



Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-3605

August 31, 2021

Ingrida Šimonytė  
Prime Minister  
Republic of Lithuania  
Vilnius, Lithuania

Prime Minister Šimonytė:

We write today to express our support for Lithuania's resolute will to counter growing malign influence of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in Europe. Your country has always been a strong NATO ally and stalwart defender of democracy in the face of authoritarian threats, and these moves further emphasizes your strong commitment to transatlantic security.

The Lithuanian people have set themselves apart with their bold and defiant opposition against foes of freedom and democracy. Your country understands better than most the reality of living under the thumb of brutal autocratic regimes. As generations before stared down the evils of the Soviet Union, your country today defies the CCP and the greatest existential threat in decades to democratic way of life.

We applaud Lithuania's courageous decision to leave the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)-initiated 17 + 1 Cooperative Framework Agreement with China. In recent years, the CCP has attempted to grow its economic and malign influences across the world. The 17 + 1 agreement is part and parcel of the CCPs broader global strategy known as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) deployed by China to turn investments and trade into political influence and leverage often through debt traps and dependency. Moreover, this framework poses a major risk to the cohesion and security of Europe in addressing the challenges posed by the CCP. Not only has the CCP's promised investments in the region fallen short of expectation, but also, time and again, the CCP has exposed itself as an untrustworthy and unreliable partner.

Nowhere is this more evident than the CCP-funded and built highway project intended to connect Montenegro to neighboring Serbia with the promise of boosting trade and economic activity. The \$1 billion project, which is one of the most expensive in the world, has been plagued with corruption allegations and delays and driven a wedge between European countries. The unfavorable investment skyrocketed the Balkan country's debt to nearly 100% of its Gross Domestic Product with the single project accounting for a fifth of all publicly held debt. The ill-fated project has generated immense economic and political stresses in the country and potentially complicated Montenegro's aspirations to join the European Union.

While we encourage other members of the framework to reassess their membership, we also understand that the decision to leave the framework was not easy to make. The CCP and other adversaries repeatedly attempt to undermine and erode democratic values across the globe, and we have seen the CCP punish those that object to its ambitions. It is imperative for the United States and her allies and partners seek every opportunity to work together to protect and uphold those sacred values against the malign and corrosive tactics of the CCP. Toward that end, we will also continue to call on this Administration, particularly through the National Security Council and International Development Finance Corporation, to robustly support and uphold our commitments to the Three Seas Initiative to expand energy, transportation, and digital infrastructure and boost economic development in Central and Eastern Europe. These trustworthy and transparent Western alternatives are desperately needed to counter the CCP's predatory investments in the region.

Furthermore, we support Lithuania's efforts to engage the CCP from a position of unity and strength through a 27+1 format that includes all EU members, to ensure the CCP cannot divide Europe. A more unified approach within Europe and across the Atlantic is necessary to address the generational challenge posed by the CCP.

Finally, we commend the steps taken by your government to improve relations with Taiwan by opening representative offices in Vilnius and Taipei. Beijing's reaction and attempts to dictate Lithuania's foreign policy through coercion and bullying is wholly unacceptable. The CCP's use of these tactics further underscores their decades-long attempts to marginalize and intimidate Taiwan and her friends and allies. We stand with you and condemn the CCP's retaliatory behavior.

Again, we strongly support your decisions to exit the 17+1 framework and improve Lithuania-Taiwan relations. It is our sincere hope that your decisions will raise awareness of the implications of China's economic and security strategies, reinforce cooperation, and strengthen transatlantic ties.

Sincerely,



August Pfluger  
Member of Congress



Brian Fitzpatrick  
Member of Congress



Marcy Kaptur  
Member of Congress



Adam Kinzinger  
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