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## PARLIAMENTARY BUSSINES

### PRESENTATION OF THE WORK PROGRAMME STARTED THE SEVENTH (AUTUMN) SESSION OF THE SEIMAS



Opening the seventh regular (autumn) session of the Seimas on 10 September 2015, Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, and Algirdas Butkevičius, Prime Minister, presented the draft Work Programme to the parliamentarians. The leader of the parliament read a welcome address on behalf of Dalia Grybauskaitė, President of the Republic of Lithuania. The registered draft Work Programme includes 677 draft legislative acts (in addition to the accompanying draft legislation) out of which 184 were proposed by the Government, 15 by the President, and more than 370 by members/political groups of the Seimas.



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### SEIMAS ADOPTED THE LAW ON ETHICS OF BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH

On 17 September 2015, the Seimas adopted the Law on Ethics of Biomedical Research, which sets forth the requirements for the ethics of biomedical research; the conditions for the handling of human biological samples and health information for biomedical research purposes; the conditions for the activities of biobanks; the procedure for granting authorisation to conduct biomedical research and the procedure for the supervision of biomedical research, and the liability of research sponsors and researchers for the damage done to the health of the person involved in the research or death thereof.

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## SEIMAS SUSTAINED A PRESIDENTIAL VETO: POLITICAL PARTIES WILL NOT BE PUBLIC INFORMATION PRODUCERS

On 22 September 2015, the Seimas sustained a veto by the President of the Republic of Lithuania, Dalia Grybauskaitė, and adopted the amendments to the Law on the Provision of Information to the Public together with all the amendments suggested by the country leader, following the repeated submission to the Seimas. The draft Law with all the President's amendments received 79 votes in favour, 3 against and 26 abstentions.

The earlier amendments of 23 June 2015 should have lifted restrictions for political parties to be public information producers and/or participants as of next year. The Chief Adviser to the President, Rasa Svetikaitė, had previously said that the Law was vetoed because it could have jeopardised a safeguard against control of the media by political parties, which was in force for almost 20 years. The Chief Adviser noted that in order to retain and strengthen the constitutional guarantees for the protection of media freedom, ensure proper provision of information to the public and prevent the politicisation of the media, restrictions for political parties should remain in place.

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## SEIMAS DISCUSSED LITHUANIA'S APPROACH TO THE REFUGEE CRISIS

On 24 September 2015, at a plenary sitting, the Seimas held a debate *On the Approach of the State of Lithuania to the Refugee Crisis*, which brought together Algirdas Butkevičius, Prime Minister; Linas Antanas Linkevičius, Minister of Foreign Affairs; Saulius Skvernelis, Minister of the Interior; Algirdas Šešelgis, Vice-Minister of Social Security and Labour; Valdas Vasiliauskas, Chair of the Migration Commission of the Seimas; and members of the political groups in the Seimas.

Mr Linkevičius started the discussion by pointing out that in fact 95 per cent of Syrian refugees are to be regarded, under the terms of the Geneva Convention, as refugees in need of protection. In his view, Europe has already taken in approximately 500 000 Syrians out of the 4 million who have fled the country. The minister believes that the greatest focus will be on the operation of "Hotspots" – migration management centres used for the initial registration of refugees and distinguishing of people fleeing war from economic migrants. "Italy, Greece and Hungary have set up the initial registration points [...], and it is them that should fulfil this function," said the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

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Speaker of the Seimas:  
"Various institutions should actively cooperate on refugee issues"

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

### MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AFFAIRS MET WITH THE DELEGATION OF THE SUPREME COURT OF UKRAINE



On 8 September 2015, Julius Sabatauskas, Chair of the Committee on Legal Affairs; Stasys Šedbaras, Deputy Chair of the Committee; and Vilija Aleknaitė Abramikienė, Member of the Committee, had a meeting with the delegation of judges from the Supreme Court of Ukraine. The delegation was led by Yaroslav Romaniuk, President of the Supreme Court of Ukraine.

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## SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS WELCOMED A NEW AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN



On 9 September 2015, Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, welcomed Toyoei Shigeeda, a newly appointed Ambassador of Japan to Lithuania.

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## SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS MET WITH THE NEW AMBASSADOR OF THE UNITED KINGDOM



On 9 September 2015, the Speaker of the Seimas, Loreta Graužinienė, met with the newly appointed Ambassador of the United Kingdom to Lithuania, Claire Lawrence. At the meeting, they discussed bilateral cooperation and close inter-parliamentary relations.

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## SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS MET WITH MINISTER OF DEFENCE OF GEORGIA



During the meeting on 14 September 2015, Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, and Tinatin Khidasheli, Minister of Defence of Georgia, had an exchange of views on the relevant security issues and commended the successful bilateral cooperation. The Speaker of the Seimas highlighted Lithuania's consistent support to Georgia's efforts to move towards European integration and NATO membership and urged to continue implementing reforms. "Lithuania is prepared to assist Georgia in ensuring deeper European integration. Georgia has made significant progress along this road, but, at present, it is important to keep up the momentum and continue the work in progress," said the Speaker.

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## COMMITTEE ON RURAL AFFAIRS MET WITH THE COMMISSIONER ANDRIUKAITIS



On 17 September 2015, the Seimas Committee on Rural Affairs met with Vytenis Povilas Andriukaitis, European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety. The meeting focused on the fight against African swine fever (ASF), the Russian embargo and some other important issues.

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## **SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS MET WITH GEORGIA'S MINISTER OF JUSTICE**



On 18 September 2015, Loreta Grauzinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, met with Thea Tsulukiani, Minister of Justice of Georgia, on her visit to Lithuania. During the meeting, the Speaker of the Seimas expressed her appreciation of Georgia's progress towards European integration and encouraged to actively continue with the reforms in line with the obligations imposed by the Association Agreement.

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## **SPEAKER GRAUŽINIENĖ: "LITHUANIA IS INTERESTED IN THE OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY THE INVESTMENT PLAN FOR EUROPE"**



On 18 September 2015, Loreta Grauzinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, met with Jyrki Katainen, Vice-President of the European Commission (EC) for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, and with Vytenis Povilas Andriukaitis, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety. During the meeting, the leader of the Seimas and high-level EC officials discussed the Investment Plan for Europe and opportunities for Lithuania offered by the European Fund for Strategic Investments which is a key component of the Investment Plan.

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## **MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON EUROPEAN AFFAIRS MET WITH KATAINEN, VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION, ANDRIUKAITIS, MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION, AND HOYER, PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK**



On 18 September 2015, members of the Seimas Committee on European Affairs met with Jyrki Katainen, Vice-President of the European Commission, Vytenis Povilas Andriukaitis, Member of the European Commission, and Werner Hoyer, President of the European Investment Bank. The aim of the meeting was to inform members of the Committee about the Investment Plan for Europe proposed by the European Commission, which aims to boost economic growth and job creation in the EU, and to discuss opportunities offered for Lithuania by the European Fund for Strategic Investments, a key component of the Investment Plan for Europe.

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## **ZITA ŽVIKIENĖ, CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS: UK'S FIGHT AGAINST THE MODERN SLAVERY IS MERCILESS; THERE ARE CERTAINLY LESSONS TO BE LEARNT**

On 18 September 2015, Zita Žvikienė, Chair of the Seimas Committee on Human Rights, had a meeting with Kevin Hyland, UK's Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner. The meeting was also attended by Julius Sabatauskas, Chair of the Committee on Legal Affairs; Giedrė Purvaneckienė, Head of the Parliamentary Group Parliamentarians against Trafficking in Human Beings; and Ona Valiukevičiūtė, Member of the Committee on Human Rights. Prior to his appointment as Commissioner, Mr Hyland headed the Human Trafficking Unit of the London Metropolitan Police, renowned for its robust record in fighting human trafficking on an international scale. Kevin Hyland has over 30 years of experience in investigating organised crime and in securing several long-term convictions in several notorious cases of trafficking in human beings.

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## SPEAKERS OF LITHUANIAN AND LATVIAN PARLIAMENTS MET IN ROKIŠKIS



On 19 September 2015, Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, and Ināra Mūrniece, Speaker of the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia, had a tête-à-tête meeting that was arranged during the annual celebration of the Day of Baltic Unity. The leaders of the Lithuanian and Latvian parliaments have discussed the recent political matters and the issue of refugees that both states have to deal with.

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## SEIMAS SPEAKER: “WE NEED TO BE UNITED AND WORK TOGETHER TO ADDRESS COMPLEX CHALLENGES”



Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, [welcomed](#) the people of the town of Rokiškis and guests from Latvia who all gathered together to celebrate the Day of Baltic Unity. This yearly international event is alternately organised by the parliaments of Latvia and Lithuania in either country, making it the 15th anniversary this year.

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## SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS MET WITH HIGH REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNION FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND SECURITY POLICY



On 21 September 2015, Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, had a meeting with Federica Mogherini, who came to Lithuania for the first time in her capacity as High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission.

The meeting primarily addressed the situation in Ukraine, the implementation of the Eastern Partnership, the support for Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova in their pursuit of Euro-Atlantic integration, and the challenges posed by refugees.

“The Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania continues making major efforts to ensure the implementation of the Eastern Partnership programme. We have to continue providing active support to Ukraine. We cannot stop halfway, because Ukraine is looking forward to our support. We are well aware of the problems caused by illegal migration and we are searching for ways to tackle them. However, the geopolitical changes and challenges in the region should not restrain the ambitions and aspirations to implement the Eastern Partnership programme”, Loreta Graužinienė said during the meeting.

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## SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS MET WITH TIMO SOINI, MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF FINLAND



On 24 September 2015, Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, met with Timo Soini, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland, who was visiting Lithuania. The meeting mainly focused on bilateral political and economic cooperation and EU’s decisions on ways to tackle the refugee crisis.

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## MEETING OF THE BA PRESIDIUM MEETING OF THE BA BUDGET AND AUDIT COMMITTEE 10TH BA BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

### PRESIDIUM OF THE BALTIC ASSEMBLY STRESSED THE NEED TO JOINTLY DISCUSS THE REFUGEE



On 25 September 2015, the events of the Baltic Assembly (BA) commenced in Palanga. In the morning, the BA Presidium held a meeting to debate the programme of the upcoming 34th Session of the Baltic Assembly and 21st Baltic Council, the answers of the Baltic Council of Ministers to the BA questions related to the implementation of BA recommendations and the Latvian Presidency of the Baltic Assembly in 2016.

After Giedrė Purvaškaitė-Puraneckienė, Head of the Lithuanian delegation to the BA and the President of the BA, made reference to the refugee issue as a highly relevant problem to all countries, members of the BA Presidium decided that certain aspects of the refugee crisis would be covered during the 34th Session of the Baltic Assembly to be held in Vilnius in November this year, and that it would be appropriate to arrange an event devoted for the topic during the Latvian Presidency of the Baltic Assembly in 2016.



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### ESTONIAN RIIGIKOGU – CHAMPION OF THE BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT OF PARLIAMENTARIANS FOR THE BALTIC ASSEMBLY CUP



The 10th traditional Basketball Tournament of the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian Parliamentarians for the Baltic Assembly Cup concluded in Palanga. The team of the Seimas defeated the representatives of the Latvian Saeima by 37:23, but it lost to the Estonian parliamentarians by 43:33. Both the teams were defeated by the



parliamentarians of the Estonian Riigikogu, who became champion and won the travelling Baltic Assembly Cup for the ninth time in a row.

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[More about the event](#)

## JOINT MEETING OF THE ECONOMICS, ENERGY AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE AND THE NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE OF THE BALTIC ASSEMBLY

### IMPACT OF THE RUSSIAN EMBARGO FOR THE BALTIC ECONOMIES DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING OF BA COMMITTEES



On 2 October 2015, Aleksandras Stulginskis University in Kaunas, Lithuania, hosted the meeting of the Economics, Energy and Innovation Committee and the Natural Resources and Environment Committee of the Baltic Assembly (BA). The first item on the agenda was the impact of the Russian embargo on the Baltic economies. Presentations were delivered by members of the responsible ministries and followed by a discussion.

First, Mr Pauža gave an overview of the state of the Baltic economies following the EU sanctions against Russia and the latter's response and stressed that the impact on individual EU Member States was different. He also spoke about the need for cooperation, which is currently insufficient, and search for new markets and technologies, as the situation is not likely to change soon.

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### BALTIC ASSEMBLY COMMITTEES DISCUSSED GMOS

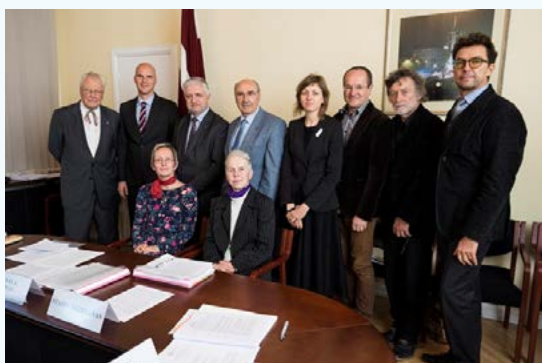


On 2 October 2015, the committees on Economics, Energy and Innovation Committee and the Natural Resources and Environment Committee of the Baltic Assembly had their meeting in Kaunas, Lithuania. The event took place in Aleksandras Stulginskis University. The impact of the Russian embargo on the Baltic economies was discussed in the first part of the meeting. The key item on the agenda in the second part of the meeting was the regulation of genetically modified organisms in the Baltic States and the EU.

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[More about the event](#)

### BALTIC ASSEMBLY PRIZE FOR THE ARTS AWARDED TO CONDUCTOR MODESTAS PITRĖNAS



On 6 October 2015, the Joint Jury of the Baltic Assembly Prize decided to award the Baltic Assembly Prize for the Arts 2015 to conductor Modestas Pitrenas for his endeavours to strengthen cultural ties among the Baltic States by conducting numerous plays and concerts in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. The Baltic Assembly Prize for Literature went to Māris Bērziņš (Latvia), and the Baltic Assembly Prize for Science went to Clarita-Eva Pettai and Vello Pettai (Estonia).

The prizes will be awarded during the 34th session of the Baltic Assembly which is to be held in Vilnius in November 2015.

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## EVENTS

### THE BANNER OF PEACE SOLEMNLY PRESENTED TO LITHUANIA IN THE SEIMAS



On 10 September 2015, at a ceremony in the Seimas, Dr Alicia Rodriguez Fernandez, President of the International Committee for the Banner of Peace, a UN non-governmental organisation, presented to Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, the Banner of Peace and designated Lithuania as the Republic of Peace.

Dr Rodriguez presented the Banner of Peace to our country having assessed Lithuania's contribution in spreading the culture of Peace after the 15th of April was declared as the Universal Day of Culture in Lithuania, a day when the Banner of Peace is hoisted across the country, while towns and schools are being designated as the bearers of peace. Auksė Narvilienė, Coordinator of the International Committee for the Banner of Peace in Lithuania, says that Lithuania is the first country in the world to receive the title of the Republic of Peace.



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### GEDIMINAS KIRKILAS, DEPUTY SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS AND CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE ON EUROPEAN AFFAIRS: YIVO – AN INVALUABLE PART OF CULTURE OF THE LITHUANIAN JEWS AND JEWS OF THE WORLD



On Sunday, 20 September 2015, when delivering his speech on the 90th anniversary of YIVO (Institute for Jewish Research), Gediminas Kirkilas, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas and Chair of the Committee on European Affairs, stressed the contribution of YIVO and Litvaks to the Lithuanian science, culture and public life.

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### SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS: THE JEWISH HOLOCAUST IS PART OF THE HISTORY OF LITHUANIA



On 22 September 2015, Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, took part in the ceremony at the Paneriai Memorial dedicated to pay tribute to the victims of the Jewish genocide in Lithuania. When delivering her [speech](#), the Speaker stressed that the Jewish nation had always been firmly rooted in the Lithuanian soil; therefore, the genocide carried out by the German invaders was also part of the history of Lithuania.

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## PHOTO MOMENTS



*Irena Degutienė, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas, Marija Aušrinė Pavilionienė and Giedrė Purvaneckienė meet with the delegation of the Svenska Kvinnors EuropaNätverk, Swedish women's European network.  
4 September 2015*



*Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, meets with Bernadette Ségol, Secretary General of the European Trade Union Confederation; Artūras Černiauskas, President of the Lithuanian Trade Union Confederation; Kristina Krupavičienė, President of the Lithuanian Trade Union Solidarity.  
10 September 2015*



*Prof. Dr Wolfgang Hermann von Stetten, Honorary Consul of Lithuania in the German federal state of Baden-Württemberg, visits the Seimas.  
15 September 2015*



*Vydas Gedvilas, First Deputy Speaker of the Seimas, meets David Usupashvili, Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia.  
15 September 2015*



*Gediminas Kirkilas, Chair of the Seimas Committee on European Affairs, meets with the Group for Inter-parliamentary Relations with the Baltic States of the Austrian Parliament.  
17 September 2015*



*Members of the Seimas Committees on Foreign Affairs, on European Affairs, and on Economics meet with the expert delegation of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, headed by Mari Kiviniemi, Deputy Secretary-General of the OECD.  
17 September 2015*



*Opening of the exhibition Icons on Ammunition Boxes from Eastern Ukraine by Sofia Atlantova and Oleksandr Klymenko. 21 September 2015*



*Vydas Gedvilas, First Deputy Speaker of the Seimas, meets the delegation of the members of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. 23 September 2015*

*For more photos of the September 2015 events and meetings, see [here](#).*

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