

Remarks by President Donald Tusk after his meeting with President of Lithuania Dalia Grybauskaitė

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We just had, with President Grybauskaitė, a very good meeting, in preparation of next week's informal European Council.

We discussed in particular the future budget of the EU, a topic which of course your President knows very well.

The future budget of the EU will be a particular challenge to negotiate this time, in the context of Brexit. Not only because the UK's departure will lead to a financing gap. But also because the UK referendum has made us realise even more, the need to strengthen our efforts on key challenges. By which I mean migration, defence, and the freedom of movement, especially the mobility of young people. And these new priorities will require additional money.

Of course the main reason for my trip to Vilnius is tomorrow's celebrations of the hundred years of the restoration of Lithuanian independence. Being here today is, for me – as the President of the European Council, but also as a Pole, as a historian and, first and foremost, as your friend – particularly important. It is no coincidence that when I became Prime Minister of Poland, I decided to pay my first foreign visit to Vilnius.

Today, Lithuania stands tall, as dignified and determined as the white Vytis on your country's great coat of arms. It is a symbol of stable growth and political predictability. But in the decades following the Declaration of the 16th of February 1918, your history was turbulent. And for a long time you have had to rely, almost entirely, on yourselves. This is why no-one can lecture Lithuanians about the difference between declaring independence and winning and keeping it.

Independence in today's world means having your own voice at the table, where countries face common challenges and threats together. So today, the best guarantee of Lithuania's independence is its participation in international organisations: the United Nations, NATO, and of course the European Union. In fact, only by being united can European nations be sovereign and free of dependency on the great superpowers. Lithuania understands this all too well, and that is why it has always played an active, and constructive, role. Your

national motto could also be the motto of the whole European community: "Let unity flourish", *Vienybė težydi*.

Thank you. *Ačiū*

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[News story: Firing of 50,000th simulated round from turret trainer signals savings of £125M](#)

The trainer, based at Tidworth Garrison in Wiltshire, was first introduced in 2005 to train the commander, gunner and loader of an AS90 – a self-propelled 155mm Howitzer gun.

It is designed to allow gun crews to practice their routine firing drills, turret operating procedures and crew duties without the expense of live firing and offers the immersion and realism of firing, with a reduced safety risk and a highly reduced cost.



Based on a real AS90 turret, the trainer uses an electro-mechanical system to fully replicate a complete firing cycle. This includes the weight and size of the artillery rounds and the noise and turret movement on firing.

Since the trainer was introduced more than 8,500 soldiers have used the equipment. This experience enhances their safety for when they progress to live firing and allows them to focus on more advanced training scenarios.

Defence Minister Guto Bebb said:

This equipment provides high quality training for the British Army that's also cost efficient. As live firing events are extremely expensive and can be logistically challenging, using the AS90 turret trainer is a great alternative. It also offers immersive training that prepares users for live firing both in practice and on the battlefield.

The 50,000th simulated round was fired by Lieutenant General Paul Jaques, Chief of Materiel (Land) at Defence Equipment & Support (DE&S), the MOD's procurement agency based at MOD Abbey Wood in Bristol.

Lt Gen Paul Jaques said:

This firing marks another milestone demonstrating Defence's innovative and cost-saving approach to deliver effective and worthwhile training for our personnel. I'm exceedingly proud of the team's work and the benefits gained by the soldiers that get to use the training equipment.

The milestone, on February 14, represented savings of approximately £125 million over a 12-year period on the basis that live rounds cost £2,500 per use.

[Call for applications Migration Media Award 2018](#)



The 2018 edition of the Migration Media Award is now accepting applications until 15 May 2018.

The Migration Media Award (www.migration-media-award.eu) funded by the European Union, hosted over 35 winning stories in the 2017 edition showcasing

journalistic excellence on migration in the Euro-Mediterranean region. In line with the quality and number of applications received last year, this year's edition will reward up to 48 published stories resulting from time-intensive, un-sensationalistic, in-depth reporting and contributing to balance the narrative on migration, making it, evidence based, nuanced and less polarising. The awards will consist in funding from 750 to 7000 euros towards the production of a second story.

Journalists or media houses based in either EU countries or EU South Partner Countries are eligible to apply by submitting an already published journalistic work along with a proposal for a second production. Both productions, actual and intended, need to address one or more of the following themes in the Euro Mediterranean region:

- **Diaspora**
- **Labour migration**
- **Vulnerable groups**
- **Legal and irregular migration**

Candidates who wish to apply must respect the following criteria: The submitted story must have been published between 15 April 2017 and 15 May 2018. The content of the entry must be related to one of the four themes mentioned above on migration limited to the Euro-Mediterranean region.

1. The entry must be submitted in one of the 3 languages of the Award scheme: English, French or Arabic. Stories in other languages from the Euro Mediterranean region must be accompanied by a translation into either English, French or Arabic.
2. Multiple entries are accepted in separate and complete applications in the following formats: video, radio, print, online, multimedia and photo.
3. Mid to long length formats are requested and therefore short news items will not be eligible.

Please note that candidates may not submit a story already supported by the MMA 2017.

The MMA panel of judges will be announced in May 2018 and will evaluate the eligible entries in Summer 2018. The 48 winners will be announced at the award ceremony planned in early September 2018.

The online application form and FAQs are available at www.migration-media-award.eu . Interested applicants should check the Eligibility & Application section prior to applying. In case of any questions, kindly contact us on: contact@migration-media-award.eu

This award is a collaboration of the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) funded programs Euromed Migration IV implemented by the International Center for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) and the Open Media Hub led by the Thomson Foundation, in partnership with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion of Malta and the European Asylum Support Office (EASO).



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[VIS: Operational Training – Intermediate Level \(L2\)](#)

The eu-LISA Development Training Programme for VIS IT Operators was successfully launched in 2017 with a training course for Entry Level (L1) participants. The follow-up course entitled ‘VIS: Operational Training – Intermediate Level (L2)’ took place on the 26th January 2018.

The objective of the training was to provide reminders and updates of the VIS system’s operational activities as well as its communication means and IT Service Management tools. The following topics were covered during the training session: 

In addition, the course included a hands-on exercise with the Service Manager 9 software (custom developed by eu-LISA) on Incident Management and Standard Requests.

Nine participants from eight different Member States took part in the training, including VIS Newcomer countries Bulgaria and Romania, held in eu-LISA’s offices in Strasbourg, France. The course satisfaction rate was 85% with an average score given by participants of 4.24 on a scale from 1 to 5 (1-lowest, 5-highest). At the end of the training session, following a test on the course material, three participants were awarded the eu-LISA certificate “VIS Professional”. One of the recipients said ‘I really liked

that the course was technical. On top of that, we had open discussions with the trainers and many matters were clarified in addition to those in the course curriculum.'

The Development Training Programme for VIS IT Operators will continue with an Advanced Level (L3) course which will take place on 21-22 March 2018.