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## PARLIAMENTARY BUSSINES

### SEIMAS APPROVES THE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMME FOR THE SPRING SESSION

The Seimas has approved the legislative programme of the fourth (spring) session by adopting a relevant resolution by 67 votes in favour with 19 votes against and 22 abstentions.

During the parliamentary session, the Seimas will focus on social and labour relations, imposition of discipline in public finance management, fight against shadow economy, energy efficiency and energy security, prevention of corruption, improvement of the quality and availability of education, science, culture and health services through implementation of the relevant policies, and other pertinent matters.

### MORE

27 March 2014



**STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS BY H.E. DALIA GRYBAUSKAITĖ,  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA**

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

### LORETA GRAUŽINIENĖ, SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS, MET WITH LAURA BOLDRINI, PRESIDENT OF THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES OF THE ITALIAN PARLIAMENT, AND PIETRO GRASSO, PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE OF THE ITALIAN REPUBLIC



Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, visited Italy on the invitation of Laura Boldrini, President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Italian Parliament, and Evangelos-Vasileios Meimarakis, Speaker of the Hellenic Parliament. She took part in an international conference organised to discuss economic growth and employment in the EU.

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### COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS DISCUSSED THE STATE AND PROSPECTS OF INTER-PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION BETWEEN LITHUANIA AND THE USA

After U.S. Vice President Joe Biden's visit to Lithuania, during which the U.S. commitment to ensure the security of Lithuania was reaffirmed, the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Seimas and Žygimantas Pavilionis, Ambassador of the Republic of Lithuania to the United States of America, discussed the state and prospects of inter-parliamentary cooperation between Lithuania and the USA. Members of the Committee unanimously agreed that the USA had always been and remained an important strategic ally of Lithuania contributing significantly to ensuring the security of Lithuania and an important partner in seeking energy independence of Lithuania. Accepting that the U.S. Congress plays a vital role in the U.S. decision-making, members of the Committee agreed on the need to maintain and strengthen inter-parliamentary cooperation.

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### LORETA GRAUŽINIENĖ, SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS HOLDS A BILATERAL MEETING WITH THE NEW SPEAKER OF THE ESTONIAN PARLIAMENT

Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, had a bilateral meeting with Eiki Nestor, a newly elected Speaker of the Riigikogu of the Republic of Estonia. Eiki Nestor, who has been in politics for over a decade, visited the Seimas on many occasions. Nevertheless, it is his first official visit abroad in his capacity as Speaker of the Estonian Parliament.

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### LORETA GRAUŽINIENĖ, SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS, HOLDS A BILATERAL MEETING WITH EWA KOPACZ, MARSHAL OF THE POLISH SEJM



Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, had a bilateral meeting with Ewa Kopacz, Marshal of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland, and thanked the Marshal for her participation in the Conference of Speakers of European Union Parliaments.

"I am grateful to the parliamentarians of the Republic of Poland, who took an active part in the events that have been organised in Vilnius. Also, I express my gratitude to the Polish politicians, who supported us during a very responsible period of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union," Speaker Graužinienė said.

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

### SEIMAS STRONGLY CONDEMNS MILITARY AGGRESSION BY THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AGAINST UKRAINE AND THE OCCUPATION OF PART OF UKRAINE'S TERRITORY

At the plenary sitting on 13 March 2014, the Seimas adopted [the resolution](#) strongly condemning military aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine and the occupation of part of Ukraine's territory. The Resolution on Threats from the Russian Federation to security in Ukraine and across Europe was passed by 82 votes in favour, no votes against and 4 abstentions.

The Resolution adopted by the Seimas strongly supports Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity and expresses political solidarity with the new Ukrainian government and invites all Ukrainian authorities, political parties and the public to cooperate in implementing democratic reforms significant for the country's future and in restoring political and economic stability and the unity of society.

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### SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS LORETA GRAUŽINIENĖ MEETS WITH CHAIRMAN OF THE VERKHOVNA RADA AND INTERIM PRESIDENT OF UKRAINE OLEKSANDR TURCHYNOV IN KIEV

On 16 March the Speaker of the Seimas Loreta Graužinienė arrived in Kiev as the head of a Seimas delegation and had a tête-à-tête meeting with the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada and interim President of Ukraine Oleksandr Turchynov. The Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada thanked Loreta Graužinienė for her visit at this complicated time. Mr Turchynov emphasised that Lithuania for him had always been and would forever remain a reliable friend. Both speakers noted that the Russian attempt to redraw borders could not be tolerated and all democratic communities should put every effort to prevent this.

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### THE SPEAKERS OF THE SEIMAS, THE POLISH SENATE AND THE VERKHOVNA RADA HAVE SIGNED A JOINT STATEMENT CONDEMNING THE RUSSIAN INVASION OF CRIMEA

At the meeting of the presidium of the Lithuanian, Polish and Ukrainian parliamentary assembly the leaders of the three national Parliaments: the Speaker of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, Loreta Graužinienė; the Marshal of the Senate of the Republic of Poland, Bogdan Borusewicz; and the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada and interim President of Ukraine, Oleksandr Turchynov, signed a joint statement.

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### LORETA GRAUŽINIENĖ, SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS, MEETS WITH ARSENIY YATSENIUK, PRIME MINISTER OF UKRAINE, IN KIEV

During the visit to Ukraine, Speaker of the Seimas, Loreta Graužinienė, and Marshal of the Polish Senate, Bogdan Borusewicz, had a meeting with Prime Minister of Ukraine, Arseniy Yatseniuk. At the meeting, the Ukrainian Prime Minister asked EU Member States to provide financial aid to Ukraine as soon as possible. According to the Prime Minister, the former Ukrainian Government threw the country into bankruptcy; therefore, the incumbent authorities have to address serious economic problems at a very complex time, during the conflict with Russia.

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# ACCORD BETWEEN THE POLITICAL PARTIES REPRESENTED IN THE SEIMAS OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA ON STRATEGIC GUIDELINES FOR THE FOREIGN, SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA FOR 2014–2020

## SEIMAS AND EUROPEAN UNION

### SPEAKERS OF EUROPEAN UNION PARLIAMENTS MEET IN THE SEIMAS OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

On 6–8 April 2014, for the first time in the history of the country, the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania hosted the Conference of Speakers of European Union Parliaments. It is the final and one of the largest parliamentary dimension events of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, which is conducted by the national Parliament of the Member State holding the Presidency in the second semester of the year and organised by this Member State following the completion of its Presidency in the first semester of the next year.

### CONFERENCE OF SPEAKERS OF EUROPEAN UNION PARLIAMENTS: FOCUS ON COMBATING YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS

On 7 April the Conference of Speakers of European Union Parliaments has started in the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania. Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, opened the Conference and observed that the event was taking place in the historical Hall of the Act of 11 March where the independence of Lithuania was restored 20 years ago.

José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, was unable to attend the Conference due to the changes in the agenda and addressed the participants via a video message from Brussels. He noted in his speech that Europe as a whole had come out of recession.

At Session I, Speakers discussed the role of parliaments in tackling the consequences of the economic and financial crisis.

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### SPEAKERS OF EUROPEAN UNION PARLIAMENTS HAVE DISCUSSED GREATER INVOLVEMENT OF NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS IN THE EU LEGISLATIVE PROCESS



During the Conference of Speakers of European Union Parliaments held in the Seimas, Session II “Five Years after the Coming into Force of the Treaty of Lisbon: Lessons of Subsidiarity Checks in Parliaments” has discussed greater involvement of national Parliaments in the EU legislative process.

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## EU MEMBER STATES EXPRESS STAUNCH SUPPORT TO THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP COUNTRIES

Session III of the Conference of Speakers of European Union Parliaments in the Seimas focused on interparliamentary cooperation with the Eastern Partnership countries. Participants commemorated the victims who died on Maidan Square in Kiev by a minute of silence during the meeting, on the initiative of Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania.

The meeting began with a video address from Kiev made by Oleksandr Turchynov, Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and interim President of Ukraine. He said that signing the political provisions of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union on 21 March 2014 was a historic milestone in the relations between Ukraine and the European Union. The agreement formally enshrined a choice made by Ukraine's people in favour of European values. "We have to yet again rebuild the very basics of an independent democratic country – restore combat-prepared armed forces, transform a clan-based economy into a market economy of a democratic society, fight corruption which has corroded the framework of state authority, and establish the constitutional and legal guarantees so that the country should not revert to the times of dictatorship."

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## SPEAKERS OF EU PARLIAMENTS SUPPORT ECONOMIC SANCTIONS IN CASE OF ANY FURTHER STEPS BY THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO DESTABILISE THE SITUATION IN UKRAINE



In the closing session of the Conference, the Speakers of EU Parliaments adopted conclusions, condemning Russia's military intervention in and illegal annexation of Crimea. As underlined in the conclusions, the Speakers support the targeted sanctions adopted by the EU against the Russian officials who are directly responsible for the military intervention in Crimea and support additional measures, including economic sanctions, in case of any further steps by the Russian Federation to destabilise the situation in Ukraine.

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## THE DECLARATION OF COOPERATION AMONG THE PARLIAMENTS OF ITALY, LATVIA AND LUXEMBOURG SIGNED IN THE SEIMAS



On 7 April 2014, the declaration of cooperation among the parliaments of Italy, Latvia and Luxembourg in support of the preparation and fulfilment of the parliamentary dimension of the Presidencies of these three European Union Member States was signed in the Constitution Hall of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania.

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## SEIMAS TAKES OVER CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE IPEX BOARD

Following the Conference of Speakers of European Union Parliaments, the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania takes over the chairmanship of the IPEX (Interparliamentary EU Information Exchange) Board. In the view of Jonas Milerius, Secretary General of the Seimas, it is both a big honour and responsibility at the same time.

As noted in the Presidency Conclusions adopted by the Conference of Speakers of European Union Parliaments, the Speakers thank the German Bundestag for its successful chairmanship of the IPEX Board during the last four years. "Speakers note with satisfaction that it was during these years that IPEX became a reliable and effective tool to exchange documents and information relevant for interparliamentary cooperation. Speakers congratulate the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania upon assuming the chairmanship of the IPEX Board following this Conference and wish successful fulfilment of the Chair's mandate."

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[MORE \(PRESS RELEASES, DOCUMENTS, PHOTOS, VIDEOS ETC.\) ABOUT THE CONFERENCE OF SPEAKERS OF EUROPEAN UNION PARLIAMENTS](#) [SEE HERE.](#)

## EVENTS

### SEIMAS MARKS THE DAY OF RESTORATION OF LITHUANIA'S INDEPENDENCE



On 11 March the Seimas hosted the solemn commemoration of the Day of Restoration of Lithuania's Independence. The event featured congratulatory speeches made by Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas; Birutė Valionytė, Signatory to the Act of Independence and President of the Club of Signatories to the March 11 Independence Act of Lithuania; Kęstutis Kėvalas, Auxiliary Bishop of Kaunas; Gustav Bergemann, Chairman of the Thuringia-Lithuania Friendship Group, Landtag of Thuringia, Federal Republic of Germany; Giedrius Antanas Kuprevičius, composer and winner of the Lithuanian National Culture and Art Prize; and Algis Karpavičius, student of Kaunas University of

Technology, member of the mission Lituanica 80 and member of the Lithuanian satellite LitSat-1 team.

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[ADDRESS BY LORETA GRAUŽINIENĖ, SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS, AT THE SOLEMN COMMEMORATION OF THE DAY OF RESTORATION OF INDEPENDENCE](#)



[SPEECH BY LORETA GRAUŽINIENĖ, SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS, AT THE CEREMONY OF HOISTING THE FLAGS OF THE THREE BALTIC STATES](#)

## SEIMAS MARKS THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF LITHUANIA'S MEMBERSHIP OF NATO: LITHUANIA DEMONSTRATED ITS UNITY BY THE ACCESSION TO NATO



On 28 March 2014, the Hall of the Act of 11 March of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania hosted an international conference entitled Contribution of Parliaments to NATO Enlargement, which is organised by the Seimas Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on National Security and Defence to mark the 10th anniversary of Lithuania's membership of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation – the most powerful defence organisation in the world.

The Conference was welcomed by Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, Prof Benediktas Juodka, Chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and Artūras Paulauskas, Chair of the Committee on National Security and Defence.

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[WELCOME ADDRESS BY MRS LORETA GRAUŽINIENĖ, SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS, AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE "CONTRIBUTION OF PARLIAMENTS TO NATO ENLARGEMENT"](#)

## ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE EUROPEAN STATES ON THEIR ROAD TO TRANS-ATLANTIC INTEGRATION AFTER THE COLD WAR ADDRESSED AT THE SEIMAS' CONFERENCE ON NATO



The Road of trans-Atlantic integration of the European countries after the Cold War, major achievements and the role of parliaments were overviewed during the first session of the international conference Contribution of Parliaments to NATO Enlargement, which takes place at the Seimas. Relations between Russia and Ukraine were also among the addressed issues. When speaking about Lithuania's decision to join NATO, Linas Linkevičius, Minister of Foreign Affairs, recalled the situation which led to the adoption of this historic decision, and the initial debate on possible neutrality of our country. "Very soon, already in 1992, <...> we realised that vacuum is never completely empty Therefore taking into

account the size of our country, our defence capacity and the geographic location, we had to choose a collective defence system. It was a very easy choice as there were almost no alternatives to NATO."

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## NATO MUST REMAIN UNITED AND SEND A CLEAR SIGNAL



Juozas Olekas, Minister of National Defence, Adam Schiff, Member of the U.S. House of Representatives, Chairman of the Baltic Caucus, Irakli Sesiashvili, Chairman of the Defence and Security Committee, Parliament of Georgia and Lt. Gen. Arvydas Pocius, Chief of Defence of the Republic of Lithuania, discussed NATO enlargement prospects and new security challenges in their speeches delivered during the second session of the conference.

### [MORE](#)

[SPEECH BY ADAM SCHIFF, MEMBER OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, CHAIRMAN OF THE BALTIC CAUCUS, AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CONTRIBUTION OF PARLIAMENTS TO NATO ENLARGEMENT](#)



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