

Dear President Valdas Adamkus!
Dear colleagues!
Dear people of Lithuania!
Dear friends! BRANGUS BIČIULIAI!

The Lithuanian poet Marcelijus Martinaitis, laureate of the Baltic Assembly prize in literature, says, in a poem where a tree begs that after felling, it not to be used to make a fence or chopped up for firewood:

“Make a footbridge of me,/ or a door, or a threshold,/ where one says hello.“

For centuries, Lithuania and Estonia have stood on the same threshold. Our sorrows have been similar, but more importantly – so too have been our victories. After all, together, we have torn down the iron curtain erected to keep us physically, morally and cultural cut off from our European home.

Lithuania and Estonia have had common enemies and common oppressors, but more importantly – today in the European Union and NATO, we have common friends.

We both have multiple times been forced to prove our right to exist. Prove to ourselves and to rest of the world. And we have done so, we have done so magnificently.

Our forefathers have been brave, as have we too. We have every reason to be proud, to be proud of ourselves, to be proud of our countries. We have no reason for envy.

Lithuania and Estonia, the Baltic countries in general, are strong allies, we have helped and supported one another in good times and bad. A century ago, your linguist Jonas Jablonskis, the author of The Lithuanian Grammar, persecuted at home by foreign authorities, found refuge and work in Estonia, amidst Estonians.

Today, we no longer need to think of providing refuge, today we are reviving the Baltic Battalion, which will be make up our joint contribution to the NATO strike force; already now we are planning for joint protection of Baltic air space after 2018. And of course, never far from our minds are the dangerous foreign missions where Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian soldiers serve bravely together in common cause.

Our causes are common, but so too our concerns. Currently, the Baltic countries form an energy island, cut off from our European neighbours. For this reason, Estonia welcomes the decision taken by the Lithuanian parliament and President Adamkus to proceed with the new nuclear power plant project, as well as with power bridges to Poland and Sweden. If these projects were not to be carried out, the Baltic countries would no longer be free in our economic decisions. Here, Estonia wants to be a trusted partner of Lithuania.

Trust, solidarity, and co-operation in attaining our common goals are the keys to ensuring our countries' development.

Recalling Marcelijus Martinaitis once more, we can say that Lithuania and Estonia again stand on a threshold. We look to the future, confident in our choices, confident in ourselves, confident in our friends and neighbors.

I wish you all a magnificent anniversary!

GRAŽIŲ ŠVENČIŲ JUMS VISIEMS!