



Dear Delegates,

It is my pleasure to greet you and bid you a very warm welcome to Lithuania!

It is for the first time that our country has been privileged to host a BILC conference and provide an international forum for discussing issues and sharing experience in the field of language training and testing.

The knowledge and use of languages have become a great necessity with Lithuania's accession to NATO. Therefore, the acquisition of language communication skills by military personnel is a priority for our Ministry of National Defense and an important goal facing our armed forces. It is of key significance for our interoperability with allied forces to successfully participate in multinational operations and work in international staffs. That is why, for a considerable number of years, our efforts and resources have been consistently applied to achieving that goal.

It is for the same reason that the management of the Ministry of National Defense highly appreciates the expertise provided by BILC as a consultative and advisory body for language training and testing matters in NATO.

The topic of this year's conference targets the very centre of what language training in the armed forces is about – operational proficiency. It does not only allow you to highlight the challenges in this area, but also find practical solutions to these issues through sharing knowledge and best practices.

I wish you successful and constructive work during the conference. I believe that your stay in Lithuania will prove to be fruitful and pleasant experience and leave you with the sense of yet another job well done on the road to successfully fostering interoperability and developing operational proficiency among NATO and PfP nations.

I truly hope that upon leaving Lithuania you will take with you unforgettable memories of the beauty and culture of Vilnius. Moreover, I believe that your stay in my motherland will inspire you to come back and enjoy Lithuanian hospitality.

A fair wind to you all!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rasa Juknevičienė'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

Minister of National Defense
Rasa Juknevičienė