

Statement by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Gabrielius Landsbergis

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Today, we are confronting multiple challenges that require our collective response. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, turmoil in the Middle East, and growing tensions in the Indo-Pacific, including in the South China Sea and Myanmar, cast a veil of uncertainty over the future. Growing instability on multiple fronts is compounded by global challenges such as climate change, food insecurity, terrorism, and migration.

Geopolitical uncertainty in the world makes national and regional security weaker, but also more interdependent. EU and ASEAN both have a pivotal role in defence of the rules based international order. In the world of unpredictability Europe and ASEAN have a shared interest in expanding our ties.

Lithuania sees itself as part of this synergy. We have been strengthening our engagement in the region: we have recently adopted our Indo-Pacific strategy, based on a clear understanding of ASEAN's central role in the region; have expanded our network of embassies; have intensified political dialogue with countries of the region. We look forward to building new partnerships and deepening the existing ones, advancing mutually beneficial economic diversification, building economic resilience and investing into fomenting the shared understanding of security in our respective regions being so closely intertwined.

In the economic domain, we see a great potential for cooperation with ASEAN in high-tech areas, such as life sciences, ICT, renewable energy, space technology, engineering, and digitalization. We are pleased that Lithuanian businesses have already extended their outreach to the South-East Asian market.

Lithuania also stands ready to cooperate in building comprehensive ecosystems of resilience. The bullies in our regions are increasingly playing from the same textbook, especially when it comes to hybrid threats. We hence stand ready to share our experiences on combating disinformation or strengthening energy independence.

Lithuania together with the OECD has recently launched a resilience training centre, which will help public officials to counter foreign influence and fight disinformation. We invite public officials from your countries to Vilnius in spring 2024 to the first training session.

Let me conclude from where I have started. European and Indo-Pacific security is becoming deeply intertwined, so we have no choice but to be more united and better coordinated in our response. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine is the bleeding wound in our region, but its ripple effects and long-term implications are transregional, global and devastating. Russia's aggression not only violates fundamental principles of the UN Charter, but has a significant disruptive effect on regional and global trade chains, and affects stability of global oil and grain prices.

That is why it is my firm conviction that we cannot let Russia to set a precedent, as it is being closely watched by other revisionist actors, including in your region, with an interest in fracturing the international system and replacing the international order with a version of 'might is always right'. Let me express my sincere gratitude to the most of you for a clear stance in UNGA, you're your humanitarian support to Ukraine and your support to President Zelensky's Peace Formula.

We count on ASEAN to remain an anchor of stability in the rough waters in the region and look forward to working with the Southeastern Asian states to build a safer, more prosperous future for all.