

There are much more positive sides to membership of NATO, than there are negative ones. In the following paragraph this brief will explore most popular arguments and misconceptions against NATO. The facts and experiences of the Baltic States are against them. Then this brief will explore the benefits that NATO has brought to Lithuania.

Most popular arguments against NATO are:

- i. **Joining NATO will result in tensions with Russia.** In Lithuania tensions with Russia increased after it attacked Georgia in 2008 and started war on Ukraine in 2014 and illegally annexed Crimea. Reaction of Russian politicians to the Baltic States joining NATO (and the EU) in 2004 were incomparable. Of course there were unfavourable comments in Russian Duma, but nothing that would amount to the tensions, scope of disinformation, meddling and threats after the wars of 2008 and especially of 2014.
- ii. **Joining NATO will provoke Russia.** Real life examples of Georgia and Ukraine show that the mere existence of these states and their sovereign decisions have provoked Russia for war. Their experience shows that **NOT being in NATO has provoked Russia**.
- iii. **NATO is expensive, not only financially, but also because of risk of being drawn into unwanted conflict.** NATO does not draw into conflicts. It is a defensive alliance. Decisions of the alliance are consensus based. "Consensus decision-making is a fundamental principle which has been accepted as the sole basis for decision-making in NATO since the creation of the Alliance in 1949."¹ Peace and security is worth paying a price for² and NATO is a main guarantor of peace and security in Europe. It helps to keep our hostile neighbour at bay. This increases the prosperity of NATO members.

The benefits that NATO membership brings are many, but this brief details three of them:

- I. For Lithuania **NATO gives unmatched security guarantees.** It signifies a transatlantic relationship with our allies, among which are the strongest militaries in the world. We are under their extended deterrence and defence umbrella. Our defence guarantees from NATO and the US extend beyond moral support and the supply of arms is the case of war. Our promise is the actual guarding of our territory. We have a promise of the US and of NATO to defend our territory that no centimetre of it would be lost. Our adversary knows that an attack against us will result in retaliation by the many. For most countries in Europe, there is no deterrence without extended deterrence, without the commitment of other countries to defend you, and your commitment to defend them. And this is what NATO gives us.
- II. **Lithuania can lead independent social, political and economic life,** thanks to the security that NATO provides. Being in defensive military alliance, despite

¹ Consensus decision-making at NATO https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_49178.htm

² Funding NATO https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_67655.htm

geopolitical situation of Lithuania (being sandwiched between Russia and its proxy Belarus) we can lead our own independent political and economic life. Without turning back, peeking through the shoulder if our big neighbor is content, if they approve. This applies to our politics, to the leaders we choose, to the values we honor, heroes we commemorate. Of course, our big neighbor through their disinformation campaigns let us know that they don't like it. These disinformation campaigns started not when we joined NATO in 2004, but much later, once Russia started the war on Ukraine, and shifted their strategic direction. In their disinformation campaigns they let us know, that they think our state is failed, our leaders don't matter, our democratic values are morally corrupt, and our heroes are villains. But being in NATO and the EU, we have the privilege, and partnerships to build up our resilience on all domains, including military. We also can collectively impose costs and together with our allies guard rules based order. Thanks to the membership in NATO, Lithuania can carry on despite the Russia's hostile threats.

- III. Being part of military alliance has improved the economy of the country and investment climate.** Investors do consider Lithuania a safe place to invest, and investors trust the security that NATO has to offer. Our economy continues to grow thanks to the work of the citizens, but also thanks to the security that the alliance has provided.

The Baltics have joined at an impeccable time. For Finland stars have aligned well too. Public opinion is positive, geopolitical situation calls for more security and the alliance is open and ready to speed up the joining process. Thank you for your time. I wish Finland to make a good decision.