

**Completing Europe: Integration with Neighbours and Engagement with Russia - Speech by  
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Distinguished Professors,  
Dear Students,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is both a great privilege and a great challenge to be visiting your school known for its academic excellence and to discuss with you the future of Europe. I have to confess: I googled London before coming here. And I found out that London is famous for two things: the London Stock Exchange, as London is naturally one of the world's leading financial, commercial and trading centres; and the London School of Economics, which only signifies the importance of London as one of the world's leading hubs for ideas and discoveries.

Thus, to be present here is a truly exciting experience. For a small nation like Lithuania, participation in the global exchange of ideas is perhaps the only means to effectively embrace the challenges of globalisation. So today I would like to share with you some ideas regarding Europe's relationship with its eastern neighbours. Not only because Europe's East is our natural geographic neighbourhood which plays a crucial role in our security matters, including energy security; but also because further integration of this area into the European body poses an immense intellectual challenge to our countries and people.

Discussing further enlargement is a tough issue nowadays. Confronted with domestic difficulties we gave up the enlargement debate rather easily. Or we replaced it with global transnational issues which Europe is not yet ready to solve. This situation is comfortable for many – especially those who look for an excuse to do nothing. As a man of politics I understand the dynamics behind this development, but as an honest European I refuse to accept it.

Let me give you a few examples. In a series of European Councils during the last few years we have been repeatedly discussing various issues, domestic and international, which have not been resolved and will not be resolved in the foreseeable future. It is not entirely upon the European Union to stop mass killings in Darfur or enforce the Kyoto Protocol in the world's most polluting regions. Still we need to keep faith and fight for the ideals that are dear to all of us.

But apart from the sophisticated global agenda, there are less complicated issues which may have a negative effect, day-to-day, on the interests of millions of people on our own continent. For example, the implications of the EU-Russia visa facilitation agreement which reinforce separatism in countries like Georgia and isolate the Kaliningrad Region of Russia from its neighbours. Or the slow implementation of the Nabucco project which leaves Europe increasingly dependent on one single supplier of gas in the future. Or the plans to build the gas pipeline Nord Stream under the Baltic Sea – a project which, according to international scientists, risks causing very serious environmental consequences for both the whole biosphere and the nations around the Sea.

These problems are produced by the EU's own decisions or inaction and could be resolved easily, should Europe have such a wish and a political will.

There are exceptions, of course. Kosovo is one such exception. The European Union is close to accepting an independent Kosovo because we envisage no other alternative for this part of Europe and we are ready to act. An independent Kosovo is partly an outcome of the EU policies adopted in the early 90s, and by reaching out to both Kosovo and Serbia we demonstrate our unchanged commitment to complete the Balkan transformation through self-determination and full integration with the European Union.

We could have more exceptions given that we increase our focus and determination to act. Take Europe's power to "mobilize and drive transformations". The European Union through its integration and enlargement mechanisms helped to transform the entire Central European region from Estonia in the North down to Slovenia in the South. Instead of using this momentum, Europe paused. I am concerned that this pause should not be prolonged for too long so as to start producing a chain of negative consequences on the Continent.

Why is the enlargement debate so important? First, it produces ambition and encourages further transformation of the European institutions, which is necessary for adapting to new global challenges. An open Europe is not just an ideal envisioned by its Founding Fathers 50 years ago, but also the only viable way for us to be strong and competitive in the 21st century.

Second, it encourages positive transformation of our immediate neighbourhood in the East. Europe can project and ultimately consolidate stability, democratic principles, the rule of law and economic growth in this region. But Europe can do it not by waiting for the right circumstances to emerge, but by creating such circumstances.

Third, it gives us an idea of the Europe of the Future because the 21st century Europe is not only about norms and values, but also about standards and legal harmonisation. I believe it is not only history and democratic values that make nations like Iceland, Norway or Switzerland a part of Europe. Just imagine Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova having the same regulations as Britain – would the question whether these countries are European still be raised?

From this perspective our Europe is not yet complete. There are countries in our neighbourhood which want approximation with Europe but are not capable of doing it alone. They need to be assisted in their strive to adopt European rules, economic dynamism and legal environment. They need a Neighbourhood Policy which is a true Integration Policy. We need the same policy too.

The problem of Russia – is not really a problem. We asked Russia once, in 2003, what kind of relationship they would like to have, and they said no to European Neighbourhood Policy. Nothing prevents us from posing that question again and drafting EU policies based on real, not imagined, answers of Russia. They want to be a global power? They are welcome. But then we have to ask: What kind of a global power Russia wants to be? The one which seeks to be a monopolistic energy exporter and a creator of problems and therefore has disputes with almost all its neighbours? I believe we should not agree to this option because it runs counter EU interests. But we support Russia's global role if its leadership fully recognizes the burdens and the implications of global responsibilities. Respect your neighbours' sovereignty and implement intergovernmental agreements; live up to the commitments and withdraw troops from Georgia and Moldova; implement the principles of the Energy Charter; honour the commitments made to the international community when joining the Council of Europe. If Russia does so, Europe and the whole international community will be stronger. Russia will also be stronger. But it is Russia's choice. Europe can only influence that choice. The question is: Does Europe believe that it has the potential, even a magnetic power, to make a difference? Unfortunately, Europe in its relationship

with Russia has lost confidence and too often reacts to Russia's positions. If Russia chooses to deal with each member state separately, Europe follows this line of action and that undermines our solidarity. If Russia chooses lower standards, Europe goes along.

That would be understandable provided that such a policy encourages positive changes in Russia. But does it? Russia was granted a G8 status hoping it would be a stimulus to consolidate reforms and democracy. Neither got better. But not everything is lost. Europe can still use its power and hopefully its resolve to tell Russia that membership in the World Trade Organization or in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development is not a goal in itself, but rather a chance to transform their country. Membership also means the acceptance of a commonly agreed set of rules that govern these institutions.

Ukraine successfully uses prospective membership in international organizations as a means to reform their country. We saw real progress in Ukraine's integration into the WTO. Ukraine continues to show progress in its relations with the European Union. But too often, we send mixed or wrong messages to such countries like Ukraine. Kiev held one democratic election after another while Russia is cruising on the slippery slope of democratic backsliding, taking action even against such apolitical activities as those of the British Council. Russian petrodollars are not invested in infrastructure, reforms or citizens' welfare. Despite these fundamental differences between Russia and Ukraine, the EU finds it much easier to start negotiations with Moscow on a new qualitative agreement than to welcome Kiev's European aspirations. Therefore, there is nothing strange about a Ukrainian student asking whether the European Union itself still believes in Euro-Atlantic values. Values are immensely important in the EU-Russia relationship, otherwise we run the risk of building a partnership that is primarily based on mere cubic meters of gas or oil. Although, such a partnership is important, it will not endure.

Neither values, nor democratic reforms will prevail without real stability and security that are not yet fully anchored in the region. Ukraine and Georgia are doing their best to be security "producers".

Ukraine de facto behaves as a NATO ally and is the only NATO partner which today contributes to all current NATO operations. Georgia has already achieved remarkable progress in reforming its military. Georgian people confirmed their wish to join NATO by an absolutely majority in a referendum held in January of this year. At this crucial juncture it is very important for NATO to reinforce what has been achieved in the region by offering Membership Action Plans to Ukraine and Georgia in the forthcoming summit in Bucharest.

When values are set to be a guiding force behind our policies, we can, with confidence, broaden and deepen our agendas with Russia and East European countries.

We already cooperate with Russia in various fields. For example, counter terrorism. There is no separate British, French, Lithuanian or Russian fight against terrorism, but only our common desire to protect the people from the perils of terrorism. We have a common desire to build prosperity. That is why the European Union and Russia will continue to promote trade, investment and cooperation in the fields of transport and energy. There is no other way but to enhance EU-Russia partnership, the potential of which is far greater than its present day outcome.

As long as the European Union's Russian policy represents a multitude of vectors and conflicting initiatives, the EU-Russia relationship will be marked by confusion and unfulfilled opportunities. That naturally leads to devaluated cooperation and potential conflicts. Therefore, we can move EU-

Russia cooperation forward only when the European Union adopts a consolidated and a coherent approach vis-à-vis Russia. When faced with a unified Europe, Russia will stop searching for a backdoor to Europe, but rather seek to adopt policies that are transparent and fair. Indeed, a genuine EU-Russian partnership requires mutual trust, equality, respect and transparency. If both sides adhere to these principles, we will be able to make a true breakthrough in EU-Russian relations.

EU relations with Ukraine, Georgia and increasingly with Moldova are already based on these principles. Therefore, it is time for the European Union to offer more for these countries. As a first step in this direction, the EU could reduce the price of the Schengen visa and eventually introduce facilitated visa regimes. The EU should also deepen economic integration with these countries and when they are ready, conclude free trade agreements. The EU should help integrate their transport and energy networks into the European system.

Furthermore, the EU and NATO policies to closer integrate with Ukraine and Georgia will work as a force multiplier for democratic changes in the region and beyond. Ukraine is a swing state that will determine the future course of Russia, Belarus and Moldova. Georgia will be the same for the South Caucasus countries. And if Eastern Europe swings to embrace democratic norms, it will create pressures for a positive change in the bordering regions of Central Asia and the Greater Middle East. Such changes will have a direct effect to long-term European security and the security for our people.

The upcoming years will be a turning point in the Europe's East. First, Russia will have a new president and will most likely seek to readjust its relations with the West. Next, progress and development in truly European countries like Ukraine or Moldova are reaching a level where, if we do not offer deeper integration with the EU, we are running the risk of alienating their societies from Europe. At this critical juncture, Europe does not know what kind of Russia it would like to have. Nor does it have a strategic answer for Eastern Europe at a time when such an answer is indeed the most needed. If we do nothing, we will soon find ourselves to be only bystanders when the historic opportunity to complete Europe closes down before our eyes.

Today I have shared with you Lithuania's vision of how Europe can better frame its policy towards Europe's East. I see a major need for a discussion inside Europe and also with our American partners about such a policy. I hope that our discussions will continue and will result in concrete strategies finally making Europe whole, free and at peace.