

**Report by Giedrė Purvaneckienė, President of the Baltic Assembly,
at the 34th Session of the Baltic Assembly**

20 November 2015, Vilnius

**Report of the Presidium about the work of the Baltic Assembly
Under Lithuania's presidency**

Members of the Baltic Assembly!

Dear guests!

Colleagues!

It is a late afternoon and we have had heated debates today. I will share with you review on the implementation of the Lithuanian presidency programme in the Baltic Assembly.

Allow me to underline, that members of the Lithuanian delegation believe that the Baltic Assembly is one of the most successful Baltic cooperation platforms. With this faith and high political commitment towards Baltic parliamentary cooperation, we all together implemented priorities, goals and tasks of the Lithuanian presidency. I would like to express gratitude to our Latvian and Estonian colleagues both from the parliamentary and governmental branch for selfless and diligent work under the Lithuanian presidency.

When I addressed you last year, I said that the Lithuanian presidency will do utmost to implement three main ideas in life. The first idea is that we will do everything we can to focus the Baltic interparliamentary cooperation on areas that can increase growth of our region and welfare of our nations. Doing nothing in this regard is not an option for us. The second idea of our presidency was the following – we will learn from our mistakes. The third idea is that we have to act together as a group of neighbours and a group of states concerned about the future of the international community and the world we live in.

So what have we achieved?

I truly hold a view that we managed to implement all these three main ideas into the work of the Baltic Assembly.

Agenda of the cooperation was filled up with issues which aim to increase integrity, security and sustainability of the Region. Members of the Committees jointly with governmental representatives, experts, business representatives and international partners we elaborated recommendations in regard to joint measures to promote growth and increase of employment, joint procurements in military sector, in regard to the development strategically important transport and infrastructure projects, regarding economic cooperation as well as joint health care projects. One of the tasks for the Baltic Assembly next year will be to ensure intense parliamentary oversight of implementation of these recommendations.

I believe that we managed not to repeat the mistakes of past. Our leitmotif was to overcome our disposition to compete with each other. In the past, we have missed many golden opportunities while fiercely competing among ourselves for investments, better ratings on international markets or being the first to join European and transatlantic organisations. By assessing the work of the Baltic Assembly

for the last almost 12 months, I can unequivocally affirm that Baltic parliamentarians were working without “hidden knife of competition” in their minds or behind their back. We had an open cooperation process, we were sitting around the table, openly discussing issues and considering the best solutions to the challenges we all face. We acted together as a group of neighbours, shoulder to shoulder, by supporting each other in our endeavours.

Honourable members,

I am of the opinion that we are too critical in regard to the parliamentary cooperation of the Baltic States. We are waiting for high-speed results which would happen over the night. We are expecting that, for example, our joint education or research projects will be implemented next year after signing of any Letter or Intent or Memorandum of Understanding. We should keep in mind that coordination process might be lengthy within one single institution, not in the least among several institutions of three countries. From the perspective and tasks of the Baltic Assembly, we need to be more demanding, persistent and vigorous. But we cannot state we have no results of cooperation.

As I said this morning during the Baltic Council, this year we closely monitored the follow-up activities of the Baltic Council of Ministers on the recommendations of the Baltic Assembly for last 3 years. National delegations have received the report on the implementation status of the recommendations. Our governments have been implemented recommendations of the Baltic Assembly for 85% - 90%. Of course, we should aim for the goal of 100%. We still need to make a pressure on our governments to cooperate more closely in regard to the joint procurements in health-care, specialisation of medical centres, promotion of exports and joint marketing activities of different sectors, joint study programmes for vocational and higher education and so one.

Development of Baltic cooperation is in our hands. Decisions are ours to make. We must act, even if sometimes we fail to be perfect. Success of the Baltic cooperation depends on each of us gathered here for the 34th Session of the Baltic Assembly.

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to review also our efforts in developing regional cooperation networks. Our relations with the Nordic Council and Benelux Parliament are close, friendly and open. We are also building our cooperation channels with the Visegrad countries and South East European countries. Better coordination of policies, effective actions in different fields of mutual interest is needed to meet global challenges and promote growth and stability in the Region.

We had fruitful parliamentary meetings about security issues and EU Eastern Partnership with our international partners this year. Our messages to the EU Eastern Partnership Summit in Riga were received and heard by the Heads of the Summit. Recently, we shared our messages with members of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly.

Jointly with the Nordic Council we continue to strengthen the Baltic – Nordic parliamentary influence at the European Union. Voice of the Baltic Assembly and the Nordic Council on the EU issues has to be louder. We pool our resources, to appear as a grouping on the EU level. By pooling our resources we can form a group of European frontrunners in research, smart technologies and growth.

Jointly with the Benelux Parliament we will continue our fight against the social fraud. Jointly with our international partners we continue to work on the integration of refugees, cooperation in research

and education, energy security, labour market and other issues of mutual interest. Jointly we will continue to support our partners of the GUAM countries.

Dear Friends!

I would like to extend my best wishes to the incoming Latvian Presidency.

Trough mutual understanding, goodwill, sincerity, trust, great wisdom and broad views we should continue to work for peace, stability, cooperation and mutual benefit.

Thank you.