

**Acceptance Speech by Ms. Ingrida Šimonytė, Prime Minister of the  
Republic of Lithuania**

**At the CEPA 2022 Forum**

September 27-29, 2022

Dear CEPA President Alina Polyakova,

Dear CEPA team,

Dear colleagues,

I am pleased and humbled to accept the 2022 Transatlantic Leadership Award.

-----

I do believe that there is no partnership more strategic and more important for my country, for Europe, for the United States and for the future of the whole world than the Transatlantic one.

Today, the strength of our bond could make the difference between rules-based international order and the vulturous chaos with no-rules and no-order; between peace and binge of wars; between prosperity and destruction.

Yes, we live in a more dangerous world. The world, where the rules-based international order is under attack; where small democracies are bullied by large autocratic states; where autocratic regimes use energy, information, or even food as tools of blackmail; where autocracies want to decide whether at all certain countries and nations have a right to exist.

Nowhere is this more evident today than in Ukraine. The future of our transatlantic security architecture will be shaped by the outcome of Russia's war against Ukraine. I hope – indeed, I believe – that with our support, it will be shaped by Ukraine's victory. Because only if – rather, when – Ukraine wins can we have a chance at sustainable peace in Europe and in the world.

Appeasement and ‘Russia-first’ policy had been nurturing aggressor’s appetite for quite some time. But Ukraine made the aggressor choke. However, the aggressor is far from defeated. Ukraine is still under attack. Ukrainians are still living under the fear and reality of constant bombardment. Hundreds of Ukrainian towns are still under the Russian occupation.

Somebody in these towns is being killed today just because they are proud to be Ukrainian, even if they spoke Russian language all their lives and plan on continuing so. A mother, father or someone’s loved one is being tortured by Russian soldiers. Someone’s child is being taken away and flown to Russia – for illegal adoption and “re-education”. Someone’s family is in a filtration camp – or exiled to Siberia, like so many families from our countries were exiled by the Stalin’s regime. This happens today. Every day. Unfortunately, it is not a horror movie – not even an old history textbook. It is Europe in 2022. The “Russian world” edition.

In Ukraine, 70 000 children did not go back to classrooms this September. Millions of Ukrainians face winter without roofs, windows and heating because their houses, schools, hospitals and other civilian infrastructure was deliberately destroyed by Russian missiles.

I am proud that Lithuanian people quickly rallied to help Ukraine. More than half of our population helped Ukraine in one form or another: by providing accommodation, donating money, volunteering, and even chipping in to buy a famous Bayraktar for the Ukrainian army. Lithuania is among Ukraine’s top donors per capita. My government remains committed to help Ukraine for as long as needed. People of Lithuania are committed to help Ukraine until its victory – and ours.

I commend the leadership of President Biden and the leadership of both parties in the U.S. Congress for the vital U.S. military support for Ukraine and thus - for our common security. I am also grateful, wholeheartedly, to the U.S. for building and maintaining unity of the transatlantic community and the whole democratic world in support of Ukraine and in response to Russia’s aggression. Once again, as so many times before, the US have been there to lead and to unite – when this leadership and unity was most needed.

But we can and we must do more. We must deliver more of heavy weapons and do it even faster. We must maintain our unity and withstand the winter that will be challenging for our people and for our governments – but not nearly as challenging and life-threatening as it is for Ukrainians who fight for their country and for all of us. Finally, when Russia is defeated on the battlefield, we must ensure that all those responsible for this war, for war crimes, and for the genocide of Ukrainians are brought to justice. And when Ukraine wins, we must again unite in helping Ukraine rebuild every inch of their country – and rebuild better.

In all these endeavours we will succeed – because we don't have a luxury not to. But also because our strength is in our values, our unity, our transatlantic bond.

Thank you very much.