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#### PREPARATION OF THE SEIMAS FOR THE LITHUANIAN PRESIDENCY OF THE EU COUNCIL

#### MEMBERS OF NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS OF THE EU MEMBER STATES AND CANDIDATE COUNTRIES AND MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ARE INVITED TO THE EVENTS TO BE HELD IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PARLIAMENTARY DIMENSION OF THE LITHUANIAN PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Speaker of the Seimas, Vydas Gedvilas, has sent a letter inviting Members of national Parliaments of the EU Member States and Candidate Countries and Members of the European Parliament to attend the events to be held in the framework of the parliamentary dimension of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, which Lithuania takes over from Ireland on 1 July 2013. During the Presidency, the Seimas will host 10 meetings. The Lithuanian Presidency of the Council ends on 31 December 2013.

The Speaker of the Lithuanian Parliament sent the letter to the President of the European Parliament Martin Schulz and Speakers of 40 parliamentary chambers of the EU Member States and six Parliaments of the EU Candidate Countries.

“The Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania will contribute to the implementation of the key priorities of the European Union – higher employment and financial sustainability – with an aim to ensure economic growth and competition. The Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania will play a fundamental role by assisting in the achievement of the priorities of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union: greater energy security; efficient implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and enhanced regional cooperation; rapprochement of the Eastern Partnership countries with the EU by implementing reforms and concluding intended agreements with the European Union; efficient protection of the external borders of the European Union through the development of the integrated management of the EU external borders and strengthening of the fight against smuggling and fraud,” the letter reads.

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#### [CALENDAR OF PARLIAMENTARY DIMENSION EVENTS OF THE LITHUANIAN PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION](#)

## **GEDIMINAS KIRKILAS, CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE ON EUROPEAN AFFAIRS: THE PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION SHOULD TAKE PART IN THE DEBATE ON THE ECONOMIC AND MONETARY UNION**

“Non-Euro area Member States and the Presidency Parliaments should not be left behind in the debate on the EU’s economic and monetary union”, said Gediminas Kirkilas, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas and Chair of the Committee on European Affairs, in his opening address at the meeting of Chairmen of Committees on European Affairs of national Parliaments and representatives of the European Parliament in Copenhagen, Denmark, on 11 March 2013.

This was Mr Kirkilas’ reaction to the proposal from the French National Assembly to set up a conference to discuss issues related to the EU’s economic and monetary union and establish, in the framework of the conference, a special committee made up of representatives of the national Parliaments of countries in the euro area and the European Parliament. The French proposal relates to the implementation of Article 13 of the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union (the so-called Fiscal Compact). The article highlights the need to enhance the role of the legislative bodies of the Member States and the EU in decision-making on EU level as regards economic coordination and management in the EU.

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## **GEDIMINAS KIRKILAS: THERE IS INCREASINGLY MORE HOPE THAT UKRAINE WILL SIGN THE ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT WITH THE EU DURING LITHUANIA’S PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Hopes are high that Ukraine will sign the Association Agreement, including the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement, with the EU at the Eastern Partnership Summit to be held in Vilnius on 28-29 November 2013 during the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU. This was confirmed today at the meeting in the Seimas between Gediminas Kirkilas, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas and Chair of the Committee on European Affairs, and Valerii Zhovtenko, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ukraine in Lithuania.

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[Four Seimas Committee Chairs visit the EU institutions](#)

[The Seimas delegation briefed the EU institutions on the priorities of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU and parliamentary dimension events](#)

## **PARLIAMENTARY BUSSINES**

### **ON 10 MARCH 2013, THE SEIMAS CONVENED FOR THE SECOND (SPRING) SESSION. ON 14 MARCH, THE SEIMAS APPROVED THE WORK PROGRAMME OF THE SESSION**

The second (spring) session of the Seimas brought national representatives together on 10 March 2013 (Sunday). In his opening address, Vydas Gedvilas, Speaker of the Seimas, congratulated the assembled Members of the Seimas and read out the Letter to the Seimas by President Dalia Grybauskaitė.

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[Address by Vydas Gedvilas, Speaker of the Seimas, on the occasion of the launch of the spring session](#)

### **PROPOSAL TO GRANT THE STATUS OF A PROJECT OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE TO THE VIA BALTICA PROJECT AND EAST WEST TRANSPORT CORRIDOR IN LITHUANIA**

**Vladislavas Kondratovičius**, Vice Minister of Transport, presented to the Seimas Draft Resolution No. XIP-4706, aimed to grant the status of a project of national importance to the Via Baltica Project, as well as modernise roads, improve transport links between Western Europe and the Baltic States on the one hand, and the Baltic States and Nordic countries, on the other, as well as ensure faster implementation of the project and swifter land acquisition for public needs.

The Vice Minister says that the implementation of the Via Baltica Project is expected to result in increased mobility of persons and freight, better communication with the Baltic States and speedier development of the Baltic Sea Region, reduction of congestion in the European road network, improved quality of transport services, shorter duration of travel, higher passenger and freight flows and more security through constructing interchanges and installing smart transport systems.

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## THE WORK OF THE 16<sup>TH</sup> GOVERNMENT PRESENTED TO THE SEIMAS

**Algirdas Butkevicius, Prime Minister, presented a report on the First 100 Days of the 16th Government, which was followed by a discussion at the plenary sitting of the Seimas**

In his review of the initiated and projected activities, the Head of Government stressed that the Government would aim at responsible implementation of the Coalition Government's Programme and creation of a welfare state, avoiding hasty or ill-founded reforms. "The Government of this legislative period is ready to ensure continuity, which has never existed in Lithuanian politics before. We will carry on with the budget saving policy by particularly focusing on the strategic energy projects, the development of which should be fuelled by new initiatives of cooperation with our regional partners. We support the pension reform. In addition, we will continue the reform of the social support system and the implementation of the Lithuania 2030 Strategy", Algirdas Butkevicius noted.

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## THE SEIMAS HAS APPROVED THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE COMMITTEE ON EUROPEAN AFFAIRS ON POSSIBLE NON-COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY OF THE PROPOSAL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

The Seimas has approved the conclusions of the Seimas Committee on European Affairs that the EU Fourth Railway Package conflicts with the principle of subsidiarity. The plenary has adopted the resolutions (drafts No XIIP-391, No XIIP-392, No XIIP-393, No XIIP-394 and No XIIP-395) approving the conclusions.

One of the major arguments put forward by the Committee relates to the measures presented by the Commission on 30 January which are aimed at delegating important functions (e.g. safety certification) from national safety authorities to the European Rail Agency. The Committee is of the opinion that these measures are not reasonably necessary for they would lead to discriminatory treatment of small carriers on the market and to more expensive rail passenger services.

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## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



### AT THEIR MEETING, THE SPEAKERS OF THE RIKSDAG AND THE SEIMAS DISCUSSED ENERGY, EU PRIORITIES AND EASTERN PARTNERSHIP

During his official visit to Stockholm, Mr Vydas Gedvilas, Speaker of the Seimas, met with Mr Per Westerberg, Speaker of the Riksdag of the Kingdom of Sweden. The meeting focused on the upcoming Lithuania's Presidency of the Council of the European Union and future priorities of the EU, particularly the Eastern Partnership and energy.

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## SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS: WE WILL SEEK FOR CLOSER BILATERAL COOPERATION WITH FINLAND

**Vydas Gedvilas**, Speaker of the Seimas, welcomed **Eero Heinäluoma**, Speaker of the Eduskunta of the Republic of Finland, who arrived at the Seimas on a very special day for Lithuania, the Day of Restoration of Independence. Mr Gedvilas stressed that cooperation between Finland, other Nordic and Baltic countries is among Lithuania's key priorities. In his turn, Mr Heinäluoma, Speaker of the Eduskunta of the Republic of Finland, extended congratulations to Lithuania on the Occasion of Restoration of Independence and assured that he understood how significant that day was for Lithuania.



*Eero Heinäluoma and Vydas Gedvilas.  
Photo by Olga Posaškova  
(Office of the Seimas)*

Possibilities for inter-parliamentary cooperation and priorities of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU were discussed during the meeting. The two Speakers also exchanged their opinions on Lithuania's and Finland's experience in the energy sector. Speaker of the Seimas expressed his hope that Members of the Finnish Parliament would take part in all the parliamentary dimension events of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU.

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*Vydas Gedvilas and Eugeniusz Grzeszczak.  
Photo by Olga Posaškova  
(Office of the Seimas)*

## **SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS: DISCUSSIONS OF THE MPS FROM POLAND AND LITHUANIA SHOULD BE PROMOTED**

**Eugeniusz Grzeszczak**, Vice Marshal (Deputy Speaker) of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland, who came to attend Lithuania's Independence Day events, had a meeting with **Vydas Gedvilas**, Speaker of the Seimas.

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## **SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS MEETS WITH THE PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION FROM GEORGIA TO DISCUSS OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERPARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION**

**Vydas Gedvilas**, Speaker of the Seimas, met with the Georgian Delegation led by **Zurab Abashidze**, Deputy Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia. The meeting focused on bilateral relations, parliamentary cooperation and the upcoming Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.



*Photo: Zurab Abashidze, with the Georgian Delegation, standing to the right of Vydas Gedvilas, Speaker of the Seimas. Photo by Olga Posaškova (Office of the Seimas)*

The Speaker of the Seimas reviewed the Lithuanian Presidency priorities and noted that much attention will be paid to the Eastern Partnership issues. In November, Vilnius will host the European Union's Eastern Partnership summit. Prior to the summit, a lot of progress is expected to be reached in negotiations with the European Union on association agreements allowing for further economic and political rapprochement of Eastern Partnership countries, including Georgia, with the EU. "With this view in mind, we call on the main political forces in Georgia to pool their efforts and work together," Mr Gedvilas said.

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## **GEDIMINAS KIRKILAS, DEPUTY SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS: THE LITHUANIAN-POLISH INTERPARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY RESUMES ACTIVITIES AFTER THE BREAK OF FOUR YEARS**

The Assembly of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania and the Sejm and Senate of the Republic of Poland is resuming its activities after four years. Its new Session will be held in Warsaw on 3 May, the day marking the adoption of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of the two Nations on 3 May 1791. Eugeniusz Grzeszczak, Vice Marshal of the Polish Sejm and the current Chair of the Assembly, confirmed this information at the meeting between Gediminas Kirkilas, Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Seimas Committee on European Affairs, and the delegation of the Polish Parliament. The Assembly of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania and the Sejm and Senate of the Republic of Poland, set up in 1997, held its last meeting in Vilnius and Šiauliai in spring 2009.

"I truly believe that the renewal of our bilateral inter-parliamentary cooperation, among other things, will significantly contribute to the new quality of the relations between Poland and Lithuania. Some "winter tranquility" prevailed in the last four years – only one session of the inter-parliamentary Assembly was held during the last term of the Seimas notwithstanding the Statute provision that the Assembly sessions shall be held twice a year in Lithuania and Poland in turn, – said Mr. Kirkilas, Chair of the Seimas Delegation to the Lithuanian-Polish Interparliamentary Assembly during the meeting. "We also greatly appreciate the Seimas' effort to resume the work of the trilateral Lithuanian–Polish–Ukrainian inter-parliamentary Assembly established in Lutsk in 2005".

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*Vydas Gedvilas, Bogdan Bogdan Borusewicz  
and Volodymyr Rybak. Photo by Rimantas  
Stankevičius (Office of the Seimas)*

## **VYDAS GEDVILAS, SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS: EU-UKRAINE ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT SHOULD BE CURRENTLY THE PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVE OF THE TRILATERAL LITHUANIAN–POLISH–UKRAINIAN ASSEMBLY**

The fifth session of the Assembly of Members of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, the Sejm and Senate of the Republic of Poland, and the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine has started today in Warsaw. During the session, Vydas Gedvilas, Speaker of the Seimas, focused mainly on the Eastern Partnership policy, the upcoming Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union and Vilnius Summit where the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement is expected to be signed, aiming to search for common solutions to energy problems and address issues of cultural cooperation.

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### THE SEIMAS COMMEMORATED THE 23<sup>RD</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE RESTORATION OF INDEPENDENCE

On 11 March 2013, a solemn sitting to commemorate the Day of the Restoration of Independence of Lithuania was held at the Seimas.

During the solemn sitting speeches were rendered by Vydas Gedvilas, Speaker of the Seimas, Irena Andrukaitienė, Signatory to the Act of Independence, Director of Antanas Vienuolis Gymnasium of Anykščiai, Prof. Zigmantas Kiaupa, winner of the Lithuanian National Science Award 2012, historian, editor-in-chief of Lietuvos istorijos metraštis (Eng. Yearbook of Lithuanian History), Member of the Senate of Vytautas Magnus University, Romas Gudaitis, Member of the Council of the Lithuanian Reform Movement Sąjūdis, Signatory to the Act of Independence, writer, Dr Daumantas Matulis, winner of the Lithuanian National Science Award 2012, Head of the Department of Biothermodynamics and Drug Design, Institute of Biotechnology, Vilnius University, and Paulius Irtmonas, student at Norbertas Vėlius Gymnasium of Laukuva, Šilalė District.

Mr Gedvilas invited everyone to show greater appreciation of the achievements of Lithuania's younger generation: "We have not learned yet to rejoice at the achievements of hard-working and talented people who love their country. We have to admit that achievements and activities of prominent science, art, culture and sports people are often overshadowed by insignificant things and everyday problems. And scientific achievements tend to be mentioned only among other things."

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[Speech by Vydas Gedvilas, Speaker of the Seimas, at the solemn commemoration of the Day of Restoration of Independence of Lithuania](#)

[Speech by Vydas Gedvilas, Speaker of the Seimas, at the ceremony of hoisting flags on the occasion of the Day of Restoration of Independence of Lithuania](#)



### VYDAS GEDVILAS, SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS, AWARDS THE NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE GRANT 2013

On 11 March 2013, Vydas Gedvilas, Speaker of the Seimas, awarded Dr Giedrė Milerytė, historian, with the National Independence Grant 2013, an award which is given annually on the Day of Restoration of Independence to young researchers in humanities and social sciences for research promoting the consolidation of the statehood of Lithuania.

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### THE EXHIBITION TITLED SCULPTORS READ DONELAITIS WAS OPENED AT THE SEIMAS

The exhibition titled Sculptors Read Donelaitis was opened at the Seimas on 10 March 2013. On the occasion of the 300th birthday of Kristijonas Donelaitis, the most prominent author in Lithuanian literature, to be marked next year, the Seimas has announced 2014 the Year of Kristijonas Donelaitis.

Irena Degutienė, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas and Chair of the Seimas Commission for the Traditions and Heritage of Lithuanian Studies, said, "The Exhibition titled Sculptors Read Donelaitis will be exhibited in foreign countries and it is intelligible without any translation. Artists from other countries join Lithuanian sculptors in the plein-air contributing to the international relevance of Donelaitis. I hope that the Donelaitis' project becomes known not only in Europe but also worldwide."

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## SEIMAS MARKS THE 150<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE UPRISING IN 1863

The Lithuanian Parliament formally commemorated the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1863 uprising at the Seimas sitting on 19 March 2013. The introductory address was made by Vydas Gedvilas, Speaker of the Seimas, followed by Prof. Bronislovas Genzelis, Member of the Supreme Council–Reconstituent Seimas and Signatory to 11 March Act of Independence, Arvydas Anušauskas, Member of the Seimas and historian, and Dr Darius Staliūnas, historian and Deputy Director of the Lithuanian Institute of History.

At the commemoration, Speaker Gedvilas stressed that Lithuania was celebrating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1863-1864 uprising which was one the most prominent battles in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. “The dimension of fights for freedom is of particular relevance for the history of the Lithuanian nation, and it also involved other nations who inhabited this territory. <...> The uprising produced dramatic and tragic consequences for Lithuania. Nonetheless, it was an outstanding and significant event for the nation”, said the Speaker, calling for a minute of silence to honour the fighters who died in the uprising. Mr Gedvilas noted that wide-ranging studies into the 1863-1864 uprising were launched during the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the event, but the conclusions of the historians back then were conditioned by the ideological conjuncture. Therefore, objectiveness could not be expected. “The regained independence in Lithuania has brought about a new approach to history in domestic research. This has laid down a conceptually new framework for the study of the goals and progress of the 1863 uprising, producing new evaluations”.

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