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Letter dated 9 December 2025 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Belarus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to convey to you a non-paper on the situation regarding weather balloons on the border between Belarus and Lithuania (see annex).

I would appreciate it if you could circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 107, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Artsiom Tozik



Annex to the letter dated 9 December 2025 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Belarus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

[Original: Russian]

Situation regarding weather balloons and the closure by Lithuania of checkpoints on the land border with Belarus

The main reason advanced by Lithuania for its closure of checkpoints on the land border with Belarus was alleged mass violations of Lithuanian airspace by aerostatic balloons (weather balloons) containing smuggled cigarettes.

There is absolutely no logical connection between the release of weather balloons and the closure by Lithuania of land border checkpoints.

It is no secret that the problem of smuggling is characteristic of all borders around the world, despite the efforts of the relevant services. Unfortunately, Belarus today is forced to fight this criminal evil on its own, without the help of neighbouring countries of the European Union, which has broken all agreements with Belarus and stopped financing joint border projects.

However, even the Lithuanian Procurator General purposely avoids phrases such as “organized nature” and “hybrid attack” precisely because of the absence of any evidence.

The head of the State Border Guard Service of Lithuania is of the same opinion, noting that, to date, such incidents have not been “mass” incidents. However, he has expressed concern about the increasing flow of not only smuggled but also mostly counterfeit tobacco products, calling it a region-wide problem involving so-called underground factories that produce counterfeit tobacco products. Recently, several such factories have been discovered in both Lithuania and Latvia. According to the head of the State Border Guard Service of Lithuania, this explains the fact that more than 51 per cent of smuggled tobacco products, especially counterfeit ones, now come from Latvia.

What does this have to do with Belarus and mass violations by Belarus of Lithuanian airspace?

Apparently, Lithuanian politicians are expecting a financial windfall from the European Union budget by using tactics of escalation of tension and accusations against Belarus. It is easy to see why. After all, it is always easier to level accusations against a non-member of the European Union – and there are no political or economic risks, only bonuses.

As has been shown in practice, the Lithuanian statements about mass aerostatic balloon flights are not supported by actual detentions of perpetrators by Lithuanian law enforcement agencies. For example, in the media, representatives of the security services stated that, on 22 October 2025, balloons numbering between several dozen and 200 had arrived (the highest figure was announced by the commander of the Lithuanian border agency). On that day, the State Border Guard Service of Lithuania detected a total of only 12 aerostatic balloons.

As part of efforts to counter illegal activities involving the use of weather balloons along the Belarus-Lithuania section of the State border of Belarus, intelligence operations have been carried out, during which 88 aerostatic balloons, 359 gas cylinders, 98 Global Positioning System (GPS) trackers, 2 thermal imagers,

10 mobile phones and 36 SIM cards from Lithuanian mobile phone providers have been seized in a total of 29 incidents. In addition, 23 attempts to use other types of uncrewed aerial vehicles, both manufactured and home-made, have been thwarted. The Border Guard Service of Belarus will continue its work to detect the illegal use of civilian uncrewed aerial vehicles in the border area, including those involving the use of home-made aerostats and weather balloons, and will also continue to implement preventive measures.

An investigation has revealed that the intercepted weather balloons and uncrewed aerial vehicles contained GPS trackers with SIM cards from Lithuanian mobile phone operators. This demonstrates that this criminal activity involves only persons residing in the territory of Lithuania and, in general, in European Union countries, who smuggle supplies from Belarus in this way for subsequent sale for profit in their own countries.

The measures taken by the Lithuanian authorities to combat smuggling are ineffective. The lack of adequate measures to prosecute and punish the perpetrators, weak control of transit through Lithuania to the European Union, bureaucratic delays at the border – all this is detrimental to the country's economic sector. The country's excise policy is particularly conducive to smuggling, including from Belarus.

According to information from Lithuanian law enforcement agencies and media, smugglers have been using weather balloons since 2023, but the speculation and border closure did not occur until 2025. The upsurge of political hysteria surrounding the balloons is explained by the authorities' desire to justify military expenditure, cuts in social funding and the suppression of dissent.

All the facts point to the contradictory nature of statements made by political leaders and by representatives of the security services regarding the purposes of illegal activities and suggest the promotion of narratives about the hybrid purposes of the launch of weather balloons from Belarus.

The reactions of the authorities and the media, the televised "outrage" and the international incidents are a smokescreen to avoid their own criminals being caught. This is an attempt to divert attention away from the real problem, which has existed for long enough.

The decision to close the land border was taken unilaterally by Lithuania and was a purely politicized decision that was taken without regard for the procedure and time frames established by the treaties in force. For example, under the bilateral agreement on State border checkpoints, official notification of such actions must be given 1 to 5 days in advance, depending on the situation.

The latest decision to reopen the Šalčininkai and Medininkai checkpoints (Byenyakoni and Kamyenny Loh on the Belarusian side) was again made in violation of established procedures. Lithuania has thus once again shown disregard for its international legal obligations.

The threat to Lithuanian air traffic from further flights of balloons used for smuggling cannot suddenly have disappeared. Therefore, the decision to reopen the land border checkpoints was made under pressure from transport operators, who had suffered considerable financial losses, and also because of the position of Poland, which opened two of its border crossings on the same day. Apparently, Lithuania, having calculated its economic losses and not received any support from the European Union for the closure of the border, decided not to take any more risks and opened the crossings at the land border with Belarus earlier than expected.

We welcome this step by Lithuania. We also regard as a positive and reassuring signal the statements by the relevant Lithuanian services that there is no reason for the Belarus-Lithuania border to be closed again.

Belarus has never abandoned its attempts to develop and maintain a constructive dialogue with Lithuania. The issue of the alleged unwillingness of Belarus to constructively cooperate has been artificially exaggerated by Lithuania. The proposal by Belarus that the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the two countries hold consultations in order to develop a sustainable solution to the issue of the operation of checkpoints on the Belarus-Lithuania border and prevent similar situations still stands.

The main ways of solving the aforementioned problems at the State border are the fulfilment, by all parties involved in cross-border cooperation regarding border matters, of their obligations with regard to border security and international law, including humanitarian law, and the continued implementation of measures to counter organized forms of illegal cross-border activity.

The issue of border security can be resolved only through cooperation. It will never be resolved by the efforts of one State alone.

Belarus remains open to constructive and mutually beneficial cooperation with Lithuania. We expect a similar approach from Lithuania.
