**The U.S. and the Baltics celebrate the centenary of diplomatic relations**

The Baltic States are located in the northeastern region of Europe containing the countries of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, and are bounded on the west and north by the Baltic Sea and on the east by Russia. Based on its location, the region has gained increased importance for the US and NATO following the escalation of the war in Ukraine since February 2022. The United States enjoys a deep, long-standing 100-year-old relationship with all Baltic states, which have maintained their commitment to democratic ideals and free markets since becoming independent. While economic ties remain limited, the U.S. State Department identifies “growing commercial opportunities” and “room for growth” between the U.S. and the Baltic States.

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**Estonia offers an innovative and agile business environment**

Estonia has been a trusted investment destination for US companies over the last decades. Beneficiaries of our transparent and progressive business ecosystems are companies such as Microsoft, Flir, Blackstone, Goldman Sachs and many others. Named “the most advanced digital society in the world,” Estonians are pathfinders, who have built an efficient, secure and transparent business ecosystem. We will see the innovation level accelerating this decade significantly faster than at any point in the past as we now also have systematic strategy to become innovation leader in Europe. Our open society and agile business environment, ensures the continuous growth of Estonian – US business and innovation collaboration. Great foundation is laid to grow together towards more prosperity and innovation. May the next 100 years bring even more successful in co-operation.

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**Tech and Social Inclusion Drives Lithuania’s Economic Transformation**

The US-Lithuania relationship can best be described as same-mother siblings,” stated Elijus Ėlvičius, General Manager of Invest Lithuania, the country’s national investment promotion agency.

“...They are both far away from each other but have the same mother—the strong democratic values that keep us well-connected and relevant to each other,” he explained.

Among the Baltic States, Lithuania has the tightest economic relationship with the US in terms of bilateral trade and inward FDI. “US investors emphasize the cultural proximity between the two societies, some of the strongest talent pool in the region as well as the excellent digital ecosystem, making Lithuania their choice for business,” said Ėlvičius.

Indeed, Lithuania has a strong and constantly growing tech talent pool and a well-developed digital infrastructure, which are the main reasons it is fast becoming the region’s leading technology hub. “Tech ecosystem is flourishing here: with the front runner, Fintech, Lithuania is also the region’s leader in game and Software Development, Cybersecurity, and R&D. Lithuania is the largest Fintech hub in the EU, with 178 licensed Fintech institutions and over 260 total Fintech companies,” noted Ėlvičius.

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**Riga’s capital of Latvia and the 3rd largest city in Northern Europe with a metropolitan area population of more than 1 million.** The city serves as a regional air hub hosting the largest airport in the Baltics with direct flights to over 100 destinations provided by 20 airlines. As a member of EU, NATO and OECD, Latvia ensures safe and reliable environment with unlimited growth potential within the single European market. In 2021 Latvia was ranked 2nd among OECD countries in the International Tax Competitiveness Index and 1st in Baltic Bloomberg Innovation Index.

Riga has thriving startup ecosystem, multilingual and highly qualified talent pool and lowest cost of doing business in the Baltics. “Riga provides open and attractive environment for business with equal treatment for local and foreign investors, offering several support mechanisms for investments in Global business services and financial services, high value-added manufacturing, real estate development, ICT, startups and film industry” explained Mr. Fredis Bikovs, the Director of Riga Investment and Tourism Agency.

The Agency offers various infrastructure funding options, boosting tourism development and international recognition of Riga added the Director.

While most of the cities have one or two postcard-perfect streets, Riga has a whole area lined with perfectly preserved architecture, ranging from Romanistic to Gothic and Baroque. Vivid nightlife, rich art and culture offerings, excellent transportation and mobility infrastructure, lots of leisure activities for both families and individuals - all this makes Riga a perfect place for maintaining a perfect work/life balance. “While comparatively large and wellconnected, Riga is compact enough for a company to be able to make an impact. Our city has a huge potential for business development in the region with a competitive economy, tax regulation and cost effectiveness. We welcome you to unlock the potential of Riga” stated Bikovs.