



Valsts kanceleja

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Prime Minister: The Baltic States' commitment to implement the energy security projects and Rail Baltica is essential to development of the region and Europe as a whole

On Friday, April 10, in Vilnius (Lithuania), the Prime Ministers of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia met for an informal working session of the Baltic Council of Ministers. The key topics of the meeting were the preparations for the EU's Eastern Partnership summit in May, in Rīga, security, energy and transport, the issues of the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Prime Minister Laimdota Straujuma expressed gratitude to the Lithuanian Prime Minister for hospitality and congratulated the Estonian colleague Taavi Rõivas on the establishment of the new government.

Prime Minister Laimdota Straujuma informed the Prime Ministers of Lithuania and Estonia of the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the most important results in the first three months and activities that are still planned before the closure of the presidency. The Baltic Prime Ministers welcomed the progress of the Latvian Presidency. The Prime Minister of Estonia noted that "small countries have to be ambitious, with great responsibility when assuming the duties of the presidency of the Council of the European Union".

L.Straujuma informed of the upcoming major events of the presidency to be held in Rīga, including the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) of the ministers for education and transport, the Digital Assembly. Much attention was devoted to the European Union's Eastern Partnership summit to be held on May 21- 22, this year in Rīga that will focus on ever closer cooperation with Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus and concrete measures to enhance cooperation.

The Eastern Partnership summit will discuss a specific plan for cooperation with each of the Eastern Partnership countries, including the promotion of human contact, facilitation of visa regime, economic cooperation, and other areas. The summit will be a firm signal of Europe that this close co-operation with the countries will be strengthened, and that it is important to Europe's future," said L.Straujuma.

Speaking of Ukraine, all the parties were of the same opinion that Europe's unity has to be maintained steadfast – the clauses of the Minsk agreement have to be fulfilled; otherwise it is not possible to speak of any lifting of sanctions against Russia.

L.Straujuma emphasized that the Baltic States need to develop even closer cooperation in the

field of defence and strengthening of external border, incl. through joint procurements, etc. The Prime Minister also noted the single position of the Baltic States regarding the fight against Russian propaganda.

According to L.Straujuma, the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union attaches great importance to the issues relating to the establishment of the Energy Union, and it is important for Latvia to contribute to energy security in the Baltic region.

At the press conference, the Prime Minister drew attention to the importance of the commitment of all Baltic States to implement the Rail Baltica project: "It will be our physical path that will connect us to Central Europe, and it is as essential as to continue the work on further implementation of various energy security projects".

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