**Joint Declaration of the Ministers of Justice of the Baltic States**

Based on the criminal Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 23 August 1939 and its secret protocols, the USSR in June 1940, occupied and annexed three independent Baltic States: the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Lithuania. After 50 years of resistance to the occupant regime, the people of the three Baltic States re-established their independence. Many of them sacrificed their lives and/or were deported from their homeland.

During the years of occupation the three Baltic States were exploited for political and economic needs of the occupying regime; as a result they have suffered enormous demographic and socio-economic losses. After the collapse of the USSR, the Russian Federation declared itself to be the successor of the rights and obligations of the USSR. Consequently, all claims arising from the occupation of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and its consequences, at present shall be solved with the Russian Federation.

We, the Ministers of Justice of the Baltic States declare that it is time to arrange the relationship with the past and to calculate in a scientifically justified manner the losses caused by the totalitarian communist occupation regime of the USSR. The Declaration aims at emphasising the need for the national experts and politicians of the three countries to enhance their joint efforts and address the following issues.

1. To state the fact that the Baltic States never seized to legally exist, even during the Soviet occupation.
2. To assess and declare through joint cooperation the total economic loss and damage inflicted upon the three Baltic States by the USSR, based on the most practical and thorough research method.
3. To highlight the fact of occupation in relations with the Russian Federation and to ensure that the Russian Federation as the successor of rights and obligations of the USSR acknowledges this occupation, takes full responsibility and compensates all related losses.
4. To enable the three Baltic States to prepare for international actions in accordance with International Law to claim legally and factually justified compensation from the Russian Federation.
5. To ensure that current and future generations have full and objective understanding of the USSR occupation and its impact based on the facts and information obtained from the research and calculations, and to provide them with means of taking legal action individually.
6. To ensure that the crimes of the Communist totalitarian regime and in particular the occupation of the Baltic States receive respective evaluation at the international level.

Minister of Justice of the Republic of Estonia

Minister of Justice of the Republic of Latvia

Minister of Justice of the Republic of Lithuania

Riga, 5 November 2015