

Presidents of Latvia and Hungary underline the importance of the Three Seas Initiative for the regional development of Europe

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Foreign policy

Egils Levits



On 8 December, President of Latvia Egils Levits met with President of Hungary János Áder in Budapest. President Levits congratulated his Hungarian counterpart on centenary of bilateral diplomatic relations. He noted that bilateral agreements in the area of research, education and innovation signed during his official visit are important for promoting cancer treatment in both countries.

As regards to Latvia-Hungary cooperation within NATO, Egils Levits thanked Hungary for contributing to Baltic air-policing mission, including Hungary's commitment to extend its participation to 2022-2025. He also praised Hungary's support for NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence and urged Hungary to join the Centre officially.

Heads of both states discussed the rule of law in Europe. Egils Levits underlined the need of a common understanding of the general principles of the rule of law in Europe and European Court of Justice (ECJ) is in the best position to consolidate those principles. Both presidents agreed that the diversity of constitutional and cultural traditions and the plurality of certain values are very important aspects of the identity of Europe which makes Europe so attractive for the people.

Three Seas Initiative (3SI) was another key topic discussed by both leaders. 3SI is a cooperation platform bringing together 12 EU member states located on shores of the Baltic, Black and Adriatic Sea. Latvia will host the 3SI Summit and Business forum in June of 2022 and presidents of both countries, therefore, discussed closer cooperation between 3SI member states and strategic partners. President of Hungary stressed that 3SI is important for boosting regional cooperation. Hungary completed a construction of 230 kilometre-long section of motorway *Via Carpatia* this October and a number of other regional projects this year.

On the European Union common foreign and security policy, President Levits stressed that EU should give firm response to Alexander Lukashenko regime's hybrid attacks on EU-Belarus border by introducing additional sanctions to prevent further

attacks. It is also important for EU to update its migration framework, which has become outdated, and provide mechanisms for punishing the use of migrants in hybrid attacks against other countries.

Egils Levits also raised his concerns about Russia's military build-up near Ukrainian borders and underlined the need to consider additional sanctions against Russia in case of further escalation.

President of Latvia spoke about the significance of EU's Eastern Partnership and underlined that Eastern Partnership Summit, which will take place on 15 December, must give a clear signal to political partners that this strategic partnership is important. He also expects Summit to give partner countries a meaningful future perspective.

Meeting also focused on EU's climate objectives and national programmes of Latvia and Hungary for tackling climate change and achieving greening of their economies.

<https://www.president.lv/en/article/presidents-latvia-and-hungary-underline-importance-three-seas-initiative-regional-development-europe>