

# STRATEGIC GUIDELINES FOR LITHUANIA'S RELATIONS WITH GERMANY

*More Germany in Lithuania and more Lithuania in Germany*

## INTRODUCTION

**The partnership between Lithuania and Germany is of exceptional importance**, both in terms of bilateral relations and with regards to cooperation within the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). In a context of global instability and parallel crises, it is in the interest of both countries to work together to defend the rules-based global order; to strengthen the EU and NATO's transatlantic partnership; to expand and consolidate the area that enjoys security, prosperity and democracy in Europe's neighbourhood; and to invest in the creation of a global network of trusted partnerships.

In the wake of Russia's large-scale war against Ukraine that began in February 2022, Germany announced a major shift in its policy. On 27 February, 2022 the German Chancellor's speech signalled a turning point (*Zeitenwende*) in German politics. With regards to security and defence policy, Germany expressed its aspiration to assume a more active military role in Europe, increased its defence spending and has become the second-largest donor in absolute terms of military aid to Ukraine. In the area of energy policy, Germany has taken considerable steps towards reducing its reliance on Russian gas and oil.

Germany's revised assessment of the global security situation and its role in this area are aligned with Lithuania's interests. The continued and permanent presence in Lithuania of forces belonging to key NATO allies, namely the United States (US) and Germany, is a valuable contribution to our national security. Germany's decision to permanently station a military brigade in Lithuania is also a manifestation of the *Zeitenwende*, marking not only Germany's very concrete and long-term commitment to Lithuania's security but also Germany's emerging realisation that its security and defence are directly dependent on, and begin with, the deterrence and strength of the collective defence present in Lithuania and the other Baltic States. In this way, Germany is becoming the most important pillar of European security for Lithuania. Furthermore, this presents an opportunity to review bilateral cooperation mechanisms with Germany, with a view to fostering a qualitatively new level of bilateral relations, not only in security and defence but also in other areas of cooperation.

**Establishing a permanent German military presence in Lithuania and elevating bilateral political, economic and societal cooperation to the level of strategic, value-adding cooperation between Lithuania and Germany are the two most important, complementary and mutually reinforcing objectives of Lithuania's strategy for its relations with Germany.**

With the arrival of the German military brigade, there is an opportunity to enhance bilateral cooperation in a number of other areas, including the development of closer economic ties. Furthermore, the intensification of the bilateral partnership and the strengthening of human relations will contribute to the long-term sustainability of Germany's defence commitment.

**The goal of these strategic guidelines is to examine the possibilities for enhancing our bilateral relations and to suggest ways in which we might further strengthen the strategic partnership between Lithuania and Germany.**

## **Successful implementation of the strategic guidelines will mean more Germany in Lithuania and more Lithuania in Germany.**

The first part of these strategic guidelines is dedicated to exploring opportunities for political collaboration between Lithuania and Germany, with a particular emphasis on matters related to security and defence. The second part offers an analysis of economic links and aspects of economic security. The third part examines other areas where there may be opportunities for closer cooperation between Lithuania and Germany. The fourth and final part offers suggestions on the ways and means to further develop Lithuania's engagement with Germany.

The insights presented in the document include suggestions from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and other state institutions, as well as from the business and academic communities.

### **I. POLITICAL AND SECURITY DIMENSION**

#### ***Cooperation in Matters of Security and Defence***

##### ***Successful Deployment of the German Military Brigade in Lithuania***

Over the past 50 years, Germany has placed a strong emphasis on enhancing its soft power capabilities and their role in international politics. However, in light of the growing geopolitical tensions, particularly Russia's large-scale invasion of Ukraine, Berlin has started to re-examine its approach and explore ways to integrate hard-power considerations into its strategy.

Germany's decision to permanently deploy its military brigade in Lithuania is of historic importance for Lithuania, Germany and the Alliance as a whole. It marks the beginning of a new phase in the strategic partnership between Lithuania and Germany. This also forms part of NATO's ongoing efforts to enhance collective defence, which will considerably strengthen Lithuania's defence capabilities and deterrence.

This decision will have a significant and far-reaching impact on bilateral cooperation between Lithuania and Germany, not only between our armed forces but also in a number of other areas, including the economy, culture, energy, industrial cooperation and the strengthening of ties between the societies of both countries.

It is natural to consider the recent **transformation of German foreign policy** that had been in place since the end of the Cold War, as well as its symbol – **the decision to permanently station a military brigade in Lithuania** – as a potential catalyst for bilateral relations in other areas. This is a **strategic opportunity for Lithuania**.

The successful relocation of the German brigade to Lithuania, reaching full operational capability by 2027, and the long-term, permanent presence of the brigade is a priority for the country. This will require the use of all necessary resources to create the appropriate conditions for the presence and resettlement of troops and their families in Lithuania. This includes the creation of military and civilian infrastructure; the creation of social, economic/tax and cultural conditions; and the securing of strong political and societal support from both sides.

Germany also remains Lithuania's most important partner in the modernisation of the Lithuanian armed forces. The presence of the German brigade in Lithuania undoubtedly reinforces the need for greater interoperability and interchangeability between the Lithuanian and the German armed forces. In the future, cooperation in terms of acquisitions should be expanded to include the acquisition and integration of new platforms into the Lithuanian armed forces.

Germany's recognition of its responsibility to increase its contribution to NATO's defence capabilities coincides with Berlin's desire to maintain the US military presence in Europe. It therefore fully corresponds to Lithuania's interests to encourage its European allies to take on more responsibility for Europe's defence while preserving and strengthening the transatlantic bond.

Hence, Lithuania's objective is to create the necessary conditions and to secure the support of Berlin and Washington for closer German–US cooperation in Lithuania. This would enhance Lithuania's security and create prerequisites for synergy between German and US efforts.

#### *Opportunities for Increased Cooperation in the Defence Industry*

The permanent deployment of the German brigade in Lithuania and the further deployment of German troops for the implementation of NATO's regional plans create new opportunities for further strengthening cooperation in the field of security and defence. This is particularly the case with regards to the development of projects for the acquisition of weapons and equipment, the promotion of German investments in the Lithuanian defence industry and the integration of the Lithuanian defence industry into the production chains of the German defence industry. Successful defence cooperation is anticipated to create the conditions for new investments while ensuring military mobility and enabling closer cooperation and/or participation in a variety of areas. These include the EU European Defence Industrial Strategy (EDIS), the European Defence Fund (EDF), multinational operations, military missions, joint international exercises, the EU's Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) projects, and the involvement of Germany in the activities of the NATO Energy Security Centre of Excellence (ENSEC COE) and the NATO Force Integration Unit (NFIU). **An important practical example of the extension of such military cooperation to other areas is the strengthening of cooperation with the German defence industry**, in particular by establishing the success story of Rheinmetall AG's investments and thus creating incentives for new joint projects with an even broader functional field (see the section on Economic Cooperation).

#### *Working Together to Enhance Resilience*

To achieve integration in terms of military cooperation, it is appropriate to **strengthen cooperation with Germany in the area of resilience to hybrid threats, including in relation to Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI)**, as well as in the fight against propaganda, disinformation and the falsification of history. This strengthened cooperation can be achieved through regular bilateral consultations, exchanges of experience and best practices, and joint training and other events. It seems likely that a German brigade deployed in Lithuania could be a target for hybrid attacks. Successful cooperation between Lithuania and Germany that helps to prevent such threats and successfully counters hostile narratives could prove to be a useful test case that supports the development of solutions for the whole of Germany.

#### *Enhancing Bilateral Political Dialogue*

##### *Consolidating the Strategic Partnership between Lithuania and Germany*

Germany's decision to deploy a military brigade in Lithuania on a permanent basis presents a valuable opportunity for a qualitative enhancement in bilateral relations between the two countries. **Lithuania's -goal is to establish the status of a strategic partnership by setting up a format for regular intergovernmental meetings.**<sup>1</sup> This would not only facilitate more efficient handling of the brigade's deployment and operations but also offer a promising avenue for further strengthening

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<sup>1</sup> Germany holds regular intergovernmental meetings with FR, PL, ES, IT, NL, CN, JPN, IND, PAR, BRA, AUS and IL.

bilateral relations in other areas and sectors, including foreign policy, defence, economy and innovation, transport, energy, education and culture.

**Lithuania has to be more visible in Germany.** To achieve this, it is important to maintain close communication at the highest political levels, organise regular visits, ensure the participation of Lithuania's representatives in major international events held in Germany, encourage Germany's representatives to attend major conferences organised by Lithuania, and develop bilateral cooperation at the sectoral level, including ministries, departments, and local government institutions. **Strategic partnerships can only be created and function effectively** if there is a **network of regional, functional, political-party related and personal relationships** that is as wide and deep as possible. The development of such a network is a necessary condition for achieving the goal of 'more Lithuania in Germany and more Germany in Lithuania'.

**Building stronger relationships with German states** will be an important **step** in fostering broader bilateral collaboration. Given the differences in geographical, demographic and economic size between Lithuania and Germany, it would be beneficial for Lithuania to identify the forms of cooperation with individual German states that have the greatest potential for mutual benefit. This would entail the **preparation of a map of federal states in Germany for Lithuania to prioritise**, based on an assessment of political, economic, historical, cultural and social ties. It would also involve a greater focus and allocation of financial resources to political, economic and cultural ties with these states.

#### *Cooperation on European Union issues*

Lithuania is focused on playing an active role within the EU. Therefore, developing relations with Berlin, which is an important driving force behind European integration, is of particular importance for Lithuania. Both Germany and Lithuania share the interest in the areas of common values, democracy and the rule of law. It is **strategically important for Lithuania** to do its utmost to ensure that common European interests remain an important factor in Germany's policies and that **Germany's European initiatives are as closely aligned with Lithuania's interests as possible.** It would be beneficial for Lithuania and Germany to deepen their bilateral cooperation and implement this strategic partnership in a practical manner. This could help align the positions of Lithuania and Germany and better reflect Lithuania's interests within the European agenda.

#### *Cooperation on NATO Issues*

In coordination with Germany, it is important to ensure the implementation of NATO's deterrence and defence agenda. Particular attention should be paid to the feasibility of NATO's defence plans, to the assignment of forces and the establishment of an effective command and control system, to the rapid development of necessary military capabilities, to the empowerment of the defence plans and the provision of logistical support, to the improvement of the host nation's support package, and to the organisation of military training.

Support and promote Germany's ambition to be the European leader of NATO and a major contributor to our region. Support and promote Germany's ambitions in nuclear policy.

In coordination with Germany, develop a strategy to contain Russia and the means to implement it, including by repealing the NATO–Russia Founding Act. In active consultation with Germany, pursue the invitation to Ukraine to join NATO and the achievement of Ukraine's goal of NATO membership.

## *Cooperation on Foreign and Security Policy issues in Multilateral Formats and International Organisations*

As the largest country in the European Union, the world's third-largest economy and Europe's largest economy, Germany plays an important role in global affairs. It is **also a member of the G7 and G20, thus, to further strengthen the bilateral partnership between Lithuania and Germany, it would be beneficial to enhance our collaboration in multilateral formats and international organisations.** The most urgent foreign policy issues on which it is important to develop a consistent dialogue with Germany through institutional and non-governmental formats are ensuring adequate support for Ukraine in its defence against Russian aggression, the enlargement of the EU and NATO, the implementation of the policy of containment of Russia, the improvement of the effectiveness of the sanctions against Russia and Belarus and the creation of a new European security architecture (against Russia, not with Russia).

## *Identifying Common Synergies in the Priority Regions of the Eastern Neighbourhood and the Indian and Pacific Oceans (Indo-Pacific?)*

With regards to the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy, Lithuania holds long lasting expertise and experience in the area of supporting the democratisation and reform processes of the EU's eastern neighbours. In light of this, Lithuania's objective is to collaborate closely with Germany to conduct a comprehensive and constructive review of the Eastern Partnership (EP) format. This review will aim to enhance the EP policy in a manner that aligns with the EU's ongoing enlargement processes, while also addressing the specific needs of the Eastern Partners, thereby strengthening their resilience and sovereignty.

It would be beneficial to consider the potential for joint activities and projects aimed at providing technical assistance to Ukraine and Moldova as they embark on their EU pre-accession journey. **It is pursued that Germany intensify its engagement and proactive involvement in ensuring the sustainability of democratic reform processes in Moldova, Armenia and Georgia.** Germany's potential to facilitate the normalisation of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as between Armenia and Turkey, could be a significant factor. **Given the presence of Russian and Belarusian citizens in Lithuania, who have been subjected to persecution by the Putin and Lukashenko regimes, is aimed to establish additional joint support projects involving collaborations between German and Lithuanian institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).** It is essential to collaborate with Germany to keep the issue of Belarus on the EU's political agenda. This must be carried out in conjunction with a consistent policy of containing the regime through the implementation of restrictive measures and isolation.

It is of the utmost importance **to ensure a supportive environment for German humanitarian foundations and NGOs operating in Lithuania that provide assistance to Belarusian democratic forces and civil society. Additionally, it is essential to involve new German organisations in these activities.** Lithuania is interested in the prospect of greater involvement of the German government and non-governmental institutions in the preservation of the European Humanities University (EHU), with the objective of transforming it into an important centre of Belarusian education and civic education in exile. It is important to extend invitations to German representatives to events and conferences organised by Russian and Belarusian democratic forces in Lithuania.

In light of Lithuania's implementation of the Indo-Pacific Action Plan and the strategic shift of the US towards Asia, it is imperative to identify collaborative opportunities and synergies between Lithuania and Germany in the Indo-Pacific region.

In 2023, Germany adopted a strategy for its relations with China, placing greater emphasis on China as a strategic competitor, and acknowledged the necessity to de-risk economic cooperation. The strategy highlights the human rights situation in China and the need to pay more attention to the country's increasingly aggressive behaviour in the region (including the Taiwan issue), as well as to the formulation of the EU's overall policy towards China. This is also in Lithuania's interest, which is why it is important to cooperate more actively with Germany in the field of China policy.

It is of particular importance for Lithuania to cooperate with Germany in the field of economic security, including the fight against economic coercion, not only in the context of bilateral relations but also in shaping EU and G7 positions.

#### *Development Cooperation, Global Partners*

**One potential area of collaboration is the enhancement of cooperation in the field of development cooperation.** Germany's experience and capacity in development cooperation, along with Lithuania's experience and knowledge in providing development assistance in Eastern European countries (Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and Armenia), can enhance the value of joint activities and facilitate the emergence of new bilateral cooperation formats, including, among other priorities, Ukraine's reconstruction. It is of great **importance to build upon the successful cooperation between the Lithuanian Central Project Management Agency and the German International Cooperation Agency (GIZ).** This can be achieved by proposing formats for joint activities between Lithuanian and German development cooperation institutions in partner countries, primarily Ukraine, but also in other geographical areas, such as Africa.

Lithuania, not having experienced its own imperial colonial past, has survived Russian imperialism, which enables it to construct a compelling narrative in its global partner countries in Africa, Asia and South America. Lithuania's voice could potentially influence Germany's actions in global partner countries.

## II. ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Germany represents the largest investor in Lithuania, being the leading economic partner in terms of trade volumes. It is also a priority market for the export of Lithuanian agricultural and food products. Furthermore, Germany is the most attractive country for Lithuania in terms of attracting foreign direct investment, inbound tourism, and cooperation in the fields of innovation and technology.

**Lithuania's objective in its relationship with Germany over the medium and long term is to reinforce and expand Germany's political and economic involvement in Lithuania. This will facilitate closer integration of Lithuania with the Western European market, reduce the country's vulnerability to the negative effects of non-democratic markets and enhance its economic and investment appeal and credibility.** This objective of Lithuania is consistent with Germany's strategic vision of diversifying supply chains, production capacity and added value by strengthening ties with countries in the region that can offer a skilled and relatively cost-effective workforce.

#### *Finding Lithuania's Niche in Creating Economic Value for Germany*

The disparity in the economic size of Lithuania and Germany underscores the necessity to identify a niche for Lithuania that would not only enhance its value proposition but also guarantee Germany's strategic interest in investing in Lithuania and the security of that investment.

It is imperative to enhance Lithuania's visibility in Germany. This entails portraying Lithuania as a tourist destination, an attractive country for business, a reliable and secure investment destination and a country capable of attracting new investments, particularly from large and medium-sized German companies, in the export-oriented manufacturing and service sectors. Additionally, it is essential to improve Lithuania's image in Germany as a country that produces high-quality, high-value products. To establish long-term and sustainable business relations, it is essential to diversify economic relations in accordance with export and import commodity groups and areas of German investment in Lithuania. Traditional industries currently dominate the export of Lithuanian-origin goods to Germany and German investment in Lithuania. Lithuania's strategic objective is **to expand the export of high-value, innovative products and services.**

To highlight the success stories of German businesses in Lithuania, it is necessary to encourage new investments, particularly in the Lithuanian regions. It is similarly crucial to encourage German investment in Lithuania's high-tech industries in a strategic manner, with a particular emphasis on those that offer products and services with a high level of added value.

In light of evolving geopolitical circumstances and the imperative to enhance resilience and mitigate reliance on unreliable partners, it is essential to reinforce Lithuanian–German ties in the **energy sector**. In the context of the ongoing transformation of energy systems and the shift towards renewable energy development, Lithuania can potentially become a partner of Germany in the production of green hydrogen and the supply of renewable energy.

It is of considerable importance to cultivate collaboration in the advancement of defence technologies and the manufacturing of essential equipment for weapons. The recent decision by Rheinmetall to construct a manufacturing facility in Lithuania has notably increased the interest of the German defence industry in pursuing expansion opportunities in our country. This represents a potential opportunity for Lithuania to assume a leading role in the development of defence technologies. It would be advisable to identify a technology area where Lithuania could offer regulatory advantages and to extend invitations to companies with the objective of developing such technologies in our country.

Regional cooperation plays an essential role in the development and maintenance of safe, reliable and efficient **transport and logistics systems**. In this context, it is imperative to further develop the cooperative relationship with Germany to enhance the transportation and logistics infrastructure between the Baltic States and Germany.

Germany represents the most important target market for **inbound tourism in Lithuania, exhibiting a notable prevalence of B2B and B2C activities**. It is imperative to ensure that Lithuania retains its appeal as a tourist destination for German visitors. This can be achieved by enhancing and sustaining sufficient tourism infrastructure, providing rehabilitation services in Lithuanian resorts and improving regular connections with Germany's major economic hubs via air, sea, rail and road. Convenient transport links would not only enable more tourists to come to Lithuania but would also facilitate the travel of German soldiers and their relatives stationed in Lithuania, as well as the mobility of business representatives. It is essential to prioritise the establishment of convenient, scheduled flights and, in the future, train connections to Germany.

The successful implementation of Rail Baltica will markedly enhance connectivity between Lithuania and Germany. Upon completion, the project should include direct rail routes via Poland to major

German cities (especially Berlin) and the integration of Lithuania into the network of European night-train routes.

### III. COOPERATION IN OTHER AREAS

#### *Bringing Shared History Back into Bilateral Relations and Bridging Cultural Connections*

The historical connections between Lithuania and Germany provide a foundation for strengthening the present-day relationship. It is an appropriate time to reintroduce our shared history into the present discourse through comprehensive research into historical and cultural links and the commemoration of specific events and personalities. This reduction in the fragmentation of knowledge of our bilateral history should begin with the Grand Duchy of Lithuania's relations with Germany, as well as the active promotion of the study of Lithuanian–German relations during the time of the Republic of the Two Nations (RTN). Furthermore, the study of the personal union of the Saxon rulers and the RTN should be expanded. Another area of common interest is the history and cultural heritage of East Prussia, which played an important role as a link between Germany and the Baltic region, and its influence on bilateral relations. We welcome the cooperation between Lithuanian and German institutes of historical memory; encourage new partnerships between research institutes, museums and foundations in both countries; and encourage joint efforts to further research Nazi and Soviet crimes. Further in-depth studies of Lithuanian–German relations during the period of 1918 to 1940, as well as German–Lithuanian relations in the Klaipėda region and Lithuania Minor, are required. **In the context of the current geopolitical situation, it is in our interest to facilitate greater awareness and understanding of the 20th-century Lithuanian experience among the German public and the country's politicians. This will enable a greater shared appreciation of the past.** For example, an important and multifaceted connection between Lithuania and Germany is the experience of approximately 70,000 Lithuanian refugees who resided in displaced-persons (DP) camps in Germany in the aftermath of the Second World War.

The most robust cultural connection is the influence of personalities, whereby their work and its integration into contemporary cultural discourse facilitate the enhancement of mutual cultural understanding. Notable figures in the context of Lithuanian–German relations include Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis, Thomas Mann, Simonas Dachas, Johannes Bobrowski, Juozas Gruodis, Juozas Naujalis, Zenonas Ivinskis, Aldona Gustas and Jonas Mekas, as well as contemporary Lithuanian artists residing in Germany.

#### *Involving the Lithuanian Community Living in Germany in the Dynamics of Bilateral Relations*

Lithuanian communities living in Germany are an important element of Lithuanian–German relations. According to the German Federal Statistical Office, the number of citizens of the Republic of Lithuania residing in Germany at the end of 2022 was 58,360. The Lithuanian Community of Germany (LCG), established in 1946, comprises 26 districts. It is imperative **to cultivate a sense of community and citizenship among the diaspora, to encourage their active engagement in Lithuanian affairs and to mobilise German Lithuanians to contribute to the advancement of bilateral relations between Lithuania and Germany.** According to data held by the State Enterprise Centre of Registers, in 2023 there were 6070 children who had citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania living in Germany. The Vasario 16-osios Gymnasium, the sole officially recognised private Lithuanian high school in Western Europe, was established in 1950 and is currently situated in Germany. To maintain this institution, the Lithuanian state is required to provide sufficient financial support. To sustain the relationship with the diaspora, it is crucial to allocate sufficient resources to



the education of children and young people in the Lithuanian language, to engage Lithuanian young people residing and studying in Germany in collaborative activities and to motivate them to pursue internships and training opportunities in Lithuania.

It should be noted that the third-largest number of citizens returning to Lithuania are from Germany. For two consecutive years, more citizens of the Republic of Lithuania returned from Germany to live in Lithuania than left Lithuania to live in Germany (in 2023, according to preliminary data from the Agency for State Data, 1439 citizens returned from Germany to Lithuania, while 1269 citizens departed from the country).

**The intensification of economic cooperation between Lithuania and Germany creates new conditions and opportunities. The emergence of new jobs necessitates proficiency in German and familiarity with German culture and methods of working. It is therefore crucial to disseminate information about the latest opportunities in Lithuania on a regular basis and to maintain the current activities aimed at informing German Lithuanians about the potential for returning to Lithuania.** Furthermore, it is essential to maintain contact with Lithuanian students currently studying in Germany and provide them with information about career opportunities available in Lithuania. **It is of particular importance to direct specific efforts and attention towards Lithuanian professionals currently employed by German companies with the objective of facilitating their return to Lithuania with branches of their respective companies.**

#### *Approach through Language, University Studies and the Presentation of Culture and Art*

One of the most effective ways of helping Lithuanians to learn more about Germany is by teaching the German language in Lithuanian schools. German as a second foreign language is currently only chosen by approximately 21% of students (54% choose Russian). However, the number of students learning German is increasing each year. The deployment of a German military brigade has the potential to facilitate the promotion of the German language in Lithuania. **Over the next five years, it is advisable to increase the training of German-language teachers and to aim for at least 30% of students choosing to study German as a second foreign language in schools.** German soldiers will arrive in Lithuania with their families, which will increase the need to expand the education network and strengthen German-language teaching in existing educational institutions.

Germany is the fifth-most popular study-abroad destination for Lithuanian youth. Lithuania and Germany have intensive academic exchange programmes, and Germany is the second-most popular destination in terms of the number of people who travel abroad for short-term studies, internships and teaching. German students are also interested in studying and taking up internships in Lithuania. Germany leads the world in total research publications. **It is necessary to implement a targeted communication strategy to facilitate collaboration between academic communities, thereby creating additional synergies for the advancement of economic cooperation.**

Germany was Lithuania's primary partner in the EU's Horizon 2020 programme. It is essential to sustain and enhance this robust bilateral collaboration in the domains of science, innovation and technology. To this end, the network of science and innovation advisers under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania can be employed to initiate and implement a greater number of joint Horizon Europe advanced research and experimental development projects. Furthermore, it is essential to maintain the ongoing dialogue and collaboration between the Lithuanian Science Council (LSC) and the German Research Foundation (*Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft*, DFG), along with the relevant

Lithuanian–German research funding organisations. This should be achieved through the implementation of joint research initiatives and the exchange of scientific expertise.

It is of great importance to recognise the necessity of the support provided by the Lithuanian and EU funds to the Lithuanian Studies and Baltic Studies Centres at the Universities of Greifswald and Frankfurt am Main that help to facilitate the promotion of Lithuania and the Lithuanian language in Germany. These centres should serve as hubs for teaching the Lithuanian language, for Lithuanian and Baltic studies and for Lithuanian culture in the broadest sense.

In recent years, the presentation of Lithuanian culture and art in Germany has been very successful. Germany is leading the way in translating Lithuanian literature into foreign languages; by 2023, 64 books by Lithuanian authors had been published in Germany. Lithuania has been designated as the guest of honour at several of Germany’s most prestigious book fairs, including fairs held in Frankfurt am Main and Leipzig, among other locations. It is imperative that these activities be sustained and expanded, thereby enhancing Lithuania’s visibility in Germany.

A significant element in the evolution of bilateral relations between Lithuania and Germany is the collaboration between the two countries’ societies. Lithuania and Germany have 54 city partnerships<sup>2</sup>. It is recommended that an audit of these partnerships be conducted in collaboration with the Association of Lithuanian Municipalities. This would facilitate the compiling of best practices and the identification of the most promising areas for cooperation. The presentation in Germany of the history of Vilnius and the Vilnius Ghetto is ongoing. It would be advisable to devote greater attention to the task of consolidating the collaborations between the Lithuanian cities in which German troops are to be deployed and/or reside and the German cities from which German troops will arrive (redeploy).

#### IV. SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

##### General Suggestions

1. Prepare a bilateral strategic partnership declaration/agreement.
2. Establish the practice of regular intergovernmental meetings. Once the strategic guidelines have been approved at the governmental level, a mechanism must be developed for monitoring and reviewing the implementation of these guidelines for Lithuanian–German relations. The Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in collaboration with other relevant ministries, should prepare an annual review of the bilateral relations between Lithuania and Germany. This review is to be presented at the government meeting.
3. Suggest to the relevant authorities that their activities and financial resources ought to be planned in accordance with the strategic guidelines for Lithuania’s relations with Germany.

##### Proposals for Political Cooperation

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[1] [Akmenė](#) – [Bocholt](#); [Anykščiai](#) – [Heek](#); [Birštonas](#) – [Leck](#); [Biržai](#) – [Werder an der Havel](#); [Ignalina](#) – [Büren](#); [Joniškis](#) – [Solingen](#); [Jurbarkas](#) – [Borken](#), [Lichtenberg](#), [Crailsheim](#), [Dorsten](#); [Kaišiadorys](#) – [Twistringen](#); [Kaunas](#) – [Lippe](#); [Kazlu Rūda](#) – [Sondershausen](#); [Kėdainiai](#) – [Sömmerda](#); [Kelmė](#) – [Lienen](#), [Vortberg](#); [Klaipėda](#) – [Leipzig](#), [Lubeck](#), [Manheim](#), [Rügen](#); [Kretinga](#) – [Märkisch-Oderland](#); [Kupiškis](#) – [Glauchau](#); [Marijampolė](#) – [Bergisch Gladbach](#), [Naumburg](#); [Molėtai](#) – [Hörstel](#); [Naujoji Akmenė](#) – [Bocholt](#); [Nemenčinė](#) – [Dessau-Roßlau](#); [Neringa](#) – [Fehmarn](#); [Panevėžys](#) – [Lünen](#); [Plungė](#) – [Menden](#); [Radviliškis](#) – [Speyer](#); [Rietavas](#) – [Menden](#), [Saebeck](#); [Šiauliai](#) – [Teterow](#); [Šilalė](#) – [Stavenhagen](#); [Šilutė](#) – [Emmerich](#); [Tauragė](#) – [Riedstadt](#); [Trakai](#) – [Bernburg](#), [Rheine](#), [Schönbek](#), [Walsleben](#); [Ukmergė](#) – [Bad Langensalza](#), [Friedberg](#), [Unstrut-Hainich](#), [Wetterau](#); [Utena](#) – [Erbach](#); [Varėna](#) – [Prenzlau](#); [Vilnius](#) – [Duisburg](#), [Erfurt](#).

4. Promote regular high-level visits and active collaboration between governmental ministries and other relevant agencies, and maintain a consistent political dialogue.
5. Conduct regular political consultations on key foreign policy issues.
6. Draw up a map of Lithuania's interests in the German federal states.
7. Promote parliamentary diplomacy and enhanced collaboration between the principal political parties in Lithuania and Germany, with a particular focus on foreign policy, security and defence, and to facilitate personal interactions between politicians and other prominent public figures.
8. Strengthen existing links and develop new relations with the political parties represented in the Bundestag (German federal parliament).
9. Promote cooperation between parliamentary committees (foreign affairs, European affairs, national security and defence, and others).
10. Consider the possibility of establishing a position of the Lithuanian Seimas representative to the Bundestag.
11. Invest in the development of a new generation of politicians by organising visits to Lithuania for young German politicians and policy advisers, following the proven best practices of Lithuania's work with the US Congress staffers.
12. Initiate an exchange programme involving German and Lithuanian officers serving at each other's headquarters.
13. Focus on targeted communication in Germany, for example by organising visits and cultural programmes in the towns and communities from which German troops will be deployed to Lithuania.
14. Provide concrete measures for cooperation between Lithuania and Germany in terms of strengthening cybersecurity and resistance to hybrid threats and disinformation.
15. Hold regular STRATCOM consultations with the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other institutions. Continue active presence and dissemination of topics and news relevant to Lithuania in the German media. Initiate exchanges of diplomats working in the field of communication, and organise visits of Lithuanian journalists to Germany.
16. Intensify the development of relations with the German states, and consider the possibility of establishing new Consulates General of the Republic of Lithuania and specialised representative offices of Lithuanian economic institutions in the next 5 to 10 years.
17. Maintain and expand cooperation with German centres of political thought and political party foundations.
18. Strengthen and expand the network of Honorary Consuls of the Republic of Lithuania and intensify cooperation with them. Promote the activities of the Lithuanian–German Forum, using the Forum as a platform to strengthen relations between Lithuanian and German members of parliament, business people and NGOs.
19. Using Lithuania's experience of working with the Eastern Partnership countries and taking advantage of Lithuania's commitment to EU enlargement, develop cooperation with German institutions and think tanks. This should seek to advocate for a more favourable position of Germany in relation to EU enlargement. Furthermore, it should enable to form a reaching position (EPRP) on the issue of reviewing and strengthening the format, by inviting German experts to attend and participate in conferences and seminars on these topics in Germany.
20. Seek greater and continued German political, economic, financial and military support for Ukraine, as well as political and technical support for the process of Ukraine's accession to the EU. Work together on joint projects.

21. Promote further cooperation between the Lithuanian Central Project Management Agency and the German International Cooperation Agency (GIZ), focusing on projects in Ukraine.
22. Seek positive German involvement in the development of a strategy to contain Russia.
23. Promote German involvement and initiatives to ensure the sustainability of democratic reform processes in Moldova and the South Caucasus.
24. Seek German support for joint projects by mobilising support from Belarussian and Russian civil society representatives.
25. Invite Germany to become a direct donor to EHU.
26. Invite influential German representatives to events and conferences organised by Russian and Belarusian democratic forces in Lithuania.
27. Establish a close dialogue on issues related to G7 activities.
28. Cooperate with Germany on joint projects (cybersecurity and counter-disinformation projects) in Global Partner global partner countries.
29. Develop joint development cooperation initiatives, working together in partner countries; strengthen links between institutions responsible for planning, coordinating and implementing development cooperation at the bilateral and European level. Prioritise joint reconstruction projects in Ukraine.
30. Strengthen dialogue with Germany on China policy.

#### *Proposals for Economic Cooperation*

31. Prioritise sectors with high levels of added value, such as manufacturing, life sciences technology and business service centres when promoting German investment in Lithuania.
32. Help the Lithuanian engineering industry to better integrate with its customers in the value chain and become direct suppliers in German industry supply-chains, for example for defence, electronics, automotives, robotics and lasers. This will enable the industry to export traditional products and co-create with Germany innovations and smart technologies in Lithuania, which can then be used in German and other Western European industries.
33. Encourage Lithuanian research institutions and associated business structures, in particular through the network of innovation officers from Lithuanian institutions, to establish contacts with German business confederations and sectoral associations, including at the state level.
34. Publicise the success stories of German capital invested in Lithuania, to create conditions for the Kaunas Free Economic Zone (FEZ) to grow the emerging automotive hub into a centre of excellence, where future technologies and innovations will be developed.
35. Strengthen cooperation with Germany in the biotechnology and life sciences sectors. This should include the promotion of student and researcher exchanges and the attraction of German investment in life sciences and biotechnology industries and start-ups to develop innovative products and conduct clinical trials in Lithuania. Help should be provided to Lithuanian companies in the life sciences sector to increase exports of medical and pharmaceutical products and equipment to Germany. Efforts should be made to ensure a more sustainable supply of essential medicines to Lithuania from Germany.
36. Exploit Lithuania's position as a leader in fintech, cybersecurity, e-business and e-government solutions in Germany, to enable Lithuanian ICT companies to contribute to Germany's digital transformation.
37. Strengthen links between Lithuania and the German financial sector and attract German commercial banks and/or other financial sector players to Lithuania, including investment funds or insurance segment representatives.

38. Initiate agreements and joint projects between state and federal innovation agencies, innovation centres and clusters of research-funding organisations.
39. Encourage research funders and research institutions in both countries to initiate and develop bilateral cooperation to address the most pressing challenges facing humankind, ensuring sustainable and secure energy, sustainable economic development and a clean environment.
40. Promote bilateral cooperation in the development and deployment of advanced technologies that enable artificial intelligence and quantum computing, including dual-use technologies. This will enhance the impact of such technologies on our countries' competitiveness and security.
41. Organise biannual forums for the Lithuanian and German scientific communities and science policy representatives to discuss the most pressing issues in science policy, including research and development (R&D) into human potential and science infrastructure and opportunities for bilateral cooperation.
42. Increase the visibility of Lithuanian tourism services in Germany and organise appropriate marketing campaigns. Invest in appropriate tourism infrastructure in Lithuania, including providing information in German at tourist destinations, training of German-speaking guides, and provision of tourism services, especially health services, in German.
43. Actively promote regular communication in relation to economic diplomacy in both countries, both through traditional media and social media. Communicate the business and science opportunities for Germany in Lithuania and the fact that Lithuania is an innovative, safe and reliable partner.
44. Increase the participation of Lithuanian companies in sectoral events and exhibitions in Germany, to increase Lithuania's visibility and to establish as many direct contacts between businesses as possible, especially in individual states.
45. Organise annual Lithuanian–German economic business forums (alternately in Lithuania and Germany), including for the food sector, and provide appropriate annual funding in the budgets of the Public Agency for Innovation and the Public Enterprise Ekoagros.
46. Increase the number of flights from Lithuania to Germany's main economic centres. Encourage the establishment of regular cargo and passenger routes and develop cargo flows. Develop cooperation between Klaipėda and German seaports, and attract German investment for the Klaipėda South Port infrastructure project.
47. Rapidly develop the most intensive cooperation possible with Germany on green hydrogen technology development, infrastructure development and possible exports. From 2050, Lithuania is projected to have surplus green hydrogen production, and the Nordic–Baltic Hydrogen Corridor will become operational. A shortage of renewable energy resources is projected for Germany, however, so it may become an export market for hydrogen produced in Lithuania, as well as for hydrogen derivatives such as synthetic green fuels, methanol, methane, ammonia and synthetic methane.
48. Promote German–Lithuanian cooperation to integrate offshore wind potential in the Baltic Sea into the European energy system, and contribute to the security of energy supply in the Baltic countries by 2035. Develop an optimal interconnection network of offshore wind farms and cost-effective cross-border electricity transmission links, which would also contribute to the harmonisation of electricity systems.
49. Take advantage of KN Energies AB's successful cooperation with German companies in the development and provision of liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal operator services in northern Germany, to seek cooperation in the development of new LNG projects in Germany or to collaborate with German companies in the development of projects in other countries.

50. Work with the German authorities to attract more direct investment in Lithuania's defence industry, with a focus on the production of ammunition and weapons in Lithuania, and to create the conditions for the joint development of defence innovations in Lithuania.
51. Promote cooperation between Lithuanian small and medium-sized enterprises and their German partners to supply the German military brigade with accommodation, catering, medical, education and other services, technical parts, repair services, logistics, etc.
52. Utilise the economic diplomacy forces of TeamLT in Germany (the Lithuanian Embassy in Berlin, the Lithuanian Consulate General in Munich), as well as the network of Lithuanian Honorary Consuls in Germany and representatives of Lithuanian professional organisations. Make more active use of their experience, contacts and knowledge to strengthen economic and scientific ties between the two countries.
53. Create an appropriate regulatory environment for the development of innovative defence technologies in Lithuania, with a view to becoming the miltech (military technology) 'silicon valley' of Europe.
54. Foster collaboration in the production of medicines and the development and application of advanced therapies.
55. Support medical tourism from Germany.
56. Promote collaboration in the development of personalised medicine and the safe use of health data for better healthcare, research and policymaking.
57. Promote cooperation in medical technology and clinical and biomedical research.

#### *Proposals for Cooperation in Other Areas*

58. Support the activities of the Lithuanian–German Forum and use the Forum as a platform for strengthening relations between politicians, businesses and cultural figures from both countries.
59. Promote the community spirit of Lithuanians in Germany, their involvement in Lithuanian life and the representation of Lithuania in Germany.
60. Promote individual contacts between Lithuanian professionals working in Germany with Lithuanian cultural and scientific institutions and business organisations.
61. Encourage Lithuanian and mixed families in Germany to enrol their children in the Vasario 16-osios Gymnasium or other Lithuanian schools, and conduct targeted campaigns to publicise Lithuanian education. Develop a long-term support plan for the Vasario 16-osios Gymnasium.
62. Provide information to Lithuanians living in Germany about the possibilities of returning to Lithuania, and organise events presenting job opportunities in Lithuania.
63. Focus more on Lithuanian young people studying in Germany, encouraging them to choose internships and traineeships in Lithuania and take part in educational summer programmes.
64. Encourage and support joint initiatives involving German and Lithuanian students by organising academic summer schools, student research conferences, R&D internships in the countries' universities and research organisations, as well as R&D in high-tech companies.
65. Aim to increase the number of Lithuanian children learning German by at least 30% over the next five years.
66. Encourage the implementation of joint study programmes; currently, Vytautas Magnus University (Sociolinguistics and Multilingualism) and Kazimieras Simonavičius University (Entrepreneurship and Management) are implementing joint study programmes with German partner universities.

67. Develop German-language websites for public authorities, in particular the MFA.
68. Promote German TV and radio channels in Lithuania.
69. Encourage German subtitling of TV shows on Lithuanian TV.
70. Develop a reference list of the most important creative platforms and cultural organisations in Lithuania and Germany that are relevant to artists and cultural professionals in both countries, and update it at regular intervals.
71. Promote city partnerships.
72. Develop a programme of reciprocal visits of cultural professionals, promoting cooperation projects and joint production in all fields of art, culture and the creative industries, initiating long-term partnerships, taking into account the needs of Lithuanian and German artists and cultural professionals.
73. Facilitate reciprocal cultural exchange programmes on a larger scale, with a view to deeper mutual understanding, dialogue on topics of mutual interest and targeted communication through culture in both countries.
74. Continue to mark the camps for displaced persons (DPs) in Germany where Lithuanians lived after the Second World War, for example with commemorative plaques.
75. Develop and strengthen cooperation with the Baltic Studies and Lithuanian Studies Centres at the Goethe University of Frankfurt/Main, the Westphalien Wilhelm University of Münster, the Humboldt University of Berlin and the University of Greifswald. Increase support for these centres, to expand the partnerships between Lithuanian and German scientists through them, and to strengthen their position in the international scientific community. Promote and support the activities and projects of the Institute of Lithuanian Culture in Hüttenfeld, to research its archive and library of great value to Lithuania, and to involve Lithuanian and German research and memory institutions in this process.
76. Strengthen links with institutions that promote the history and culture of East Prussia and Lithuania Minor. Facilitate closer links between German research institutions and Klaipėda University and other Lithuanian academic institutions.
77. Continue cooperation in the field of Holocaust remembrance and Jewish heritage, and develop projects on the history of Vilnius city and the Vilnius Ghetto.
78. Continue to promote Lithuanian artists and their work by participating in events to disseminate Lithuanian literature, such as major book fairs and *Literaturhaus*; film dissemination events, and film and music festivals.
79. Encourage artists and cultural professionals from both countries to participate in artistic residencies, and facilitate the implementation of targeted artistic residency exchange programmes.
80. Promote the translation and dissemination of literature from both countries.
81. Develop relations with Lithuanian and East Prussian emigrants and their descendants living in Germany, to harness their positive emotions for the development of present-day relations and to invite them to become actively involved in Lithuanian life.
82. Continue the government's (MFA) support for the annual Thomas Mann International Festival in Nida and increase its visibility.