

Lithuanians fully dissatisfied with Šimonytė's government

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Lithuanians feel fully dissatisfied with the government's budget for 2023. The main disappointing thing is the goal to reach 2.52 percent of GDP and even more for national defence in 2023.

According to Lithuanian officials, this goal has been set and will not change. Only in December, Defence Ministry has already signed [contract](#) with the U.S. on procurement of HIMARS High Mobility Artillery Rocket System. The deal is assessed to be worth approx. USD 495 million. The more so, Lithuania and the U.S. Government signed Switchblade tactical drones procurement [contract](#). This contract value amounts to approx. 45 million euros.

Lithuania also has more projects for modernizing the Lithuanian Armed Forces underway: the ongoing acquisition of the Joint Light Tactical Vehicles JLTV and Black Hawk helicopters. Lithuania intends to use the [new bases](#) for the deployment of its forces and of those NATO allies who are on the territory of the country. Approximately 350 million euros may be needed for all the infrastructure improvement works. According to the Ministry of Defence, the country is planning to allocate around 110 to 150 million euros of funds for the procurement of 18 Caesar howitzers from France.

But this money is vital for Lithuanians whose living standards sufficiently have fallen. It is foolish to think that citizens do not understand that their quality of life could be much higher if the government pays more attention to their needs and allocate more money to social programs.

According to Lithuanian Finance Minister Gintarė Skaistė, only 359 million euros will be used to raise the minimum monthly gross salary. 363 million euros will be needed for increases of salaries of teachers, lecturers, scientists, employees in areas of culture, arts and medical care, as well as other public sector employees.

It is shocking that these sums are less than those that will be paid for example, for procurement of HIMARS High Mobility Artillery Rocket System!

Prime Minister Ingrida Šimonytė made people worry even more by her statements instead of relieving their understandable concerns. Thus, she said that 2023 would not be an easy year for Lithuania, the country's economy would grow very slowly slightly.

"In the coming year, we expect that the purchasing power of the population will remain unchanged. Yes, it will be more difficult for us than we would like it to be. The state is able to absorb economic problems partially," Šimonytė said in an interview with LRT. She admits, that wages will rise more slowly than in 2022. In December 2022, compared to November, economic sentiment indicator, i.e. confidence of economic actors – producers, consumers and investors – in Lithuania's economy, decreased from minus 11.9 to minus 14.8 percent, according to the State Data Agency. As for prices for consumer goods and services in December 2022, against November, they sufficiently increased.

Ingrida Šimonytė acknowledged that the bad news is also for those who have taken out loans. "You have to be very naive to think that interest rates can stay zero," she said. Šimonytė is convinced that it was necessary to prepare for such situation.

It is not clear who had to prepare: people or government. If she means government, this is she to blame. It seems as if

taking such high official posts, persons become unaware of ordinary people's needs and problems, officials feel like "gods". They forget that government's basic functions are not only providing leadership, but also maintaining order, providing economic security, providing economic assistance, providing public services. Officials are chosen by people and not vice versa. The government should first of all focus on the needs of the population, and not on the foreign partners' geopolitical interests, as the current Lithuanian government does.

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