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## PARLIAMENTARY BUSSINES

### PARLIAMENTARIANS FROM MOLDOVA SHOW INTEREST IN LITHUANIA'S EXPERIENCE IN PENSION SYSTEM REFORM



On 14 April 2014, members of the Seimas Committee on Social Affairs and Labour met with the delegation of the Committee for Social Protection, Health and Family from the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova under the leadership of Maria Nasu. The parliamentarians of Moldova came to learn about the pension system in Lithuania and showed particular interest in the accumulative pension system and its development in view of demographic changes.

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### COMMITTEES ON EUROPEAN AFFAIRS OF THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS OF FOUR COUNTRIES SUPPORT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE VOICE OF EUROPE, AN INDEPENDENT TV STATION TO BROADCAST IN RUSSIAN

In their traditional meeting in Trakai on 13–14 April 2014, the Committees on European Affairs of the national Parliaments of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland called on the European Commission to allocate financial resources for setting up and maintaining democratic, objective and independent TV and other sources of news in Russian in Eastern Europe.

The parliamentarians of four countries supported the initiative by the journalists of Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, and Finland articulated in the letter of 11 April 2014 to José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, calling for the establishment of an EU-financed Russian language TV station, provisionally called The Voice of Europe, which would operate on the basis of values of free media, provide fact-based news, and serve as a platform for discussion and qualitative entertainment.

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## SEIMAS ADOPTED THE LAW ON THE EURO ADOPTION IN THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

At the plenary sitting, the Seimas adopted the Law on the Euro Adoption in the Republic of Lithuania (draft No XIIP-1450(2)) that establishes the procedure for the preparation for the euro adoption, changeover from the litas to the euro, conversion of values in litas to values in euro after the euro adoption in the Republic of Lithuania, and withdrawal of the litas from circulation. The Law was passed by 87 votes for, 7 against and 13 abstentions.

The Law sets out that the Bank of Lithuania would exchange the litas banknotes as well as the litas and cent coins to the euro free of charge for an unlimited period and without any limitation on the amount. On the euro adoption date, the money held in all client accounts would be converted to the euro free of charge. Commercial banks would exchange the litas to the euro for six months following the euro adoption date in the Republic of Lithuania free of charge and without any limitation on the amount in all bank units. After the expiry of this term, commercial banks would exchange the litas to the euro free of charge for another six months in bank units, the list of which would be drawn up in advance by the Bank of Lithuania. The Law gives banks the right to set a requirement that a client willing to exchange an amount of LTL 15,000 to EUR must inform a bank in advance.



*Press conference Towards the Euro:  
Setting A Legal Framework*

*The press conference was attended by Gediminas Kirkilas, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas, Chair of the Committee on European Affairs, Member of the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party Political Group, and Rimantas Šadžius, Minister of Finance*

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## ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE 16TH GOVERNMENT PRESENTED TO THE SEIMAS

The Prime Minister Algirdas Butkevičius has presented the Annual Government Performance Report at the Seimas plenary sitting.



The Prime Minister noted that in 2013 the Government was consistently carrying out its activity programme and implementing the tasks set.

“We were trying to prove and we did prove that the measures for getting through the outcomes of the economic crisis that we proposed were a suitable alternative to the drastic austerity policy applied earlier. We selected priority actions that ensured the growth of residents’ income, development of business and labour market as well as decrease of social exclusion. They served as engines for our economic growth,” Mr Butkevičius said.



The review of priority areas of the Government Report highlights that the growth of Lithuanian economy is one of the fastest in the European Union although one could find few examples of the economic recovery at the moment: “the Lithuanian GDP per capita today has exceeded the highest point recorded before the onset of the crisis. Despite the restrictions imposed on the import of Lithuanian dairy products to Russia and the unfavourable economic situation in the main export countries, Lithuania’s export grew by 6.5% and reached nearly LTL 84.8 billion.”

The Report indicates that the growth of GDP, which paused for a while in the third quarter of 2013, subsequently regained its former rate and reached the level of 3.3%.

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## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

### LORETA GRAUŽINIENĖ, SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS: “THE RHETORIC OF NATO ALLIES OVER RUSSIA’S AGGRESSION HAS TO BE TOUGH”



Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, met with US Senators John McCain, John Barrasso, John Hoeven and Ron Johnson on their visit to Lithuania. The Speaker of the Seimas thanked the US Senators for the US support to the Baltic states, Poland and all Eastern Partnership countries in the face of Russia’s aggression. “Russia’s aggression in Ukraine has undermined security all over Europe. It is indispensable for Allies to pass on the message about Russia’s violations of international law and to send a clear signal of their firm support to the countries in the region. In this context, appropriate information response to the large-scale propaganda campaign waged by Russia is of paramount importance,” the Speaker said.

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### LITHUANIAN POLITICIANS EXPRESS THEIR POSITION CONCERNING THE EVENTS IN UKRAINE

COMMITTEES ON EUROPEAN AFFAIRS OF THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS OF ESTONIA, LATVIA, LITHUANIA,  
AND POLAND SUPPORT THE NEED TO PROVIDE UKRAINE WITH A CLEAR PROSPECT OF EU MEMBERSHIP

#### [STATEMENT ON UKRAINE](#)

ON 24 APRIL THE SEIMAS ADOPTED THE RESOLUTION “ON THE SITUATION IN UKRAINE”.  
49 Members of the Parliament voted for the document, 8 MPs – against and 1 MP abstained.

#### [RESOLUTION ON THE SITUATION IN UKRAINE](#)

## SEIMAS AND EUROPEAN UNION

### IPEX BOARD MEETING AT THE SEIMAS



On 24–25 April 2014, the Seimas hosted meetings of the [IPEX Board](#) (Board of the Inter-Parliamentary EU Information Exchange), the IPEX Central Support, and the working group for the review of the IPEX Guidelines.

The events in Vilnius were attended by representatives of Parliaments of the EU Member States, the European Parliament, the European Commission, and the Council of the European Union.

The Seimas took over the chairmanship of the IPEX Board from the Bundestag of the Federal Republic of Germany after the [Conference of Speakers of European Union Parliaments](#) held on 7–8 April 2014. For more information, please [click here](#).

## EUROPEAN FOREST WAS PLANTED IN KAIŠIADORYS DISTRICT TO MARK THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF LITHUANIA'S MEMBERSHIP OF THE EU



On 26 April 2014, politicians, journalists and the staff of the Office of the Seimas and other public institutions planted the European Forest near Paparčiai Mound in Kaišiadorys District. Spruces, pine trees and birches were planted in as many as 4.2 hectares of land belonging to Kaišiadorys State Forest Enterprise.

Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, planted the first tree and welcomed the participants of the event. Stasys Truskauskas, Head of Kaišiadorys State Forest Enterprise, also made a welcome address.

Planting of the European Forest has become a Lithuanian parliamentary tradition: in 2004, it marked the beginning of Lithuania's membership of the EU; in 2005, trees were planted to commemorate the first anniversary of the EU membership; and in 2013, the European Forest was planted to mark the first Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.



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