

Welcome address by H.E. Dalia Grybauskaitė, President of the Republic of Lithuania, at the Inter-Parliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy

Distinguished Guests,

Two months ago, Lithuania took over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

I am delighted that the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania is actively engaged in implementing the Presidency agenda.

This conference is dedicated to Europe's foreign policy, security and defence.

I believe that it is held at the right time because foreign policy, security and defence issues are often unduly overlooked.

But security and well-being are indivisible. More security and stability in our neighborhood means more security and prosperity in Europe.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The European Union is a unique project. No other international organization possesses such a comprehensive set of political, economic and social instruments to promote democracy and ensure political stability.

Many describe the European Union as a „soft power“, but its "soft power" drive is often underestimated.

And that is why I firmly believe that the signing of the Association Agreement between the European Union and Ukraine as well as the initialing of agreements with Moldova and Georgia at the Vilnius Summit this coming November would not only advance closer trade and economic relations, but would contribute to building a European continent that is secure, stable and prosperous.

It would also reaffirm the credibility of Europe, its ability to make key decisions.

This is what Europe and its eastern partners need today.

Distinguished Guests,

Eastern Partnership and stability in the neighborhood is just one of the many themes of this conference on security and defence.

I would like to underline that in the 21st century we can no longer discuss only conventional threats. The conflicts that are taking place in the world today have many sides to them - with information, environmental, energy, humanitarian, and religious aspects among many others.

If we want peace, stability and prosperity, we cannot ignore any of these aspects. We must stand ready to deal with crises caused by the use of chemical weapons, water shortage and cyber attacks.

The European Union, which is complex and diverse, should be better prepared than any other actor to confront new challenges.

This is very important for us in the European Union. This is very important as we talk to our Eastern and Southern neighbors. This is very important for the entire world.

Therefore, we must find common agreement to address the highly complicated causes of modern conflicts.

We need it within the European Union. We need it within NATO framework. We need it as we search for common solutions together with the global security community.

Dear Participants of the Conference,

In 2012 the European Union was awarded the Nobel Prize for having contributed for over six decades to the advancement of peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights.

It is important that we continue on this path.

And this conference provides a perfect and timely platform to discuss the pressing challenges that Europe faces today and ways of dealing with them.

Thank you for your attention. I wish you a fruitful discussion.

Dalia Grybauskaitė, President of the Republic of Lithuania