strengthen NATO capabilities in strategic communication and ensure information support to NATO military actions and operations.

Information flows within the society have an important role. Through the information available to larger society groups, certain political goals and matters can be achieved. Information is one of the soft power tools; therefore synthesis of joint actions to reduce wrongful flows of information should be used. Three pillars defined by Joseph Nye are: culture, societal values and foreign policy objectives. The most important principle introduced to reduce the impact of soft power is cooperation by all at whom the soft power is aimed.

Everyone is using soft power and it is very often used by raising the image of particular country, brand, good, etc. To understand why countries use soft power there is a need to unveil the motivation that drives the intention. By projecting the real motivation of the Eastern neighbour several signals should be noticed. Statement by President Putin, that the breakup of the Soviet Union is the biggest geopolitical tragedy of the 20th century, is not an innocent statement. For several times this

statement has appeared in social media. President Putin is the first leader of Russia who does not consider the Second World War or Great Patriotic War as the biggest geopolitical tragedy of 20th century where country lost 20 million people.

Asymmetric actions by Russia largely affect the Baltic States. Elements of projection of soft power in the Baltic States are the following: 1) facts that the Baltic States live in Russian information space; 2) subject of compatriots' policy; 3) subject of multicultural policy.

In Russia, there is no independent audio and visual media, all main channels are either directly state-owned or belong to companies, which are owned by Gazprom or oligarchs close to President Putin. Since coming to power, President Putin has ensured gradual change of media ownership from independent to state policy interlinked. Currently, television is the most important source of information for many people, including inhabitants of Russia. The same change of ownership is seen with regard to second most influential source of information-internet. One example is the fact, that the owner of "ВКонтакте" internet portal, which is equivalent to "Facebook", was forced to sell the shares to oligarch close to President Putin. It is also known that there are weekly meetings about the content of media policy lines. During meetings the message, which will be translated during the following week has been discussed. Strong synchronization of messages delivered through all Russian channels and means of media is observed. Russian channel "RT" (Russia Today) has unlimited funding, therefore it is cheaper than channels from other television packages in the Baltic States markets. Information sources confirm, that internal channels of Russia are seven times cheaper, that foreign channels in cable packages available for purchase.

The few remaining independent information sources in Russia are intimidated. Recently, the Chief Editor of television station "ДОЖДЬ" was heavily beaten nearby her home when she returned from office.

Methods of Russian propaganda involve total partiality of information, direct disinformation, falsification of facts; synchronization on media means ("вброс информации"), translation of targeted psychological information to Ukrainian and

Russian population. In social media, a phenomenon called “internet trolling” was observed. Internet trolling means that specially trained people are paid to respond negatively on all negative information targeted towards Russia, also producing cyber-attacks and popular hash tags on popular media. People acting in media are no more journalists, but people considered to be agents of Russian propaganda.

These information phenomena are new and it is hard to grasp the flows of all possible information means and used policies. All governmental institutions and society needs to be informed that information available on particular events may not be innocent in its means, it is targeted to change one mind and thinking. Investments should be made to understand the psychological pressure in case of kinetic action. Counter propaganda is not efficient. It is better to ignore propaganda and provide truthful information. Professional and free media needs to be supported. Full and diverse information flows are needed and special focus should be put on minority media and media self regulation.

Younger generations should be informed about the literacy on modern media. Analysis shows, that kids are introduced to different sources of media at the age of 2, therefore it would be logical to establish introduction to information courses already in the early stages of one’s life.

The response of the Baltic States to the means used by Russia should be based on the cultural and ethical values of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

President of the Baltic Assembly **Laine Randjārv** noted that recently discussions on whether to establish a national channel for Russian speaking population were held. She asked what could be the solution for minority speaking population, what information or what shows should be introduced?

Director of the NATO STRATCOM Centre of Excellence **Jānis Kārklīņš** noted that there is no simple answer. Even if the Baltic States would join funds and establish television for minorities it would be difficult to compete with hundreds of millions that are allocated by Kremlin to support government all policy of Russia. There is no use to invest in counterpropaganda. There is rather a need to develop a very

compelling story that will not contradict reality and actions taken by states. This way the right perception in minds of people will be created.

Addresses by international guests

President of the Benelux Parliament **Marcel Oberweis** underlined that cooperation remains highly important in order to strengthen the position of parliaments on national level. During the past four years in the Benelux Parliament discussions about European migration policy have been made. The Benelux countries experience labour migration from the new EU countries.

Foreign Affairs Committee of the Benelux Parliament has examined several reasons under which military cooperation between the Benelux and Baltic countries could be fined. Benelux and Baltic countries can be players in international area. By joining forces Baltic and Benelux countries can speak in one voice, thus influencing the EU legislative framework. Benelux countries consider that it is important to join positions in a form of memorandum and present it as a common matter. The EU will take into account strong commitment and position presented by cooperating countries.

Chairman of the Georgian delegation to the GUAM PA **Zurab Abashidze** noted that the Baltic States strongly support Georgia. Legislative cooperation between Georgia and the Baltic States is an example of good exchange of information and cooperation. Through the cooperation new political partners like Visegrad group, Benelux countries and the Nordic Council have been found. Good tradition of holding seminars and parliamentary meetings with participation of GUAM PA should remain. Various formats of cooperation give new opportunities and initiatives in order to enrich already existing cooperation. GUAM PA is grateful to the Baltic Assembly for continuous support to the GUAM countries.

Georgia appreciates the Baltic States support with regard to integral policy, sovereignty and admitting the occupation of Georgian territories. Latvia and Lithuania have been among those countries who first ratified the EU-Georgian Association

Agreement, shortly after it was signed. Magnificent steps have been made towards visa liberalisation process.

Deputy Head of the Ukrainian delegation to the GUAM PA **Rustam Raupov** expressed appreciation to the Baltic States for supporting Ukrainian aspirations and hopes. Situation in Ukraine is difficult due to aggression of Russia. This conflict can be resolved not only by military actions but also by participation of international society and peaceful means. If Russia would not have intervened with military actions, this conflict would have been resolved. Ukraine is ready to perform all necessary steps to join the EU, however with regard to the current situation it will not happen so soon.

Report of the Presidium of the Baltic Assembly

President of the Baltic Assembly **Laine Randjärv** introduced to the main achievements during the Estonian presidency in the Baltic Assembly. The first achievement is a progress towards **joint procurement of medicines**. It is a general truth that discount is given on quantity. Baltic markets are small and medicines cost more if purchased separately by national 1–2 million-large markets. Therefore, the first joint procurement of BCG vaccine for infants will be not only financially beneficial – it will prove that joint procurement mechanism is functional. She invited not stop at that. After this first pilot project is implemented, members of the Baltic Assembly will continue “pressuring” the governments for other joint projects in health care, such as further joint procurement, expanding of cross-border cooperation, joint e-health system. Second, the Baltic States also moved forward with implementation of *Rail Baltic/Rail Baltica* project. Baltic Assembly has urged national governments to foster application of the project for EU funding and to start building the railway line because modern world demands faster movement of people and goods by railroads and highways. She invited to continue follow-up work of the Baltic Assembly in regard to the railway project as well as in regard to highway networks that links Baltic region. Thirdly, the Baltic Assembly continued

negotiations on the common Baltic energy market and presented recommendations to the governments. Energy independence is not a goal that can be achieved in a day. To meet the future energy needs of the Baltic States there is a need for regionally coordinated energy policies and investments. The path towards energy security and independence will be difficult and long, and steps the Baltic States have made so far are small but either parliaments or governments must not give up for the sake of stability of our future generations. Fourth, Estonian presidency launched several new initiatives, which will have to be carried out in years to come. Parliamentarians have come up with very concrete ideas on how to increase coordination among services working in food safety and environmental protection. The Baltic Assembly has started to look for more coordinated cooperation in the field of education and research – joint grants for students, joint marketing strategy for education, specialisation of expensive higher and vocational study programmes, and innovative start-ups through pan-Baltic venture capital.

The Estonian parliament has once again come up with a proposal to improve the work of the Baltic Assembly. Estonian proposals on changes in the Baltic Assembly stem from a desire to strengthen Baltic parliamentary cooperation. There is a need a truly powerful model of Baltic parliamentary cooperation. The Baltic Assembly needs more tools at its disposal to make all these practical initiatives. She expressed satisfaction about reached consensus in regard to the composition of the Estonian delegation. In the period between 2015 and 2019, the Estonian parliament will have the right to form the Estonian delegation to the Baltic Assembly at its own discretion. If the assessment of efficiency conducted by the Presidium afterwards reveals that this approach is successful, it will be incorporated into the Statutes of the Baltic Assembly. To a certain extent, the Estonian delegation will be a pioneer for this new approach. She underlined that there will be a stable and permanent Estonian delegation which will ensure direct interaction between Baltic Assembly' committees and Riigikogu' standing committees.

This year the 20th anniversary of the Baltic Assembly Prizes for Literature, the Arts and Science was celebrated. Last year, all delegations of the Baltic Assembly agreed to review principles and procedure for awarding the BA Prizes. According to the decision, the *ad hoc* group consisting of 2 parliamentarians from each of the Baltic

States was established. Views differed and opinions clashed. Some of parliamentarians are still defending the old system while some parliamentarians want to go further. *Ad hoc* group worked very well and through disputes members of the *ad hoc* group found agreements. She thanked members of the *ad hoc* group for their work. After careful analysis members of the *ad hoc* group devised a new procedure and principles for awarding the Prizes and submitted results to the Presidium prior 1 June. Based on these decisions of the *ad hoc* group, Presidium submitted proposals on amendments to the Statutes on the Prizes. She expressed regrets that the Presidium did not find consensus in regard to these new amendments to the Statutes on the BA Prizes because Lithuanian delegation decided to vote against the changes. She invited Lithuanian delegation to introduce all members of the Baltic Assembly with reasons of such decision. She invited to continue debates about changes in regard to the BA Prizes next year. She emphasised that Estonia did carry out the task it was given. In the work of national parliaments it happens that draft legislation might not end in the same shape as it was planned in the beginning.

President of the Baltic Assembly **Laine Randjärv** thanked all for their support extended to the Estonian presidency during this year. She underlined that some may be disappointed with the slow progress in some of the areas.

Vice Chairman of the Lithuanian delegation of the Baltic Assembly **Rytas Kupčinskas** noted that tasks and goals set for 2014 have met expectations of parliamentarians. He underlined that Lithuanian delegation is delighted and proud about the fact that the BA has established these four Prizes which shows the continued interest of the BA in the accomplishments in the field of culture, the arts, science, research and innovation. The Baltic States have many talented people who will be awarded with the Prize during next years. The Baltic Assembly can show these accomplishments of Baltic nations to international community.

Vice Chairman of the Lithuanian delegation of the Baltic Assembly **Rytas Kupčinskas** underlined that support to Georgia and Ukraine shows the human solidarity and respect for international order. The Baltic Assembly is convinced that justice will be implemented and territorial integrity will be re-established. Twenty

years ago Russia has started aggression against Chechen region. The Baltic Assembly expressed solidarity for several times.

Chairman of the Budget and Audit Committee of the Baltic Assembly **Sven Sester** introduced to the implementation of the Budget of the Baltic Assembly 2013 and draft Budget of the Baltic Assembly 2015, which has been submitted for consideration to all members of the Baltic Assembly.

Members of Budget and Audit Committee and Presidium have examined the Budget report on implementation for 2013. Source of Baltic Assembly budget in 2013 were the membership fees from the national parliaments of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in amount of EUR 274,140 in total. According to the report, EUR 247,189 has been used to ensure the work of the Baltic Assembly in 2013.

As some of the planned events have been postponed to 2014 residual part of the budget in amount of EUR 26,951 has been included in the Budget of 2014. Budget of the Baltic Assembly has been used to ensure the following activities of the Baltic Assembly: 1) international parliamentary seminars of the Presidium and Committees; 2) cooperation with the Nordic Council, the Benelux Parliament, the GUAM Parliamentary Assembly; 3) participation in the work of the Standing Committee of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference; 4) organisation of the Session and the Baltic Council; 5) Baltic Assembly Prizes in Literature, the Arts and Science; 6) the Secretariat.

Detailed report on the expenses is to found in draft documents which have been submitted to all members of the Baltic Assembly.

It needs to be underlined that since the beginning of the financial crisis when the Baltic States have decreased expenses for more then 20%, the same level of the BA Budget is remained.

In regard to the membership payments of the national parliaments then for the next year the membership payment of the national parliaments of the Baltic States will remain on the same level as since 2009 and will amount to EUR 91,380. With the

decision of the Presidium and the Budget and Audit Committee, funding in amount of EUR 5,000 from the BA Budget 2014 to the BA Budget 2015 has been transferred.

Lithuanian presidency programme has been used in drafting the Budget for 2015. The total of the BA Budget for 2015 is EUR 279, 140. The main budgetary positions are the following: 1) the 34th Session of the Baltic Assembly and the 21st Baltic Council approximate expenses will compound EUR 38,000; 2) the work of the BA Presidium is agreed to compound EUR 13,260; 3) international cooperation EUR 99,112, which is 36% of the total of the BA Budget will be allocated; 4) medals of the Baltic Assembly, BA basketball tournament and the website operation amount of EUR 9,733 will be used; 5) the Baltic Assembly Prizes in Literature, the Arts and Science and the Baltic Innovation prize EUR 43,327 have been allocated; 6) for the BA Secretariat of EUR 73, 208 will be spent.

Detailed overview on the estimated expenses is to be found in draft documents, which have been submitted, to members of the Baltic Assembly.

**Adoption of the Final Document of the 33rd Session
of the Baltic Assembly**

President of the Baltic Assembly **Laine Randjärv** introduced to the draft documents which have been submitted to the 33rd Session of the Baltic Assembly:

- Resolution of the Baltic Assembly, which contains recommendations of the Baltic Assembly in regard to the joint infrastructure and transport projects, cooperation in energy sector and health sector, coordination of activities in education, science and innovation. Parliamentarians have submitted recommendations in regard to the food safety, regional security and safe societies as well as in regard to the development of regional networks.
- Decision on the Regulations in regard to the composition of the Estonian delegation to the Baltic Assembly for a period of 2015 – 2019. This decision confers the right to the Estonian Parliament to form the Estonian delegation to the Baltic Assembly at its own discretion in the period between 2015 and 2019; afterwards, the Presidium of the Baltic Assembly shall assess the results and efficiency of this approach. In case the approach is identified as successful, it will be incorporated into the Statutes of the Baltic Assembly.
- Decision on the implementation of the Report of the Budget of the Baltic Assembly for 2013. Chairman of the Budget and Audit Committee Sven Sester has already introduced to this report.
- Decision on the Budget of the Baltic Assembly for 2015. Chairman of the Budget and Audit Committee Sven Sester has already introduced to the budget.
- Decision on the Secretary General of the Baltic Assembly. Presidium of the Baltic Assembly proposes to appoint Marika Laizāne-Jurkāne as the Secretary General of the Baltic Assembly from 24 October 2014 for the next four years.
- Final document of the 33rd Session of the Baltic Assembly in which the Baltic Assembly defined priorities for the next year under the presidency of Lithuania.

President of the Baltic Assembly reminded that Amendments to the Statutes on the Baltic Assembly Prizes for Literature, the Arts and Science have been excluded from the list of draft documents. Such decision was taken as Lithuanian delegation decided to vote against these Amendments to the Statutes on the Baltic Assembly Prizes for Literature, the Arts and Science.

With unanimous decision, the Baltic Assembly adopted the following documents of the 33rd Session of the Baltic Assembly:

- Final Document of the 33rd Session of the Baltic Assembly;
- Resolution of the 33rd Session of the Baltic Assembly;
- Decision on the Amendments to the Baltic Assembly Statutes;
- Decision on the Regulations in regard to the composition of the Estonian delegation to the Baltic Assembly for a period of 2015 – 2019;
- Decision on the implementation of the Report of the Budget of the Baltic Assembly for 2013 and Report of the Budget of the Baltic Assembly for 2013;
- Decision on the Budget of the Baltic Assembly for 2015 and Budget of the Baltic Assembly for 2015;
- Decision on the Secretary General of the Baltic Assembly.

Election of the President and Vice Presidents for 2015

Members of the Baltic Assembly unanimously adopted the following leadership of the Presidium of the Baltic Assembly:

- President - Giedrė Purvaneckienė, Lithuania;
- Vice President - Jānis Vucāns, Latvia;
- Vice President - Laine Randjärv, Estonia.

Election of the Chairpersons and Vice Chairpersons of the committees

Members of the Baltic Assembly unanimously adopted the following leadership of the Committees of the Baltic Assembly:

Economics, Energy and Innovation Committee:

- Chairman: Bronius Pauža, Lithuania;
- Vice Chairman: Atis Lejiņš, Latvia;
- Vice Chairman: Sven Sester, Estonia.

Education, Science and Culture Committee:

- Chairman: Valerijus Simulik, Lithuania;
- Vice Chairman - Juris Viļums, Latvia;
- Vice Chairman - Aivar Kokk, Estonia.

Natural Resources and Environment Committee:

- Chairman: Paulius Saudargas, Lithuania;
- Vice Chairman: Romualds Ražuks, Latvia;
- Vice Chairman Peep Aru, Estonia.

Legal Affairs and Security Committee:

- Chairperson: Dalia Kuodytė, Lithuania;
- Vice Chairman: Jānis Ādamsons, Latvia;
- Vice Chairman: Väino Linde, Estonia.

Welfare Committee:

- Chairperson: Jolita Vaickienė, Lithuania;
- Vice Chairman: Vitālijs Orlovs, Latvia;
- Vice Chairman: Andre Sepp, Estonia.

Budget and Audit Committee:

- Chairperson: Irena Degutienė, Lithuania;
- Vice Chairman - Ivans Ribakovs, Latvia;
- Vice Chairman: Sven Sester, Estonia.

Address by the newly elected President of the Baltic Assembly

Vice President of the Baltic Assembly **Giedrė Purvaneckienė** expressed gratitude to the Estonian delegation with the successful Presidency of the Baltic Assembly and extended sincere gratitude to the members of the Latvian delegation for their term in office.

Lithuanian Presidency will continue to fulfil duties with the highest sense of responsibility, because the Baltic Assembly is one of the most successful Baltic cooperation platforms. The main goals of the Lithuanian Presidency will be to achieve tangible results, search for pragmatic solutions and establish new partnerships in areas of mutual interest. Lithuania will focus its efforts on enhancing the ability of the region to respond to economic, financial, social and energy challenges in a coordinated manner. Back in 2012, the former Icelandic Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jan Baldvin Hannibalsson addressed Session of the Baltic Assembly. He said that humanity is characterised by two choices: to do nothing or to do everything it can to succeed. He emphasised that it is also characteristic of humanity to learn from mistakes by neglecting them. The Lithuanian Presidency of the Baltic Assembly will make every effort to implement these two ideas. Firstly, the focus will be put on the Baltic interparliamentary cooperation on areas that can increase security and competitiveness of Baltic region and welfare of Baltic nations.

The Lithuanian delegation believes that by focussing too much on an ideal model of Baltic interparliamentary cooperation, which is already an effective tool – the Baltic Assembly – that can be used to bring governments together and encourage addressing concrete cooperation plans in a determined and open manner, is forgotten. Among many others, these matters of cooperation include development of health-care

projects, joint approach in penetrating third country markets, joint approach to and position on innovation and research, and representation of our national interests at the EU level. So far, all these initiatives have looked good on a paper. However, in reality, governmental reports during the meetings of the Baltic Assembly often leave impression that governmental representatives have not even given a thought to some very specific cooperation projects.

During the meeting of Baltic Assembly Natural Resources and Environment Committee in Vilnius at the beginning of June this year, issue of food safety was addressed. Governmental representatives from the Baltic States came up with many feasible proposals for further cooperation in this area. It seemed that until that meeting, the Baltic Council of Ministers had not considered these proposals that could reduce the costs related to food safety and control. Therefore, recommendations regarding joint laboratories, joint procurement of equipment as well as reduction of costs of food and environmental pollution analyses were included in the Resolution of the Baltic Assembly.

Firstly, during the Lithuanian Presidency, the follow-up activity of the BCM on these recommendations will be monitored. Furthermore, the committees of the Baltic Assembly will assess the progress achieved by the Baltic Council of Ministers in implementing the Baltic Assembly's recommendations in the period between the previous and the upcoming Lithuanian Presidencies. Secondly, the other leitmotif of the Lithuanian Presidency will be learning from mistakes and not by neglecting them. Many golden opportunities in the past while competing among ourselves for investments, better ratings on international markets or being the first to join the EU and NATO were missed.

The Baltic States need to act together as a group of sisters and a group of states concerned about the future of the international community and the world. The Baltic States should never abandon the values and the history that holds together. The same applies to the platform of interparliamentary cooperation. A lot of time has been lost while searching for an ideal model of cooperation. Therefore, it is now time for parliaments and governments to show their political will and build mutual trust. The Baltic States must act, even if sometimes fail to be perfect. The Baltic States must act,

because it is not permissible to throw away the ideals of those who stood on the Baltic Way 25 years ago.

The Lithuanian Presidency will attempt to intensify the interaction among the Baltic States, aimed at ensuring cohesive, effective, outreaching and inclusive Baltic regional cooperation, as well as to raise the region's profile and strengthen the position of the Baltic States in both Europe and the global arena.

Today, the global security and peace are once again challenged by forces willing to rewrite the history and rules of the international order. Russia's aggression in Ukraine has defied the very basic principles of security and stability of our continent. The "ghosts" of the Cold War have returned to haunt interstate relations. Therefore, unity once again becomes crucially important and the activity of the Baltic Assembly is once again gaining a special role. Concerted efforts to achieve peace and stability in Europe and restore the credibility of international law are needed. Strengthening of cooperation on Baltic foreign, defence and security policy will be one of the key areas of activity of the Lithuanian Presidency next year. Moreover, other security aspects will join efforts to face the risks of the African swine fever and the Ebola epidemic.

The Lithuanian delegation has taken into account the state of play in the Baltic States and the international environment and has elaborated the Presidency Programme aimed at four main priorities: 1) development of a growing and credible Baltic region; 2) secure Baltic region; 3) sustainable and competitive society in the region; 4) the Baltic region in the world: development of regional networks.

Mistakes should not be forgotten. The objective of the Lithuanian Presidency is to make the Baltic region more secure, more prosperous and more competitive.

**Signing of the Final Document
of the 33rd Session of the Baltic Assembly**

Laine Randjärv, President of the Baltic Assembly, announced that the 33rd Session of the Baltic Assembly is closed. National delegations were invited for signing the Final Document of the 33rd Session of the Baltic Assembly.

President of the Baltic
Assembly

Vice President of the Baltic
Assembly

Vice President of the Baltic
Assembly

Laine Randjärv
Republic of Estonia

Giedrė Purvaneckienė
Republic of Lithuania

Jānis Vucāns
Republic of Latvia

Marika Laizāne-Jurkāne
Secretary General of the Baltic Assembly

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