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Inside this Issue

- ▶ CO-OPERATION WITH NATO
- ▶ BILATERAL CO-OPERATION
- ▶ BALTSEA FORUM
- ▶ WEAPONS PROCUREMENT

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LITHUANIA'S EXTERNAL MILITARY CO-OPERATION

External military co-operation is an important element of Lithuania's overall security strategy. This strategy for Lithuania focuses on integration into Trans-Atlantic and Western European institutions, most notably, NATO and the EU. This choice is value-based and non-confrontational. It is this orientation that determines the main functions of military co-operation with foreign partners. Four objectives are pursued by Lithuania in its external military relations:

- The development of national self-defence capabilities;
- Seeking interoperability with NATO of the Lithuanian defence forces;
- Active contribution to international military support measures, and
- Confidence building.

CO-OPERATION WITH NATO

Lithuania has declared and pursued the political objective of becoming a full-fledged member of NATO. Therefore, efforts are to a very large extent focused on co-operation with NATO and, in particular, achieving interoperability with NATO forces. Direct co-operation with NATO takes place under the NATO-launched Enhanced and More Operational PfP. Specifically, Lithuanian political-military co-operation with NATO includes:

- a Membership Action Plan (MAP) that is designed to put into place a program of activities to assist aspiring countries in their preparation for future NATO membership. Lithuania has drawn up its annual national program on preparation for future membership, setting objectives and targets for its preparation. The most important element within MAP is the feedback procedure which will allow both the Alliance and Lithuania to keep track of progress made;
- activities agreed within the Lithuanian-NATO Individual Partnership Programme (IPP), most notably participation in numerous PfP and "in -the-spirit-of-PfP" exercises and exercise-related events (international peace support efforts) as well as other activities;
- a Partnership Planning and Review Process (PARP) that is particularly focused on NATO compatibility of our doctrine, procedures, equipment and infrastructure and is designed to prepare the Partners for future participation in NATO collective defence planning;
- high-level and expert contacts within the format of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC);
- other NATO/EAPC initiatives such as Operational Capabilities Concept (OCC), Political-Military Framework for NATO led PfP Operations (PMF), Defence Related Military Co-operation, PfP Training and Education Enhancement Program (TEEP), Partnership Staff Element (PSE), etc.

BILATERAL CO-OPERATION

The Lithuanian Armed Forces work together with about 30 foreign partners including **Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States** and others. The main areas of bilateral co-operation include:

Canada

- English and French Language Training,
- Peacekeeping training and other military training courses,
- Assistance to LITPOLBAT (staff officers training)

The Czech Republic

- Consultations on NATO integration process, MAP/PARP implementation, CFE issues,
- Unit-to-unit co-operation,
- Officers education and training,
- Military equipment donation

Denmark

- Defence management,
- Education and training,
- Development of engineering,
- Fire support,
- SAR and PSO capabilities,
- Unit-to-unit co-operation,
- Adviser to TRADOC

Estonia and Latvia:

- Trilateral military exercises and co-ordination of participation in multinational exercises,
- Co-ordination of efforts in the development of interoperability with NATO,
- Development of joint Baltic projects:
Baltic Battalion (BALTBAT), Baltic Air Surveillance Network (BALTNET), Baltic Naval Squadron (BALTRON), and Baltic Defence College (BALTDEFCOL).

Finland:

- Expert advice on mobilisation matters,
- Peacekeeping-related training

France:

- All level military training,
- French language training,
- Support in introducing NATO compatible codification system

Georgia:

- Consultations and expert advice on NATO integration process, withdrawal of Russian troops, etc.

Germany:

- Military education and training, English and German language training,
- Co-operation and advice in logistics and medicine,
- Military geography,
- Naval co-operation and advice,
- Material donation.

Hungary:

- Consultations on legal questions related to NATO accession,
- English Language Training,
- Peacekeeping Training and other military training courses

Italy:

- Annual Army Training Exercise,
- Italian language training

The Netherlands:

- Officers training at ISOOC,
- Material and technical support

Norway:

- Military training assistance,
- Development of the personnel management system (personnel policy project NORBALTPERS),
- Materiel donation

Poland:

- Consultations and expertise on NATO integration process,
- Officers education and training,
- Joint participation in NATO-led operations,
- LITPOLBAT project,
- Material donation

Romania:

- Pol-mil talks on NATO enlargement,
- Exchange of expertise in procurement area,
- Military observers participation in military exercises

Russia:

- Pol-mil talks,
- Military Environment Protection and Civil-Military Emergency Planning training

Sweden:

- Military education and training,
- Full-package materiel donations,
- Conscript administration and mobilisation system (BALTPERS project),
- Support to Medical Service (BALTMED project),
- Expertise on total defence organisation,
- Co-operation in Arms control and CSBMs,
- Co-operation in environmental, civil emergency planning and disaster relief areas

Switzerland:

- Company and battalion commanders training, NCO's instructors training,
- International Training Courses on Security Policy,
- Material donation.

Turkey:

- Lithuanian participation in PFP Courses

Ukraine:

- Pol-mil talks,
- Officer training

The United Kingdom:

- Advise on reform and standardisation of Lithuanian training system,
- English language training,
- PPBS development and implementation,
- Adviser to TRADOC

The United States:

- Assistance programmes: International Military Education and Training (IMET), Joint Contact Training (Military-to-Military), Defence Resource Management, and others,
- Allocation of funds to support the Lithuanian defence procurement, making excess defence articles available to Lithuania through a Security Assistance Office (SAO) in Vilnius, funding a large part of the costs associated with Lithuanian participation in international military exercises,
- Contribution to the Baltic regional defence co-operation projects, most notably, to the establishment of the BALTNET, the central part of which is the planned establishment of a Regional Air Surveillance Co-ordination Centre in Lithuania,
- Strategic level advice on the development of national defence establishment,
- Donation

BALTSEA FORUM

Lithuania attaches the great importance BALTSEA (Baltic Security Assistance Management Group) which brings together nations ready and willing to contribute to our efforts in strengthening our defence capabilities. BALTSEA forum co-ordinates Western Security and defence assistance to the Baltic States, tailors the Western partners' support possibilities to the Baltic States' assistance requirements and helps Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia implement the Baltic defence co-operation projects – BALTBAT, BALTRON, BALTNET and BALTDEFCOL.

BALTSEA countries supported implementation of PGs, agreed between NATO and Lithuania, in the Lithuanian Armed Forces and bilateral or multilateral projects.

WEAPONS PROCUREMENT

The equipment procurement policy is oriented toward NATO-compatible systems, which forces Lithuania to turn to the Western market. Lithuania has already procured weapons and other defence equipment such as tactical radios, transport vehicles, coastal surveillance equipment, and anti-tank weapons from a number of Western countries. The main procurement projects in the period from 2001 to 2003 are the air defence systems, radars, tactical communications equipment, anti-tank systems, transport and logistics. Modern state of the art equipment, especially in the C3 area, is being procured using national funds. The expenditure for procurement projects increased from 9,8% at the overall defence budget in the year 2000 to 20,4% in the year 2001. Governments of Western countries are authorising their defence ministries to sell or donate to Lithuania excess equipment that is being decommissioned as they downsize their armed forces. Also, as part of the package, those countries undertake to train Lithuanian military personnel in operating the transferred equipment. Lithuania expects this developing trend to continue. Lithuanian investments are used to enhance the infrastructure in order to ensure the maximum benefit to Lithuanian Armed Forces from the donated equipment.

