



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA
PRIME MINISTER



Prime Minister of the Republic of Latvia



Prime Minister
Republic of Poland

Charles Michel
President of the European Council

Ursula von der Leyen
President of the European Commission

Dear Mister President,

Dear Madam President,

As the full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine enters its third year, **Russia's determination to continue the invasion of its neighbour and to ramp up confrontation with the West is only growing.** At the same time, the EU, its Member States and partners are being targeted with an unprecedented range of hybrid attacks perpetrated by Russia and its proxies. Intimidation, instrumentalization of migrants, sabotage, disinformation, foreign information manipulation and interference, as well as cyber-attacks, know no boundaries and affect all of us across the EU. In particular, instrumentalized migration impacts the security of the whole EU territory. Russia's threatening reform plans for force and capability improvement against us have been announced and launched where it continues to reconstitute and reinforce its armed forces while waging a full-scale war against Ukraine. Russia has not changed its strategic objectives that include re-establishing buffer zones and spheres of influence of the past which pose an existential threat to Europe and the trans-Atlantic community.

Because Europe sees today Russia's and Belarus' growing appetite to confront us in a hybrid way, we should think of their intentions for tomorrow. We, the leaders of the EU Member States bordering with Russia and Belarus, have little doubt that if not held back, those intentions will become increasingly hostile. We are living in the shadow of war and our countries can feel what it means to be the EU's frontline states. We see the negative economic impact on our border regions and local communities. But it has not affected our unwavering support to Ukraine. Even more, **we have done a lot to deter and defend against the looming threat – both nationally and within the EU.** We are fierce supporters of Ukraine's military efforts and invest massively in our armed forces, defence production and protection of our borders with Russia and Belarus.

Still, much more needs to be done and in a more concerted way. It is time to join ranks and let Europe step up our united and determined response, just as it did in February 2022. In parallel to our support to Ukraine, we must engage in taking greater responsibility for our own security and defence. We need to spend more and coordinate on defence initiatives within the EU and with NATO, which remains the foundation of collective defence, **combining our capabilities to protect, deter and defend our people and our territory.**

Building a **defence infrastructure system along the EU external border with Russia and Belarus** will address the dire and urgent need to secure the EU from military and hybrid threats. We need a **defence initiative to protect Europeans today and in the years to come**.

The scale and costs of this joint endeavour require a **dedicated EU action to support it both politically and financially**. Extraordinary measures need to be employed as the EU's external border must be protected and defended with military and civilian means. The EU should engage its tools and policies to enhance the support for building resilience and defence readiness across the Union. This initiative, based on the Shield East and the Baltic Defence Line - projects of defensive installations and infrastructure on the borders with Russia and Belarus set in motion by Poland as well as Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania - may also build on EU expertise and innovation in integrated border management, protection of critical infrastructure, civil protection, crisis management and military mobility. Its planning and execution should be done in coordination with NATO and its military requirements.

The upcoming June European Council will discuss security and defence and options for mobilising its financing. The defence of the EU's territory and people starts with the defence of its external borders. We will be happy to discuss it at our meeting.



Gitanas Nausėda



Kaja Kallas



Evika Siliņa



Donald Tusk