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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

SEIMAS COMMITTEES HAVE ADOPTED THE STATEMENT CALLING FOR THE IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF NADIYA SAVCHENKO, UKRAINIAN MILITARY AIR FORCE PILOT, AND OTHER UKRAINIAN CITIZENS ILLEGALLY HELD AGAINST THEIR WILL IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

On 14 January 2014, the Committee on European Affairs and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Seimas adopted by consensus the Statement regarding the release of Nadiya Savchenko, Ukrainian military air force pilot, and other Ukrainian citizens illegally held against their will in the Russian Federation.

[The Statement is attached.](#)

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PRIORITIES OF THE LATVIAN PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EU PRESENTED IN THE SEIMAS

Mārtiņš Virsis, Latvian Ambassador in Lithuania, presented the priorities of the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union at a joint meeting of the Committee on European Affairs and the Committee on Foreign Affairs. Latvia takes over the Presidency of the EU for the first time and it is the second country of the Trio Presidency (Italy, Latvia and Luxembourg).

According to Ambassador Virsis, “Competitive Europe, Digital Europe and Engaged Europe” will constitute the key three pillars of the Latvian Presidency. The Presidency will dedicate particular attention to the following three areas: increasing competitiveness of the EU thus improving the quality of life; strengthening of the information society thus seizing the opportunities for the development of the EU; and enhancing the EU’s global role by creating the area of prosperity and security in the neighbouring regions of the EU.

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SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS, LORETA GRAUŽINIENĖ, MET WITH VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION, VALDIS DOMBROVSKIS



Speaker of the Seimas, Loreta Graužinienė, met with Vice-President of the European Commission, Valdis Dombrovskis, who visited Lithuania. The topics addressed during the meeting included Lithuania's smooth joining of the euro area; general situation of the euro area as well as challenges related to the coordination of budget policy formation.

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LITHUANIA STARTS ITS PRESIDENCY OF THE BALTIC ASSEMBLY



On 1 January 2015, Lithuania took over the Presidency of the Baltic Assembly. This year, the Seimas plans to hold 14 international events, with the majority of them hosted by the Seimas in Vilnius and four of them held in Kaunas, Klaipėda, Palanga and Šiauliai.

Giedrė Purvaneckienė, Head of the Seimas Delegation to the Baltic Assembly and President of the Baltic Assembly, says that the year 2014 presented a lot of new challenges for the parliamentary cooperation of the countries in the Baltic Sea Region. Mrs Purvaneckienė wishes that the initiatives and activities of the Baltic Assembly would help to address complicated international problems and improve the geopolitical situation in the region.

The Lithuanian Presidency adopted the slogan For a Growing and United Baltic Region and set the following priorities: developing a growing and credible Baltic Region; secure Baltic Region; a sustainable and competitive society in the Region; and the Baltic Region in the world: development of regional networks.



A special [website](#) also was launched on 20 January 2015 (BA2015.Irs.lt) which will feature detailed information in Lithuanian and in English on the events of the Baltic Assembly, including programmes, lists of participants, various documents, press releases, photos and video recordings.

The Baltic Assembly is an international organisation for cooperation among the parliaments of the Republic of Lithuania, the Republic of Estonia, and the Republic of Latvia, established on 8 November 1991 in Tallinn. The headquarters of its Secretariat is based in Riga, Latvia (<http://baltasam.org/en/>).

The term of presidency of the Baltic Assembly is one calendar year and the presidency is held alternately by Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

TRANSPORT, ENERGY SECURITY AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION ON THE AGENDA OF THE BALTIC ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE MEETING

On 30 January 2015 a meeting of the BA Economics, Energy and Innovation Committee took place at the Seimas. The meeting addressed the joint transport and infrastructure projects, further cooperation between the Baltic and Nordic countries in the field of energy security and reliability of energy supply, and economic cooperation matters.

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EVENTS

TRIBUTE PAID TO THE DEFENDERS OF FREEDOM AT THE SOLEMN COMMEMORATION IN THE SEIMAS



On 13 of January 2015, the Seimas held a solemn commemoration of the Day of the Defenders of Freedom and the 2014 Freedom Prize awarding ceremony. The solemn commemoration featured speeches by Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas; Laima Liucija Andrikienė, Vytautas Petras Plečkaitis and Petras Vaitiekūnas, Signatories to the Act of Independence; and Rimantas Norvila, Bishop of Vilkaviškis.

The Speaker of the Seimas started the commemoration by stressing that the Day of the Defenders of Freedom is as important to the history of the country as the 16th of February and the 11th of March. “Fates of ordinary people lie behind these important dates. Fates that changed Lithuania and each and every one of us. If it were not for the night of the 13th of January, we would not be the way we are today. That was the night that mobilised and united us all with a common painful but powerful experience of Freedom that pierced through our whole being,” the Speaker of the Seimas says.

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[Speech by Mrs Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, at the solemn sitting of the Seimas dedicated to the commemoration of the Day of the Defenders of Freedom](#)

FREEDOM PRIZE 2014 AWARDED AT THE SEIMAS



Adam Michnik, Polish public figure, former dissident, one of the leaders of Solidarity, journalist, essayist, political analyst and editor-in-chief of the daily newspaper Gazeta Wyborcza, **was awarded the Freedom Prize 2014** in the Hall of the Act of 11 March of the Seimas. During the ceremony, Mr Michnik was awarded the Statuette of Liberty by Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, and the Freedom Prize Diploma by Irena Degutienė, Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Freedom Prize Commission.

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THE NATIONAL FLAG HOISTING CEREMONY WAS HELD TODAY IN COMMEMORATION OF THE 24TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DAY OF THE DEFENDERS OF FREEDOM



When delivering a speech during the event, Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, emphasised that “we have gathered today in the noble memory of and with the greatest respect to all the defenders of freedom of Lithuania who stood firmly like a living wall to protect our independence on 13 January 1991. Their determination and courage were inspired by the faith in freedom of Lithuania that was taking its first steps of independence. That freedom was burning within each and every of us. It was a joint and the only choice made by our people on our own free will and with an open heart”.

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TEXT

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