

**Opening speech of the Speaker of the Seimas, Loreta Graužinienė, at the  
Baltic Assembly  
20 November 2015**

Dear Speakers, President of the Baltic Assembly, Vice-Presidents, Ministers,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you all at the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania. This is the 34th Baltic Assembly. Over the years, the successful development of the Baltic Assembly activities has demonstrated that our three countries share privileged relations, common historical experience, benefits of jointly completed tasks, and the wish to build our future together.

I commend the achievements of the Baltic Assembly over the past quarter of a century. A number of ambitious projects have been implemented already; others will be completed in the near future. However, the rapidly changing world poses new challenges on a daily basis. Therefore, I invite you to review the Baltic Assembly priorities, objectives and targets. Today, security is the most important aspect for our people, our region, and Europe as a whole.

With the increasing number of terrorist attacks against civilian population, it becomes clear that our countries, Europe, and the rest of the world are confronted with a challenge to which we can only respond by joining forces. Therefore, we should strengthen our Baltic cooperation in the fields of security and defence.

In my view, as a response to the current geopolitical situation, the BA Legal Affairs and Security Committee should take a more active stance in tackling security matters. It would be reasonable and necessary to organise more meetings at both the BA and parliamentary levels and to communicate and cooperate at the level of national security committees. The joint position of the three Baltic States and objective tripartite assessment of the changed security environment will be very relevant for the next year's NATO Summit in Warsaw.

I also want to emphasise that we must continue focusing on the implementation of the Eastern Partnership programmes and providing multilateral assistance to the Eastern Partnership countries. New challenges should not overshadow our consistent policy on Ukraine. Personally I would like to reaffirm the resolute

support of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania for an independent, peaceful and prosperous Ukraine and its territorial integrity. I therefore encourage you to pay due attention to ensuring full implementation of the Minsk agreements.

I welcome the Baltic cooperation in regional projects in the field of transport and energy. Here we also have excelled.

We have wisely used the opportunity to strengthen the energy independence of the Baltic region by implementing on our own the project of the liquefied natural gas terminal in Klaipėda. Today, there are no doubts on the importance of this terminal and its impact on the energy security of the entire region. High premium is also placed on furthering our other joint projects. We need to ensure their prompt implementation and the necessary legislative amendments in strict compliance with the deadlines.

It is our duty—duty of Parliaments—to draft relevant laws in a timely and qualitative manner to enable our Governments to go on with the work.

I am convinced that in view of today's geopolitical changes, the Baltic States should urgently take common measures for the opening of the Baltic energy market while fully integrating into the internal energy market of the European Union.

Also see a lot of untapped potential for cooperation in other fields, including but not limited to common search for export markets and coordination of marketing in order to attract tourist flows.

Colleagues,

While opening the 34th Baltic Assembly, I have a very clear message to promote: I believe in the importance of the Baltic Assembly. I believe that we are firmly committed to working together in order to find joint solutions to the new challenges and problems in the region.

May the concord and cooperation of the three Baltic States continue to be based on consensus, respect and unity.

Thank you.