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PARLIAMENTARY BUSSINES

SPRING SESSION ADDRESSED DIRECT MAYOR ELECTIONS, SAFEGUARDS AGAINST LAND SALE TO FOREIGNERS, AND PREPARATION FOR THE EURO'S INTRODUCTION



The Seimas has closed its fourth regular session which began on 10 March 2014. During the session, Members of the Seimas convened to 51 plenary sittings and adopted over 300 legislative acts. The session was extended until 17 July 2014 due to the solemn sitting held on 12 July 2014 when Dalia Grybauskaitė, President of the Republic of Lithuania, was sworn in for the second term of office. After the Government returned its mandate to the re-elected President, the Seimas nominated its candidature for the Prime Minister.

During the spring session, the Seimas focused on matters related, but not limited, to finance, economy, social affairs and health, law enforcement, environment, agriculture, and foreign affairs. The most important works of this session included setting up the framework for compensation for old-age pensions and disability benefits; putting legislation in place to govern the preparation to adopt the euro, exchange of the national currency (the Litas) to the euro, conversion of values denominated in Litas to values denominated in euro after the euro adoption in Lithuania and withdrawal of the Litas from circulation. The Seimas endorsed direct mayor elections and increased the funding for the national defence. The Lithuanian parliament introduced additional safeguards against the sale of agricultural land to foreigners in order to avoid abuses and to protect the interests of farmers, agricultural companies and cooperatives employed in agriculture for years.

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PRESIDENT DALIA GRYBAUSKAITĖ TAKES AN OATH IN THE SEIMAS AND THE GOVERNMENT IS FORMED

DALIA GRYBAUSKAITĖ SWORN IN AS PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA FOR THE SECOND TERM



Dalia Grybauskaitė was sworn in at the solemn sitting of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania as President on 12 July 12. After taking the oath Dalia Grybauskaitė received all the powers of the President of the Republic of Lithuania for a new five-year term.

The Head of State received congratulations from the Speaker of the Seimas, Loreta Graužinienė, the Prime Minister Algirdas Butkevičius and the President of the Constitutional Court, Dainius Žalimas. The Metropolitan Archbishop of Vilnius, Gintaras Grušas, delivered the invocation.

In her congratulatory address the Speaker of the Seimas, Loreta Graužinienė, noted that the President had received an exceptional mandate which voices the choice and trust of our nation. “This is the best evaluation that can be earned by a politician and country’s supreme power representative,” Loreta Graužinienė said.

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[Congratulatory address by the Speaker of the Seimas, Loreta Graužinienė, at the swearing-in ceremony of the President of the Republic of Lithuania, Dalia Grybauskaitė](#)

[Inaugural Address by President Dalia Grybauskaitė at the Seimas](#)



SEIMAS HAS APPROVED THE CANDIDACY OF ALGIRDAS BUTKEVIČIUS FOR PRIME MINISTER



In accordance with the Constitution, the Seimas has approved the candidacy of Algirdas Butkevičius nominated by President Dalia Grybauskaitė for Prime Minister. The Seimas Resolution on the Candidacy of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Lithuania (draft Law No XIIP-2014) was adopted by 88 votes in favour, 36 against and 7 abstentions.

The candidacy of Mr Butkevičius was supported by the political groups of the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party, the Labour Party, the Lithuanian Poles’ Electoral Action, and the Party Order and Justice. The votes against were cast by the political groups of the Homeland Union – Lithuanian

Christian Democrats and the Liberal Movement. The Non-attached Members voted freely.

Presenting the candidacy of Mr Butkevičius, Dalia Grybauskaitė highlighted that the Government would have to continue with the projects increasing our energy independence. “We also need to maintain economic growth and stability and reduce unemployment and social exclusion,” said the country’s leader. She stated that every sector posed certain problems the solutions to which necessitated concerted effort and daily work. Only this would enable fulfilling the promises given to the public and living up to people’s expectations over the remaining couple of years. “Transparency and moral responsibility cannot be compromised or disregarded. We cannot allow the moral threshold be put lower in politics as we commence the third decade in the restored and independent Lithuania. Political maturity has to grow and enable the greater public trust in government decisions,” underscored Ms Grybauskaitė wishing the Government to take advantage of the opportunity and renew itself.

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NEW MINISTERS TOOK OATH AT THE SEIMAS



Colleagues congratulate the new Minister of Health Rimantė Šalaševičiūtė

Three new ministers were sworn in at the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania: Virginija Baltraitienė, Minister of Agriculture; Kęstutis Trečiokas, Minister of Environment; and Rimantė Šalaševičiūtė, Minister of Health. The oaths of office were administered by Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas.

In the 16th legislature of the Government, the new ministers will replace Valentinas Mazuronis, who was elected to the European Parliament; Vytenis Povilas Andriukaitis, who was nominated to the European Commission; and Vigilijus Jukna, who has resigned.

Other members of the Government remain the same.

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ADOPTED LEGISLATION

SEIMAS HAS RATIFIED THE EU ASSOCIATION AGREEMENTS WITH UKRAINE, MOLDOVA AND GEORGIA

Pursuant to a special urgency procedure, the Seimas has almost unanimously ratified the Association Agreements between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova, of the other part (draft laws No XIIP-1982, No XIIP-1983, and No XIIP-1984).

Signed in the margins of the European Council meeting on 27 June 2014, the Association Agreements with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine are ambitious, deep and comprehensive cooperation instruments of a new generation to deepen political and economic relations between the EU, on the one part, and Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova, on the other part, and to gradually integrate these countries into certain segments of the EU common internal market thus creating a deep and comprehensive free trade area. On behalf of Lithuania, the agreements have been signed by its President Dalia Grybauskaitė in Brussels.

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SEIMAS HAS INCREASED FINANCING TO NATIONAL DEFENCE

At its plenary sitting, the Seimas has approved the amendments to the 2014 state budget (No XIIP-1904(2)) with a view to increasing allocations for national defence by additional LTL 130 million already this year. The motion was approved by 100 votes in favour, with no votes against and two abstentions.

The Ministry of National Defence will receive additional LTL 85 million from the budget. The main source of the funds is the projected growth in revenue from excise duties this year. The estimate of the Privatisation Fund will be raised and additional LTL 45 million will be allocated for national defence from it.

It is highlighted in the conclusion of the Committee on Budget and Finance that the LTL 20 million increase in the budget deficit does not violate the convergence criterion (Maastricht Treaty) that establishes that the ratio of the general government deficit to gross domestic product must not exceed 3%.

The total revenue to the revised state budget for 2014, with EU and other international financial support included, will stand at LTL 26 158.4 million, and appropriations for reimbursement of expenses and acquisition of assets will amount to LTL 27 118.4 million (appropriations will exceed the revenue by LTL 960 million).

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NATIONAL DEFENCE SYSTEM WILL HAVE MORE SERVICEMEN

At its plenary sitting, the Seimas has approved the principal structure of the army in 2015 and the guidelines for planning this structure for the six-year period. The Law on Approving the Principal Structure of the Army in 2015, the Planning of the Principal Structure of the Army in 2020, the Limit Number of Servicemen in the National Defence System and the Limit Number of Statutory Civil Servants in 2015 and 2020 (draft Law No XIIP-1980(2)) was adopted by 78 votes in favour, 14 against, and 17 abstentions.

According to Juozas Olekas, Minister of National Defence, there will be no important changes in 2015 as compared to 2014, the structure will remain the same and only limit numbers will be increased. Mr Olekas emphasised that in 2015 the focus would be on funding and modernising the army and moderate increase in the number of servicemen.

The total limit number of servicemen in the national defence system, i.e., servicemen in professional and initial mandatory military service, volunteer servicemen and other servicemen of the active reserve, reserve servicemen participating in military exercises or trainings and cadets, is set between 14 340 and 18 460 in 2015, i.e. up by 1 100 servicemen as compared to the limit number of 14 140 to 17 360 set for 2014. "The increase is due to the larger number of reserve servicemen who, as planned, will participate in military exercises or trainings," the explanatory note reads. The total limit number of servicemen in the national defence system is set between 15 540 and 20 260 for 2020.

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SEIMAS APPROVES ANDRIUKAITIS' NOMINATION TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSIONER POSITION



In its plenary sitting the Seimas backed the proposal to nominate Vytenis Povilas Andriukaitis as the country's European Commissioner candidate. His candidacy had been previously approved by the President of the Republic of Lithuania, Dalia Grybauskaitė.

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THE SEIMAS REVISED THE PROVISIONS ON CONFIDENTIALITY OF THE SOURCE OF INFORMATION

The public information producers, disseminators, participants and journalists have the right to keep the source of information confidential and undisclosed, with the exception of the cases provided for in the law.

Under the newly adopted provisions, measures to disclose the source of information or to apply statutory coercive action aimed at disclosing the source of information will be limited to those based on a reasoned decision of the court, provided that the following conditions are met: it is necessary to disclose the source of information for vitally important or otherwise significant public interests; it is necessary to ensure the protection of persons' constitutional rights and freedoms and the administration of justice; it is impossible to disclose the source of information by any other means, or all other means have already been exhausted.

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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

GEDIMINAS KIRKILAS, CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE ON EUROPEAN AFFAIRS: ITALIAN PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EU WILL AFFECT EU'S FOREIGN POLICY

“The Italian Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU) should make an impact on the EU’s foreign policy. It is the search for a new momentum in EU foreign policy that is one of the key priorities of the Italian Presidency. I am sure that this task will not pose a problem to Italy as one of the founding members of the Community that presides over the Council of the EU for the twelfth time,” said Gediminas Kirkilas, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas and Chair of the Committee on European Affairs.

According to him, both the Arab Spring and the crisis in Ukraine have demonstrated that the EU cannot ignore events of historic scale that take place beyond its borders. Italy will aim to ensure that the Union’s external actions are reliable and consistent and that the EU has all the necessary tools at its disposal to address global and regional challenges. The Mediterranean region is of crucial importance to Europe as well. The constantly increasing migration flows make Europe formulate a common policy on this area of major concern.

MORE

LORETA GRAUŽINIENĖ, SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS, MET WITH THE DELEGATION HEADED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE HOUSE OF COUNCILLORS OF THE NATIONAL DIET OF JAPAN



Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, met with Masaaki Yamazaki, President of the House of Councillors of the National Diet of Japan, and the delegation from the House of Councillors under his leadership visiting Lithuania.

“Lithuania and Japan have maintained strong political ties for many years. We are like-minded nations that adhere to common values. I am pleased to note that the relations between our countries are deepening and expanding, and this is particularly important in the current geopolitical situation marked by the lack of stability in both regions,” Mrs Graužinienė stressed at the meeting.

The Speaker of the Seimas thanked Mr Yamazaki for the continued support of the Government of Japan to the new nuclear power plant project in Lithuania and expressed her gratitude to the Hitachi company for its active participation and proposals for developing cooperation.

“In late March 2014, the main political parties represented in the Seimas signed an accord on the main strategic guidelines for the foreign, security and defence policy for the period 2014–2020. Its objectives include accelerating the implementation of energy projects and strengthening energy independence. Therefore, we will strive to achieve rapid implementation of the objectives in cooperation with Japan and its high-tech companies,” the Speaker of the Seimas said.

The meeting also discussed cooperation between Lithuania and Japan in education and stressed the need to reopen the debate on signing relevant agreements in the field.

Mr Yamazaki, President of the House of Councillors of the National Diet of Japan, assured the Speaker of the Seimas that Japan supported Lithuania in the development of its energy independence and was looking forward to offering its help by bringing a wealth of know-how and technology. Mr Yamazaki also invited Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, to visit Japan.

The agenda of the Japanese delegation includes meetings with Dalia Grybauskaitė, President of the Republic of Lithuania, and Algirdas Butkevičius, Prime Minister.

The guests will also visit Trakai as well as the Sugihara House and the Centre for Asian Studies in Kaunas.

ANDREI ILLARIONOV, SENIOR FELLOW AT THE CATO INSTITUTE AND FORMER CHIEF ECONOMIC ADVISOR TO RUSSIAN PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN, PARTICIPATED IN THE DISCUSSION ORGANISED BY THE SEIMAS EUROPEAN CLUB AND INDICATED THAT THE MALAYSIAN JET WAS NOT A RANDOM TARGET



Today's world is witnessing a new kind of warfare that is increasingly moving away from direct military action to non-contact clashes. This was the subject of the discussion organised by the Seimas European Club in the Seimas on 28 July 2014.

Guest speaker Andrei Illarionov said in the discussion that perhaps the most important feature of the new type of hybrid warfare was the absence of clear boundaries between war and peace.

Mr Illarionov said that wars were no longer declared. They begin without any formal notice. Instead of destroying the opponent directly, the attacking country uses other means of warfare. There is a clear shift from direct combat to non-contact clashes and from warfare in the physical space to war in the human subconscious through the employment of propaganda and a range of smart technologies. This is a shift towards

warfare that becomes an integral part of life."

According to Mr Illarionov, it is no coincidence that the Malaysian jet carrying over 300 civilians became the target of an attack.

To see the video of the debate, please click [here](#).

EVENTS

SEIMAS LAUNCHED AN EXHIBITION TO MARK THE BEGINNING OF THE ITALIAN PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN



On 3 July 2014, an exhibition Art is a Universal Language. Sculptures by Gianmaria Potenza in Vilnius marking the beginning of the Italian Presidency of the Council of the European Union was opened in the Seimas Exhibition Gallery. The exhibition was opened by Speaker of the Seimas Loreta Graužinienė. Other speakers at the opening of

the exhibition included Ambassador of Italy to Lithuania Stefano Taliani De Marchio, Acting Rector of Vilnius University Habil. Dr Jūras Banys, the author of the sculptures Gianmaria Potenza, and curator of the exhibition Enzo Fornaro.



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SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS, LORETA GRAUŽINIENĖ, HOLDS OPEN DISCUSSION WITH HEADS OF LITHUANIA'S DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIONS



The Speaker of the Seimas, Loreta Graužinienė, invited the heads of Lithuania's diplomatic representations to a working breakfast where relevant foreign policy matters and respective challenges were discussed. The diplomats shared their views on the achievements, problems and future plans. The Speaker called on the diplomats to make full use of diplomatic leverage while representing our country.

I would appreciate your being aware of the existence of one more instrument that can be used in attaining common foreign policy goals, i.e., parliamentary diplomacy. I therefore invite you to properly exploit

this instrument, where appropriate, and to remember that the Seimas and its leaders are open to your proposals and initiatives," said the Speaker this morning during the working breakfast with the Lithuanian diplomats who had gathered to their annual meeting in Vilnius.

In her speech the Speaker of the Seimas highlighted the importance of the cooperation between diplomacy and business, scope for parliamentary diplomacy and shared her views on regional security issues and the situation in Ukraine.

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