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Inside this Issue

- ▶ COOPERATION WITH NATO
- ▶ BILATERAL COOPERATION
- ▶ WEAPONS PROCUREMENT

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LITHUANIA'S EXTERNAL MILITARY COOPERATION

External military co-operation is a tool of each individual state's overall security strategy. This strategy for Lithuania focuses on integration into the Trans-Atlantic and Western European institutions, most notably, NATO and 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. Three 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 to become a full-fledged member of NATO. Therefore, efforts are to a very large extent focused on cooperation with NATO and, in particular, achieving interoperability with NATO forces. Direct co-operation with NATO takes place under the NATO-launched PfP under which partners are offered to participate in a number of membership related activities. Specifically, Lithuanian security and defence co-operation with NATO includes:

- 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);
- 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);
- The Intensified Dialogue with NATO;
- And 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.

BI-LATERAL COOPERATION

Lithuanian Armed Forces work together with about 20 foreign partners including **Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States** and others. The main areas of bilateral co-operation include:

Canada

- Military training assistance
- NATO official language training assistance

The Czech Republic

- Military training assistance
- Provisions of expertise on pre-accession work with NATO and in the Armed Forces
- Equipment donations

Denmark

Besides being a determined advocate of full-fledged Baltic membership in NATO and aiding in preparing defence forces for NATO membership, Denmark is very active in:

- Training of peace force contingents (all Lithuanian peacekeeping contingents have undergone training in Denmark and served within a Danish foster unit)
- Assistance in the implementation of PARP Interoperability Objectives
- Development of military specialist training base in Lithuania
- Leading the BALTBAT project
- Equipment donations

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

- Support to trilateral Baltic defence co-operation projects

France

- Military training assistance
- French language training
- Development of NATO compatible codification system

Germany

- Leading the implementation of BALTRON
- Officer and specialist training (including language training)
- Equipment donations
- Support for the development of Military Medical Service

Norway

- Development of BALTNET
- Materiel donations
- Training in defence planning

Republic of Poland

- International exercises and assistance in military training
- Establishment of joint peacekeeping battalion (LITPOLBAT)
- Equipment donations

Sweden

- Expert and materiel assistance on national sea surveillance system in Lithuania
- Implementation of the ATMAS (Air Traffic Management and Air Surveillance System) project (this project is aimed at the establishment of an integrated civil-military airspace management system compatible with NATO requirements)
- Expert advice on total defence and mobilisation
- Military education and training assistance
- Mine clearance operation in the Lithuanian territorial waters and approaches

Switzerland

- Military education and training assistance
- Assistance in personnel management
- Equipment donations

The Netherlands

- Military education and training assistance
- Material donations
- Support to Baltic defence co-operation projects

United Kingdom

- Development of Commander's training concept in Lithuania
- Assistance in the development of defence planning and budgeting system
- English language and officer training

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 cost 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

WEAPONS PROCUREMENT

The equipment procurement policy is oriented toward NATO-compatible systems, which makes Lithuania turn to the Western market, as it becomes increasingly open to the Central European democracies. Lithuania has already procured weapons and other defence equipment such as tactical radios, transport vehicles, coastal surveillance equipment, anti-tank weapons from a number of Western countries. Governments of the 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.