



**CONSULTATION MEETING OF MINISTERS OF THE INTERIOR OF THE
BALTIC STATES, FINLAND, NORWAY, POLAND AND UKRAINE
23-24 May 2024, Latvia**

Joint Statement

Taking into account the current geopolitical situation, we, the Ministers of Interior of Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland and Ukraine convened a meeting in Riga on 23 – 24 May 2024, to jointly assess the various developments and existing challenges, negatively affecting and posing risks to the security of our countries.

We acknowledge that threat landscape posed to our countries by the aggressive government regimes of Russia and Belarus continues to be persistent as we are finding ourselves in the third year of Russia’s unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine.

At the same time, we continue to witness continuous efforts of both regimes to destabilize internal security and public order in our countries through various means, including the creation of an artificial migration route, instrumentalisation of migration, cyber-attacks, disinformation and other hybrid threats.

Monitoring the situation at our external borders and on the international arena is key to remaining aware and ready to address any possible threats in a timely manner.

In this context we stress the importance of continuing close coordination between our countries on matters related to internal security and developments at our common external borders.

Although instrumentalisation of migrants is recognized in the EU legal framework, we should further explore ways to enable the Member States to effectively prevent and combat this threat at the EU’s external borders. We therefore call for an EU wide common solution so that Member States can, in order to safeguard national security,

respond effectively to the instrumentalisation of migrants. Threats at the external border affects the whole Union and should therefore be addressed jointly accompanied with adequate financial resources.

We therefore call for further strengthened tools and measures to be able to act swiftly to counter instrumentalisation in order to contribute to our national security.

We affirm our commitment to continue cooperation through bilateral or multilateral means, in particular in situations where a country, that is party to this Statement, is facing instrumentalisation of migrants or other hybrid threats. All parties should work towards facilitating operational cooperation through practical arrangements and joint training and make every effort to provide operational and technical support to the extent their national situation and capabilities allow for. We acknowledge the need to examine the possibility of implementing bilateral or multilateral projects – utilizing external funding where possible – related to internal security and our external borders.

Acknowledging the threat of constantly evolving *modus operandi* of criminals and other malicious actors, we recognize the need to strengthen the capacities of our law enforcement, elaborating common approach on equipping them with adequate legal, operational and technological tools and resources at national and EU level.

While strongly reaffirming our support to Ukraine in its fight against Russia's unjustifiable aggression, we acknowledge the need of dedicating significant efforts to improve our civil protection and resilience capabilities, including civil defense shelters and mass evacuation, while developing and testing regional cooperation mechanisms and sharing our best practices regarding these matters.