

M. Kučinskis: EU countries should be united both in respect of the United Kingdom and USA

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The European Union (EU) states should be consistent both in negotiations on the UK's withdrawal from the EU or Brexit and in relations with the United States, said Prime Minister Māris Kučinskis, attending the informal summit of the European Council on Friday 3 February.

One of the issues discussed by the EU Heads of State and Government at the summit was the future of the EU after the UK's withdrawal from it, as well as future relations with the United States.

"It is undeniable that we are very closely monitoring the processes taking place in the United States following the election of Donald Trump as the President of this country. It is clear that we must seek the points in common, the areas where the cooperation is in the interest of both the EU and the United States," said M. Kučinskis.

Latvia is interested in cooperation with the US in the field security within NATO framework. At the same time, it is clear that European countries must honour their obligations towards NATO. Latvia is committed to allocate 2% of GDP for defence from 2018.

The Prime Minister expressed his satisfaction over the fact that the UK's decision on the country's withdrawal from the EU has united rather than split the rest of the EU countries, and currently there is no question about the fact that a country or a group of countries could individually negotiate further cooperation with the United Kingdom. At the same time, Latvia continues to insist on its citizens' rights, who currently live and work in the UK

Latvia supports the opinion that the EU has to regain competitiveness by increasing the welfare of the people - it would reduce the wave of populism that can be observed in the EU and rhetoric of winners and losers of globalization.

It is anticipated that discussions on the EU's future will continue in the Rome summit to be held on 25 March.

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