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On Thursday, 29 February, a trilateral cooperation meeting of the constitutional courts of the Baltic States took place in Riga, attended by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Villu Kõve, the Chairman of the Criminal Chamber Saale Laos, Judge of the Administrative Chamber Nele Siitam, Judge of the Civil Chamber Vahur-Peeter Liin and Legal Adviser to the Chief Justice Karin Leichter-Tammisto.

According to Villu Kõve, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, such tripartite meetings are crucial. “This is an excellent opportunity to share current case law, strengthening cooperation between courts and friendships between judges,” Kõve said. The President of the Constitutional Court of Latvia Aldis Lavišs emphasised the importance of multilateral cooperation in the protection of the rule of law, both regionally and globally. The head of the delegation of the Lithuanian Constitutional Court, Judge Daiva Petrylaitė, also highlighted the importance of cooperation in strengthening links between judges.

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[1]

Fourth trilateral cooperation meeting of the Baltic constitutional courts. Photo: Latvian Constitutional Court

The right to a fair trial was the first topic of discussion at the cooperation meeting. The President of the Constitutional Court of Latvia Aldis Lavišs gave a presentation on a number of judgments clarifying procedural guarantees to ensure a fair hearing in civil proceedings. The Chairman of the Criminal Chamber of the Supreme Court Saale Laos introduced various issues stemming from the procedural codes that have been brought before the Supreme Court for the assessment of constitutionality. Judge Daiva Petrylaitė of the Lithuanian Constitutional Court emphasised that the obligation to state the reasons for a court’s decision is meant to ensure that both the parties involved and society as a whole understand how the court arrived at a particular decision.

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Photo of the delegations of the Baltic constitutional courts. Photo: Latvian Constitutional Court

The second round of discussions analysed the issue of the constitutional protection of the state language. Judge of the Administrative Chamber of the Supreme Court Nele Siitam emphasised the constitutional value of the state language. Although the Constitutional Review Chamber of the Supreme Court does not have any recent case law on the subject, there was an opportunity to share a number of examples from the case law of

the Administrative Chamber. Judge of the Constitutional Court of Latvia Anita Rodiņa pointed out that the case law of the Constitutional Court is very wide in various matters related to the protection of the state language.

The last round of discussions focused on recent case law of the courts. As the term of office of the President of the Constitutional Court of Latvia Aldis Lavišs is coming to an end, colleagues thanked him for the pleasant cooperation.

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Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Villu Käve, President of the Constitutional Court of Latvia Aldis Lavišs and Head of Delegation of the Constitutional Court of Lithuania, Judge Daiva Petrylaitė. Photo: Karin Leichter-Tammisto

On 1 March, the cooperation meeting was followed by the international conference “The Role of the Constitutional Courts in Concretising the Shared Values Uniting Europe” organised by the Constitutional Court of Latvia, which focused on the harmonious interaction between national, international and EU law. You can watch the conference here [4].

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International conference “The Role of the Constitutional Courts in Concretising the Shared Values Uniting Europe” organised by the Constitutional Court of Latvia. Photo: Latvian Constitutional Court

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[4]

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