

# Lithuania wants to kick Russia and Belarus out of Interpol

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Lithuania does not give up the idea of expelling Russia and Belarus from the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol). Thus, in March 2022 Lithuanian Interior Minister Agnė Bilotaitė already called for two these countries to be expelled from the Interpol. "There is no sense in Russia, which has no respect for any rules of international law and order, being a member of Interpol. The same applies to Belarus," she added.

Nevertheless, Secretary General Jürgen Stock, responding to her call, said that Interpol must remain neutral, otherwise it could become a political tool.

He underlined also that it is in Interpol's interests to keep channels with Russia and Belarus open so as to be able to prevent or detect serious international crimes.

Interpol, the world's largest international police organisation with 196 member countries. It is unique. It is the only organization with the mandate and technical infrastructure to share police information globally.

All 196 member countries are connected to each other and to the General Secretariat via a secure communications system called I-24/7. It also allows them to access databases and services in real-time, from both central and remote locations. It also coordinates networks of police and experts in different crime areas, who come together through working groups and at conferences to share experiences and ideas.

This year Lithuania once again tried to put pressure on the organization. Lithuanian Interior Minister Agnė Bilotaitė

Bilotaitė took part in the 91st Interpol General Assembly in Vienna on November 29.

At the meeting, the Lithuanian minister accused Russia and Belarus of using membership of the organisation to achieve their political goals and persecute dissidents.

The Minister takes a rather strange position taking into consideration her post. She should realize that successful functioning of her Ministry highly depends on international cooperation in crime prevention. Interpol is the most effective tool to cooperate and share data. In case Russia and Belarus are expelled from the organization the crime detection in Lithuania will decrease significantly.

Thus, many criminals will be able to escape punishment and continue to commit crimes. Such position runs counter to the interests of the country's population and, in general, to common sense. Accusations against authorities of the countries providing assistance in finding criminals and apprehending them look ridiculous and even criminal. By the way, Lithuania is on the 26th place from 42 among the EU member states according to Europe crime index.

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