Joint statement by Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania Linas Linkevičius and Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier

Vilnius, 16 April 2015

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania Linas Linkevičius and Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier met in Vilnius on 16 April 2015. Bilateral relations, regional security and regional cooperation as well as key issues on the international agenda were discussed during the meeting.

Ministers expressed the intention to further develop their longstanding and close partnership and strengthen bilateral relations and cooperation on EU issues, particularly in the fields of culture, education, energy, and people-to-people contacts. The Ministers emphasised the importance of cooperation among civil societies, the important role of the Lithuanian-German Forum, youth exchange, and the promotion of culture and language.

Parties agreed to act together to minimise the spread and effectiveness of targeted misinformation and pressure and, inter alia, to cooperate in supporting alternative media services in the Russian language.

Ministers reiterated the importance of strengthening cooperation in the field of energy security while promoting the EU Energy Union based on the principles of solidarity and mutual trust, creating an effective and interconnected European energy market. Ministers stressed the importance of full integration of the Baltic electricity and gas markets into the EU energy market and underlined the added value of practical cooperation in the field of energy efficiency. Ministers shared the view that nuclear energy projects in the EU neighbourhood should be implemented according to international nuclear and radiation safety conventions and standards.

Both sides agree that their efforts should complement measures decided within the EU and/or NATO context.

Ministers have identified the following priorities and joint actions in the fields of media and communication, civil society, education, training and exchange.

I. Media and communication

A. Development of independent objective and professional media. This field of cooperation is aimed at boosting the professional capabilities of media outlets and/or individual journalists, including those working across language borders:

(1) Scholarship programmes for students via the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD):

a) Graduate (Master's) scholarships for Baltic journalism students

b) Scholarships for summer courses

c) Guest lectureships; in future, this could result in cooperation projects between German and Lithuanian journalism study programmes

d) Group trip by Graduate (Master's) students to Germany

e) Fact-finding trips to Germany for senior representatives of journalism schools from Lithuania

(2) Support for journalists and media start-ups in the form of practical workshops

(3) Editorial internships from the beginning of June 2015 until end of July in Germany for two interested Lithuanian journalists via the International Journalists' Programme (IJP)

(4) Expertise for the planned restructuring of national media authorities. To this end, Germany could invite experts to visit regional media authorities in Germany that brief them on structures and organisational forms

B. Providing attractive and professional content. This field of cooperation is aimed at improving the capabilities of Lithuanian journalists (including across language borders) and achieving independent and professional media production:

(1) Facilitated sharing of access to attractive content (e.g. documentaries on politics/history infotainment, entertainment etc.)

(2) TV/web programmes by Deutsche Welle for TV stations in the Baltic Region (including content in the languages of national minorities)

(3) Encouragement and support for the content exchange between other media outlets (national public broadcasters and private TV stations)

II. Strengthening of civil society

Civil society and civic education. This area of cooperation is aimed at fostering people-to-people contacts:

A. Schools/academia

(1) Cooperation on further training for history teachers by inviting multipliers to participate in further training in Germany

(2) Promotion of pupils' media skills/raising awareness on how to deal with targeted misinformation (media/internet literacy) by inviting multipliers to Germany

(3) Seminars for teachers of German language from Lithuania on media skills and civic education within the framework of further training for teachers of German

(4) Encouragement for the activities of German political and other foundations in the Baltic region

(5) Support for the important role of the German-Lithuanian-Forum in Berlin and Vilnius in promoting mutual cooperation in the field of strengthening civil society, historical remembrance and research

B. General public

(1) School theatre project on the dialogue with one's own history (history from below/oral history)

(2) Encouragement and support for civic education work in Lithuania

C. Culture

This field of cooperation is aimed at intensifying ties between the societies:

(1) Goethe Institute support for culture projects representing German culture and language

(2) Promotion of German language in Lithuanian schools and universities

III. Cooperation in the field of education, training and exchanges

A. Education and exchanges. This field of cooperation is aimed at strengthening cooperation in cultural and education exchange

(1) Encouragement for cooperation between Lithuania and German NGOs, universities, media outlets and think tanks (round tables, seminars, exchange of studies; common studies, courses etc.)

(2) Promotion of youth exchanges between the Baltic states across language borders

(3) Intensified youth exchange between Germany and the Baltic states, including the trilateral programmes organised by the German-Polish and Franco-German youth offices

(4) Support for the International Youth Forum of the European Youth Parliament for participants from Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia organised by the Schwarzkopf Foundation Young Europe, which is to take place by the end of 2015

(5) Tailor-made vocational training projects in coordination with the German-Baltic Chamber of Commerce