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Policy paper

# UK-Lithuania joint declaration on bilateral cooperation 2022

Published 30 May 2022

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1. The Republic of Lithuania and the United Kingdom are bound by a shared strategic vision and universal values. We will work together as part of a wider global network of liberty to defend peace, freedom, democracy, human rights, the rule of law, gender equality, rules-based international order, free trade and economic security, for the security and prosperity of our citizens and of Europe as a whole, with values-based foreign policy at the core of our joint undertakings.

2. As we celebrate the Centenary of de jure diplomatic relations between the Republic of Lithuania and the United Kingdom this year, we note the closeness of our relationship and commit ourselves to further strengthening our strategic cooperation.

3. Lithuania, as an European Union (EU) Member State, views the United Kingdom as a key strategic ally, and seeks to contribute to further cooperation between the EU and the UK. Our cooperation is consistent with, and also benefits from, the EU-UK framework, and both States see the positive development of that relationship as supportive of our bilateral efforts.

## **A shared strategic vision**

4. Transatlantic solidarity. Euro-Atlantic unity and solidarity are key to addressing the wide ranging spectrum of traditional military threats and newly emerging challenges, both in Europe's neighbourhood and globally. To be able to ensure security and stability in Europe and beyond, Lithuania and the United Kingdom are committed to working closely with all NATO Allies and EU member states, as well as other like-minded nations committed to the shared values of the Euro-Atlantic community.

5. Russia. Russia's aggressive, unpredictable and destabilising behaviour poses an existential threat to European and global security. The fundamental principles of international law, including the inviolability of borders, territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty, must be universally

respected. We will work together with other NATO Allies and Euro-Atlantic partners to protect our national security interests, increase resilience, and address any malign Russian activity. The Russian people, as any other people, have the right to freedom, democracy and prosperity. We will continue our engagement with Russian civil society and independent media.

6. Ukraine. Lithuania and the UK remain steadfast in our commitment to support Ukraine in the face of Russia's unprovoked and unjustified military aggression. This is a clear violation of the sovereignty, freedom and independence of a democratic European country and a flagrant breach of Russia's obligations under international law. We remain committed to supporting Ukraine at pace with military aid to ensure Ukraine is best able to defend itself. We reaffirm our readiness to continue providing significant economic and humanitarian support to Ukraine and our partners in the region, both in the short and long term. We will continue to impose unprecedented sanctions on Putin's regime in response to its illegal invasion, and will seek to ensure that Belarus is also held to account for its involvement. With Russia's actions fundamentally challenging the security architecture of the Euro-Atlantic area, we will work closely together to ensure such actions remain unacceptable and that no other nation can fall victim to attempts of violent expansionism.

7. Indo-Pacific and China. With the global political and economic balance shifting to the Indo-Pacific, both Lithuania and the UK have a shared interest in strengthening our partnerships and engagement in and beyond the region, with a view to tackling emerging global challenges and advancing the cause of freedom. Lithuania and the UK recognise that China poses systemic challenges associated with its growing assertiveness. In this regard we will, in cooperation with the US, European partners, and regional actors, work together to support free and sustainable economic growth in the region, uphold global norms and principles, and defend our interests and shared values. We call on China to comply with its international obligations, including on human rights in Hong Kong and Xinjiang. We will work with international partners to increase our economic resilience in the face of arbitrary and coercive economic policies and practices. We express our

concern vis-à-vis China's support for Russia's revisionist ambitions on European security architecture as laid out in the China-Russia joint statement "On International Relations Entering New Era", especially in view of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine. We expect China, in line with the UN Charter and basic norms of international law, to support the sovereignty, independence and integrity of Ukraine's internationally recognized borders and to urge Russia to stop its military aggression against Ukraine.

8. We will increase cooperation aimed at promoting and protecting human rights in the physical and online worlds. In particular, we will cooperate to protect human rights defenders and put an end to arbitrary detention. We condemn reprisals against those cooperating with the UN human rights system. We will fight impunity for human rights violations and abuses and will work to bring perpetrators to justice. We will together protect freedom of expression and, as its essential components, the freedom of the media and the safety of journalists. We recognize the global threat of online harms, and will collaborate to tackle the shared challenge of keeping individuals, especially children, safer online through sharing information and best practice on our approaches.

9. Lithuania and the United Kingdom will cooperate to promote gender equality and advocate for the rights of women and girls, including the enjoyment of the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health, including sexual and reproductive health. We will work to tackle all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls, including sexual violence, with a view to also raising awareness of the extent of sexual violence in conflict and rallying global action to end it. We will protect the rights of the child, as well as the rights of persons with disabilities, and members of marginalized and disadvantaged groups, including LGBT+ community, as well as ethnic, linguistic, and religious and other minorities.

10. We commit to contribute together to the efforts to modernise and increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the Human Rights Council to enable it to address existing and emerging human rights challenges. We will together oppose narratives which challenge the universality and indivisibility of human rights and dilute the essence and importance of human

rights online and offline. We will champion the potential for technological development to promote human rights. We will respect, support and protect the integrity and independence of the international human rights institutions and mandates. At the UN, we will advocate to ensure that human rights institutions get the funding they need to fulfil their mandates. We will do this in close cooperation with other like-minded nations and with civil society organizations at home and in UN Member States. We will encourage closer engagement of youth, academia and private sector in these efforts.

## **Political dialogue and regional cooperation**

11. We commit to continue our regular bilateral dialogue at all levels. We will aim to meet regularly at Ministerial level in bilateral, regional and multilateral formats. These meetings will be supported by consultations at expert level across the areas of mutual interest identified in this Declaration. As well as deepening our bilateral relations, we will continue our cooperation within NB8+UK and 3B+UK regional formats.

12. We will continue our cooperation within the framework of the United Nations (UN), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Council of Europe (CoE), Interpol, the International Criminal Court (ICC), Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and other international organizations.

13. The Lithuanian diaspora in the UK, as well as British nationals residing and working in Lithuania, are one of the strongest links between our countries. They are building prosperity and provide a valuable cultural contribution in both Lithuania and the UK. We will respect and protect the rights of our citizens, including in the context of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation and Withdrawal Agreement.

14. We will work together in advancing and sustaining democracy, independence, economic and societal reforms in Eastern Europe. Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine have the right to freely set the course of their foreign policy. Successful economic, governance and judicial reforms, and determination to fight corruption, are essential in making them safe, resilient, prosperous and successful states and societies. We remain fully committed to Georgia's, Moldova's and Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, and in this context are deeply concerned by Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

15. Both our countries remain concerned by ongoing repression and the growing number of political prisoners in Belarus. We support the democratic rights of the people of Belarus, including free and fair elections under international observation. We will continue working to counter the harmful and aggressive behaviour of the Lukashenko regime, including the instrumentalisation of migration as hybrid tools directed against Belarus' neighbours. We support a peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

## **Defence and security**

16. NATO is the cornerstone of Euro-Atlantic security and the bedrock of our collective defence. Deterrence and defence, underpinned by our Article 5 commitment and based on a strong transatlantic bond, remain central pillars of the Alliance.

17. In order to respond to Russia's aggressive military posture, the Alliance should further strengthen deterrence and collective defence. This new peacetime baseline should be an enabled and expanded forward presence, which is credible and combat effective. It should be supported via enhanced persistent presence and rapidly scalable reinforcements in crisis and conflict. Adequate and efficient defence spending is of paramount importance.



18. We are prepared to prioritise security and respect for sovereignty over short-term economic gain. Those who seek to gain by oppression, coercion or invasion are being proved wrong by the Alliance's stand on global security – one that not only seeks to deter, but also ensures that aggressors fail. By working together and expanding trade, we can deprive aggressors of their leverage and can reduce strategic dependence.

19. We will further strengthen our cooperation in areas such as resilience, including cyber defence and countering hybrid threats, military mobility in Europe, addressing Russia's threat and China's challenge as well as energy and climate security. We will work together to take forward the NATO 2030 agenda and develop NATO's next Strategic Concept to strengthen our Alliance.

20. We also recognise the importance of a stronger and more capable European defence. We remain committed to NATO-EU cooperation in areas of security and defence based on the principles of coherence, complementarity and interoperability.

21. We will continue to coordinate and exercise our joint capabilities through the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF), the Northern Group, national and international exercises, as well as through NATO initiatives and activities, including the enhanced Forward Presence (eFP). Lithuania remains committed to providing Host Nation Support to regular deployments of British troops and combat aircraft.

22. Lithuania and the UK commit to an enhanced programme of integrated JEF exercises and activities at sea, on land and in the air in the High North, North Atlantic and Baltic Sea region. We will coordinate closely with our like-minded partners within JEF to enhance defence and deterrence in the region, and ensure that Russia cannot continue to threaten European security. We will work in complement to NATO and the EU to counter both Russian and wider threats to our collective security.

23. Lithuania and the UK, along with other NATO Allies, are increasingly the target of hybrid and cyber threats that aim to weaken our economies, democracies and social cohesion. We will therefore increase our deterrence and resilience

capabilities to counter interference, and protect against disinformation, espionage and state-sponsored malicious cyber activity. We signal our readiness to strengthen our cooperation by sharing information bilaterally as well as within relevant multilateral groupings.

## **Cooperation on international criminality**

24. We affirm our close partnership on security and commit to working together in tackling identified shared threats, including those posed by serious and organized crime such as human smuggling, modern slavery, cybercrime and illicit finance.

25. We will strengthen our cooperation with particular focus on information and intelligence exchange, ensuring high levels of data protection. We will reinforce capabilities against serious and organized crime actors. We will maintain and further develop a close dialogue on serious and organised crime, in areas that impact on our national security interests.

26. We will enhance our close security partnership and deepen cooperation between our law enforcement and criminal justice agencies, strengthening ongoing cooperation via the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement. This includes identifying opportunities to strengthen law enforcement information exchange via existing mechanisms, such as Interpol, the exploration of new mechanisms to enable real-time reciprocal alert exchange, and affording each other the widest measure of cooperation for the exchange of information extracted from criminal records, both for criminal and non-criminal purposes in accordance with applicable data protection rules.

# Economic cooperation, technology and bilateral trade

27. Recognising the importance of economic growth and rules-based multilateral trade in supporting democratic values and improvements to quality of life, Lithuania and the UK reaffirm our commitment to promote prosperity and welfare through economic openness and rejection of protectionism. We will deepen our cooperation on economic security, including consulting on national action in the areas of common interest. We underline the importance of transparency in international trade and investment and recognise the existing framework of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement. We are stalwart in our support for the rules-based multilateral trading system, with the WTO at its heart.

28. As nations that support open societies and free and fair trade conducted within a system of transparent and predictable international rules and standards, Lithuania and the United Kingdom are united in our concern regarding practices that undermine such free and fair economic systems, including trade, investment and development finance. We will continue to work collectively to foster global economic resilience in the face of arbitrary and coercive economic policies building on our work so far, including in the World Trade Organisation, over China's targeting of Lithuanian businesses. We will support each other to call out these practices and work to strengthen the economic system, by helping to set new standards and norms to support our shared values.

29. We will coordinate engagement and the exchange of information between our respective governmental institutions, regulators, companies, and civil society, as needed in order to strengthen and foster bilateral economic and technological cooperation, increase the volume of our bilateral trade and investment, and support the development of economic and trade cooperation between Lithuania and the UK.

30. In particular we will seek to build closer economic links between our two countries in key economic areas including clean growth and digital technologies. Harnessing the outcomes from COP26 to address climate change challenges,

we will collaborate in developing clean, renewable energy systems, focusing on development of offshore wind and low carbon hydrogen industries. We will seek to build closer links between our business and science communities in advancing our digital economies, smart cities and environmentally sustainable infrastructure. We will foster cooperation, including regionally, to promote the sustainable and safe application of emerging technologies including FinTech, GovTech, artificial intelligence and 5/6G, supporting approaches that build security into new technologies and promoting more diverse, secure and resilient technology supply chains.

31. We will encourage investment opportunities for Lithuanian and UK companies promoting the attractiveness of both our countries, particularly focusing on Net Zero and advanced technologies, life sciences, technology transfers and R&D.

## **Education, science and culture**

32. We will encourage and facilitate bilateral collaboration in higher education, research and innovation including programmes and research projects between our higher education and research institutions. We will work to support policy exchanges between our public authorities to improve the prosperity and wellbeing of our citizens and to address shared challenges such as climate change and global health security.

33. We will aim to further strengthen the mutual trust between the people of Lithuania and the UK. We will support Lithuanian Culture Institute and the British Council in initiatives leading to a wider dialogue in culture, education and people-to-people contacts. We reaffirm our commitment to close cooperation while strengthening independent media in the fight against disinformation.

This Joint Declaration was signed in two originals, each in the Lithuanian and English languages, both texts having equal validity.

London, 23 May 2022

Elizabeth Truss, Secretary of State for Foreign,  
Commonwealth and Development Affairs

Gabrielius Landsbergis, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the  
Republic of Lithuania

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