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A delegation of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL) of the European Parliament has met with Members of the Seimas and discussed unemployment, promotion of employment, the lack of qualified labour force, emigration and the events covering these issues to be held in the framework of the parliamentary dimension of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU.

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GEDIMINAS KIRKILAS: LITHUANIA AND HUNGARY SUPPORT EU ENLARGEMENT AND THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP

Hungary supports the priorities of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, further EU development and the Eastern Partnership. This was confirmed by the visiting Minister of State for EU Affairs of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Enikő Győri, at the meeting with Gediminas Kirkilas, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas and Chair of the Committee on European Affairs. "The fact that Croatia will become a Member State of the EU during the Lithuanian Presidency shows that the EU enlargement process is still viable," Ms Győri said. The Minister of State exchanged her insights with Mr Kirkilas about the European integration prospects of the Eastern Partnership (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) and Balkan countries.

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LITHUANIA WILL SEEK TO OPEN FOUR CHAPTERS IN TURKEY'S EU ACCESSION NEGOTIATIONS

During its Presidency of the Council of the European Union, Lithuania will seek to intensify the process of Turkey's EU integration. The Presidency agenda in relation to further EU enlargement and prospects of Turkey's membership will, among other things, depend on the progress achieved in Turkey's accession negotiations during the Irish Presidency.

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EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT DELEGATION: DURING ITS PRESIDENCY, LITHUANIA WILL PLAY A KEY ROLE IN DEVELOPING THE EU'S FREE TRADE POLICY



With the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU) drawing close, the delegation of the Committee on International Trade (INTA) of the European Parliament (EP) paid a visit to the Seimas. In its meeting with Members of the Seimas, the EP delegation discussed the free trade policy developed between the EU and third countries, especially focusing on the process of negotiations on the EU-US free trade agreement.

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SEIMAS SPEAKER GEDVILAS: WE WILL TRY TO MAKE MAXIMUM USE OF THE COOPERATION WITH THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT DURING THE PRESIDENCY



On 31 May the delegation of the Conference of Presidents of the European Parliament – the most important of all the EP delegations coming to the following Presidency of the Council of the EU – has had its first visit to the Seimas. The EP delegation met with the Board of the Seimas, chairs of political groups, chairs and deputy chairs of committees.

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ENERGY MATTERS IN FOCUS DURING THE MEETING OF MEMBERS OF THE CONFERENCE OF PRESIDENTS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND MEMBERS OF THE SEIMAS



Members of the Board of the Seimas, leaders of political groups, committee chairpersons and their deputies have met with the delegation of the Conference of Presidents of the European Parliament led by Martin Schulz, President of the European Parliament. Among other topics, the participants of the meeting have discussed the priorities of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU), interparliamentary cooperation, key political issues related to the EU Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020, and EU energy policy...

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PARLIAMENTARY BUSSINES

SEIMAS HAS APPROVED THE CEF CONCLUSION ON POSSIBLE NON-COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY OF THE PROPOSAL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

With 80 votes for and 1 abstention, the Seimas has adopted the Resolution regarding a reasoned opinion on possible non-compliance with the principle of subsidiarity of the Proposal of the European Commission for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management COM(2013) 133 (draft No XIIP-505), thus approving the conclusion of the Committee on European Affairs.

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COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS ANNOUNCES: £ 3000 – THAT IS HOW MUCH A SLAVE OF THE 21ST CENTURY COSTS

The international discussion titled European Communities Against Trafficking was held at the Seimas on 15 May 2013. Trafficking in human beings, including child trafficking, is one of the heaviest crimes committed around the world, grossly violating human rights, honour and dignity. It is a contemporary form of slavery which is prohibited by the legal acts of the European Union and absolutely unacceptable to the democratic community. The international project called European Communities Against Trafficking, which has been launched in the UK, Lithuania and Italy, was introduced during the discussion

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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

BILATERAL COOPERATION DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING BETWEEN SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS AND SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA



This year Lithuania and Indonesia mark the 20th anniversary of diplomatic relations. On this occasion the delegation of the Republic of Indonesia led by Marzuki Alie, Speaker of the House of Representatives, who is visiting Lithuania, met with Vydas Gedvilas, Speaker of the Seimas, Benediktas Juodka, Chair of the Seimas Committee on Foreign Affairs, and Petras Auštrevičius, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas and Deputy Chair of the Committee on European Affairs.

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SEIMAS HAS LAUNCHED AN EXHIBITION, INDONESIA IN THE AGE OF GLOBALISATION: BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL



On the occasion of the visit of the delegation of the Republic of Indonesia Seimas has launched an exhibition, Indonesia in the Age of Globalisation: Bright and Beautiful. The exhibition was presented by Vydas Gedvilas, Speaker of the Seimas, and Marzuki Alie, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia, who was on an official visit to Lithuania with the accompanying delegation on 1–3 May 2013.

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THE MEETING BETWEEN THE SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS AND THE PRESIDENT OF FINLAND FOCUSED ON ENERGY MATTERS



Vydas Gedvilas, Speaker of the Seimas, met with Sauli Niistö, President of Finland, on his official visit to Lithuania. The Speaker of the Seimas expressed his appreciation of the intensive and dynamic cooperation and the development of political, economic, and other bilateral ties between Lithuania and Finland.

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SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS MEETS WITH PRIME MINISTER OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC



The Speaker of the Seimas, Vydas Gedvilas, has met with the Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, Petr Nečas, who is visiting Lithuania. Bilateral economic, political and cultural matters have been discussed at the meeting. As the former Chair of the Group for Inter-Parliamentary Relations with the Czech Republic in the Seimas during 2008–2012, Mr Gedvilas expressed his appreciation of the close relations between the Lithuanian and the Czech Parliaments, and remarkably their recent intensification on the committee level.

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SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA, MEETS WITH JOSIP LEKO, SPEAKER OF THE CROATIAN PARLIAMENT



Vydas Gedvilas, Speaker of the Seimas and the delegation led by him has met with Josip Leko, Speaker of the Croatian Parliament (Sabor) in Zagreb. Vydas Gedvilas noted that this was the first visit of the head of the Lithuanian Parliament in the history of bilateral relations held in the period of special significance to Lithuania – on the eve of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU and Croatia's EU accession. "We feel delighted and greatly support Croatia's membership in the EU and are ready to share our experience", says the Speaker of the Seimas. "Croatia has shown a good example to the other Western Balkan countries. We hope for your active role in strengthening regional cooperation", says Vydas Gedvilas.

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SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS EXPRESSES SUPPORT TO CROATIA'S MEMBERSHIP OF THE EU AT THE MEETING WITH THE CROATIAN PRESIDENT

During his official visit to Croatia, Vydas Gedvilas, Speaker of the Seimas, and the delegation led by him met with Ivo Josipović, President of the Republic of Croatia. At the meeting, Vydas Gedvilas underlined that Lithuania supports Croatia's upcoming membership of the European Union. "As the country taking over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union on 1 July, the date marking the start of your membership, we congratulate you on joining the EU," Vydas Gedvilas said.

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CONNIE HEDEGAARD, EUROPEAN COMMISSIONER FOR CLIMATE ACTION, MEETS WITH THE SEIMAS COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION



The priorities of the EU climate policy and other relevant environmental issues were discussed at the meeting between the members of the Seimas Committee on Environment Protection and Connie Hedegaard, European Commissioner for Climate Action.

The European Commissioner talked on a most pressing current issue under discussion in the Seimas, namely, legal regulation on shale gas. She pointed out that it is up to each EU Member State to decide what energy sources to use, be it fossil fuel, nuclear energy, shale gas or renewable energy sources. Shale gas, in her view, would be a better option than fossil carbon, but a significantly worse option than renewable energy or improved energy efficiency. Lithuania has a huge potential in the latter sphere. The main obstacle to the development of shale industries in Europe is high population density. In addition, experts have informed the European Commission that shale gas in Europe will never cost as cheap as it does in the United States. Ms Hedegaard reminded the audience that the European Commission is going to develop legislation this year that sets forth the basic requirements (including environmental) for the potential investors to meet before making their decisions. Both Connie Hedegaard and Janez Potočnik, the European Commissioner for Environment, speak out for binding obligations on Member States to meet high environmental standards during the process of extraction of shale gas.

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INTER-PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION IN FOCUS AT THE MEETING OF THE SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS AND THE PRESIDENT OF ESTONIA



Speaker of the Seimas, Vydas Gedvilas, met with President of the Republic of Estonia, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, who arrived in Lithuania on an official visit. The Speaker of the Seimas stressed that the address of the Estonian President at the Seimas sitting, scheduled in the programme of the official visit, was an exceptional and significant event indeed, one which was eagerly anticipated by Members of the Seimas. Mr Gedvilas was also happy to note that not only did the President have an opportunity to see the historical building of the Seimas but he could also address the Members of the Seimas in the new Plenary Chamber, which technologically is among the most modern in Europe. On that note, the President said, "I envy you."

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EVENTS

THE SEIMAS MARKS THE UPCOMING LITHUANIAN PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EU WITH THE BICYCLE RIDE TAKE YOUR OWN BIKE TO EUROPE 2013



A traditional parliamentary event – the bicycle ride called Take Your Own Bike to Europe – took place in Vilnius on 25 May 2013. This time the event was to mark the upcoming Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The tradition to organise bicycle rides comes from May 2004 when a ride was held for the first time to celebrate Lithuania's accession to the EU.

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