



## Lithuania in the International Press in the Context of Security and Global Politics #2

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### Brief Overview

The central development concerning Lithuania and the Baltic region during the monitoring period was the disconnection of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia from the Russian-controlled energy system, known as BRELL. This transition was viewed within the larger context of pursuing energy independence and bolstering energy security. Notably, Lithuania's name was frequently mentioned in discussions surrounding security matters during this period. This was driven both by concerns regarding Russia's perceived hybrid tactics aimed at destabilizing Europe and by uncertainties surrounding the policies of the new US President, Donald Trump's administration.

Concurrently, positive reports and news stories highlighting Lithuania also emerged in the media of its allies. These reports referenced and quoted a number of Lithuanian politicians (see Key trends).

Monitoring period: January-February 2025

The monitoring covers the following media outlets: CNBC (USA); CNN (USA); BBC (UK); FAZ (Germany); FOX News (USA); The Guardian (UK); Huff Post (UK); Independent (UK); Kronen Zeitung (Austria); Lidové noviny (Czech Republic); Rzeczpospolita (Poland); Sky News (UK); Süddeutsche Zeitung (Germany); Gazeta.pl (Poland).

### Key Trends

**Disconnection from the Russian power grid.** The biggest news concerning Lithuania was the disconnection of the Baltic States from the BRELL power grid, which was established during the Soviet era and controlled by Russia. Publications noted that the Baltic countries had been obliged to share an energy system with Russia for decades, but efforts to sever this connection had been ongoing since 2007. Russia's open military aggression against Ukraine has accelerated this process (e.g. BBC, 09.02.2025). It is noted that the departure from the Russian grid and the link to the European interconnector has become a symbol of greater energy independence. Lithuanian Energy Minister Zigmantas Vaičiūnas was quoted, stating that the Baltic countries' energy system "is finally in our hands, we are in full control" (Sky News, 09.02.2025). Concurrently, it was observed that these events could provoke a hybrid response from Moscow. For instance, the possibility of cyber-attacks remains a concern (CNBC, 10.02.2025).



## Key Trends

**Regional security aspects.** It is worth noting that Lithuania continues to be primarily mentioned in the context of security. The cutting of cables in the Baltic Sea remains a widely covered topic in global media, with Lithuania among the countries affected by these incidents. Vessels belonging to Russia's so-called "shadow fleet" (ships transporting Russian energy resources to circumvent sanctions) are suspected of carrying out these attacks. The Austrian newspaper Kronen Zeitung quoted Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda when introducing the subject of Russia's shadow fleet (Kronen Zeitung, 27.01.2025).

The overall geopolitical climate also influences how news about Lithuania is presented. For instance, the Czech media outlet Lidové noviny, in a piece commemorating the anniversary of the tragic events of January 13th in Lithuania, recalled how Czechoslovakia, as it was then known, supported Vilnius in its pursuit of independence in 1991. This story was also framed within the context of the importance of interaction and cooperation between smaller states (Lidové noviny, 13.01.2025).

FOX News quoted the Lithuanian Minister of National Defence, Dovilė Šakalienė, who emphasized that Europe must strengthen its capabilities and decide its own future, with the support of the US, regarding events in Europe and Ukraine. She cautioned that failing to do so would risk Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin discussing solutions behind Europe's back, which would be a trap for Europe (FOX News, 13.02.2025).

**Beyond Negative Headlines.** Amid the general news coverage of Lithuania, a few isolated pieces presented the country in a positive light. For example, the BBC published a feature on mushroom picking traditions in Lithuania's Dzūkija region (BBC, 7.01.2025). Additionally, the Lithuanian passport was mentioned as being among the most powerful passports in the world (CNN, 08.01.2025).

Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda's outrage over the destruction of traces of Lithuanian heritage in the Kaliningrad region went largely unnoticed in the media (in contrast to the Kremlin's propaganda, where the Lithuanian President's words caused a storm). This statement concerned the Kaliningrad government's decision to rename the museum dedicated to Kristijonas Donelaitis, a classic figure in Lithuanian literature. The Polish press was one of the few to react more extensively (e.g. Gazeta.pl 12.01.2025).

## Summary

The (non-)security of Lithuania remained a key topic in the international press during January and February 2025. However, the topic was generally presented in a fairly neutral manner. Publications focused on the actions Lithuania is undertaking, both independently and in collaboration with allies, to manage the current unstable situation and enhance long-term security.

# References

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