

Joint Statement
by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania
and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine
on cooperation in the field of European and Euro-Atlantic integration and
regional cooperation

Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania, Mr Antanas Valionis, and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Mr Borys Tarasyuk, hereinafter referred to as the "Ministers,"

Stressing the necessity to continue an intensive political dialogue between the two Ministries for Foreign Affairs,

Taking note of the membership of Lithuania in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union,

Taking into account the strategic goal of Ukraine to become a full-fledged member of the EU and NATO,

Committed to working towards a closer and integrated Europe from the Baltic Sea to the Black and Caspian Seas area,

Hopeful of the further consolidation of democratic values in broader areas,

Stressing the importance of regional and trans-regional cooperation from the Baltic Sea to the Black and Caspian Seas area,

Aiming to further deepen and intensify cooperation between Lithuania and Ukraine, in particular in the field of European and Euro-Atlantic integration,

Have agreed as follows:

1. The Ministers underline the relevance to strengthen the basis for the development of strategic partnership between the Republic of Lithuania and Ukraine, attaching significant importance to the assistance in the implementation of Ukraine's aspirations in the field of European and Euro-Atlantic integration.
2. The Ministers emphasize the importance of the efficient implementation of the Ukraine-EU Action Plan, which offers possibility of advancing to a new quality of contractual relationship between Ukraine and the European Union. Consequently, they shall promote cooperation in:

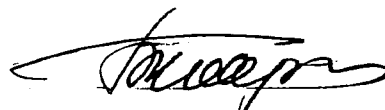
- management and co-ordination of EU affairs at national, governmental, inter-institutional and local levels in Ukraine: establishing of effective institutional mechanisms, structures and administrative procedures in Ukraine;
 - stimulating the development of Ukraine-EU relations aimed at the gradual integration of Ukraine into EU political, economic and humanitarian areas;
 - strengthening the institutional structure in Ukraine through administrative capacity building, sharing experience and expertise in reform process and training state officials on European integration issues;
 - transposition of EU acquis in different fields in Ukraine, priority being given to such areas as customs regulations, fight against corruption, free movement of capital, veterinary and phytosanitary requirements, migration and asylum, visa requirements;
 - ensuring the most favourable travel regime for citizens of Lithuania and Ukraine.
3. In order to deliver the co-operation objectives stipulated in Paragraph 2, the joint activities shall include:
- continuous co-operation on the basis of mutual interest, needs assessment and joint working plans. Other parties and partners may be involved for the purpose of facilitating the co-operation;
 - holding regular consultations between the Ministries for Foreign Affairs on issues within their competence;
 - sharing experience in, information on and expertise in EU integration process and policies;
 - implementing joint training projects and holding joint events, such as conferences, expert seminars, missions and study visits in areas pertaining to European integration;
 - stimulating cooperation among non-governmental organizations and academic institutions.
4. The Ministers agree to contribute to the implementation of the relevant reforms in Ukraine in order to make the full use of the Intensified Dialogue and to promote future access of Ukraine to the Membership Action Plan, which is a decisive step towards the implementation of Ukraine's aspiration to NATO membership. Ministries for Foreign Affairs together with other relevant partners will continue to work on the implementation of communication strategy aimed at informing the public about international security issues and NATO.
5. The Ministers pay significant attention to inter-parliamentary cooperation, as well as cooperation between regions of the Republic of Lithuania and Ukraine.
6. The Ministers shall encourage active cooperation between branch ministries and departments in sharing experience in European and Euro-Atlantic integration.

7. The Ministers agree to promote trans-regional cooperation from the Baltic Sea to the Black and Caspian Seas area and to elaborate joint initiatives aimed at spreading and strengthening democratic values and rule of law, such as GUAM and the Community of Democratic Choice. The Ministers believe that regional cooperation formats might significantly contribute to reform policies of new European democracies.
8. The Ministers underline their support to building up comprehensive trans-regional economic cooperation. The interaction should be action-oriented and focused on relevant fields of activity such as: transport and energy networks, trade and economic cooperation (especially border management), environment protection and sustainable development.
9. The Ministers endorse the continuing relevance of the OSCE 30 years after the Helsinki Final Act and 15 years after the Paris Charter – as a forum for political dialogue, promoting democratisation, rule of law and human rights, with a significant role in the conflict cycle (from early warning to post-conflict rehabilitation) and support the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security and cross-dimensional approach based on shared values, principles and political commitments. They express a readiness to consider ways of strengthening efficiency, transparency and accountability of the organisations in order to achieve the better ability to respond to the security threats and challenges of today and tomorrow.
10. The Ministers welcome the activities of the EU Border Mission in Ukraine and Moldova and commit to continue working together towards the solution of the Trans-Dniestrian issue taking into account President of Ukraine Victor Yushchenko's Plan "Settlement through democratization". The democratization of the Trans-Dniestrian region would contribute substantially to a successful solution of the issue. The fulfillment of the OSCE Istanbul commitments remains essential for the peaceful and viable settlement of the Trans-Dniestrian problem.
11. The Ministers express their belief that democratic processes taking place from the Baltic Sea to the Black and Caspian Seas area will have a positive impact on developments in Belarus and pledge their support to strengthening the Belarusian civil society.

Done in Vilnius on 23 December 2005



Antanas Valionis
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Lithuania



Borys Tarasyuk
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of Ukraine