

Government allocates funds to strengthen Latvia's external border

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On 29 August, the Cabinet of Ministers adopted a decision to allocate EUR 9748304 to the Ministry of the Interior for further construction of the state external land border infrastructure, and to enhance the pace of construction of the state external land border infrastructure on the Latvia-Belarus border.

In order to continue the construction of the external land border infrastructure to protect country's external land border on the Latvia-Belarus border in the Daugava section, it is necessary to ensure the construction of a patrol path of approximately 16.7 km.

In the light of growing geopolitical risks, including the rising number of irregular migrants, it is crucial to increase the pace of construction of the fence and infrastructure.

As of 11 August 2021, 14305 persons have not been allowed to cross the state border outside the designated border crossing points for legal entry; in 2021 - 4045 persons, in 2022 - 5286 persons while 6379 persons from 1 January to 24 August 2023.

According to the risk analysis and forecast by the State Border Guard and national security authorities, there is and would still be a significant risk that the flow of third-country nationals (both number of persons and groups of persons) on the Latvia-Belarus state border will further increase rather than decrease.

Since the beginning of the year, there have been cases where third-country nationals, with the support of unknown persons, cause damage to the infrastructure of the Republic of Latvia (temporary and permanent fence) while moving from the territory of the Republic of Belarus; a total of 49 such cases have been recorded in 2023.

Information on cases of illegal state border crossings from the territory of the Republic of Belarus is still being received from the competent authorities of the Republic of Lithuania and the Republic of Poland. It is essential to ensure trans-national joint action concerning such illegal state border crossings to safeguard a uniform level of security of the borders of the countries in the region with the Republic of Belarus.

According to assessment by the parties concerned of how to enhance the construction pace, a solution has been found to date, which would allow to significantly increase the pace of construction of the state border infrastructure by completing the construction of the fence by July 2024, by attracting additional resources. The constructor, in cooperation with the State Real Estate, continues to seek solutions to accelerate and complete the construction of the fence even within a shorter period, by attracting additional subcontractors.

The decision of the Cabinet of Ministers provides that the building design solutions in all parts of Stage 2 are due to be completed before 15 September this year, by submitting them to the Provision State Agency for evaluation. The tasks are also foreseen in relation to the involvement of local businesses to increase the pace of construction in cooperation with Latgale municipalities and involvement of the Ministry of Economics. In order to minimise the risks for sub-contractors not to receive timely payment for their work, the State Real Estate is obliged to pay them directly in cases where problems arise with the general contractor.

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