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Speaker of the Seimas meets Roberta Metsola, President of the European Parliament

13 January 2024, Press Release



Photo by Olga Posaškova, Office of the Seimas

Viktorija Čmilytė-Nielsen, Speaker of the Seimas, at her *tête-à-tête* meeting with Roberta Metsola, President of the European Parliament, said that 13 January 2024 represented a meaningful link between Lithuania's aspiration towards freedom, the 20th anniversary of the country's European Union membership, and the ongoing Ukraine's fight for its European future.

'The decisions made by the European Council in December 2023 to open accession negotiations with Ukraine and Moldova were paramount. Our next task is to swiftly translate political statements into tangible actions,' Ms Čmilytė-Nielsen said.

The Speaker of the Seimas is convinced that Russia's aggression cannot and must not be used as an excuse to delay the negotiations. 'I am certain that attempts will be made to derail the process. Russia's interference will

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not be limited to military actions. We must stick to Zelenskyy's peace plan, continue implementing sanctions, and initiate discussions on the 13th package of EU sanctions. It is high time we found a way to use frozen Russian assets for the reconstruction of Ukraine,' Ms Čmilytė-Nielsen said.

In her words, Europe must have the foresight to prepare for a long-term strategic confrontation with Russia. Therefore, it is important not only to boost investment in the defence industry and improve European defence capabilities, but also to cooperate with other democratic states, especially the US.

'In the pursuit of strategic autonomy through building Europe's resilience and reducing dependency, we have to initiate discussions about strengthening our partnership with the US and other partners. Concurrently, closer ties between EU Member States will strengthen our unity and the Union as a whole,' Ms Čmilytė-Nielsen said.


Ms Metsola paid a visit to Lithuania at the invitation of the Speaker of the Seimas and accepted the Freedom Prize 2023 awarded to the European Parliament. The Seimas has chosen to confer the Freedom Prize on the European Parliament for its current efforts to consolidate democracy and human rights, for the defence of the right of nations to free self-determination and sovereignty, for the unrelenting efforts towards historical justice, for the support to the cause of Lithuania's freedom and the aspiration of the Soviet-occupied Baltic States towards independence, for the diplomatic assistance to Lithuania that had just restored its independence, and for the contribution to European Union integration.

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