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PARLIAMENTARY BUSSINES

DEBATE ON MEASURES TO BE USED IN RESPONSE TO RUSSIA'S DECISION TO BAN FOOD IMPORTS FROM THE EU

In an extraordinary meeting of the Seimas Committee on Rural Affairs, Virginija Baltraitienė, Minister of Agriculture, has presented a number of measures to be used in an attempt to deal with the situation which has developed in the Lithuanian agricultural and food industry sectors due to Russia's food embargo. The Minister stresses the necessity to make full use of all available EU market regulation measures, such as intervention buying-in, export refunds and private storage, until reorientation towards new markets.

Saulius Bucevičius, Chair of the Committee on Rural Affairs, underlines that Lithuanian diplomats working abroad, who often put too little focus on economic cooperation, must engage in active search for new markets as of right now.

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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

MEETING OF THE SPEAKERS OF THE NB8 PARLIAMENTS IN PALANGA

On 18–20 August 2014, Palanga hosted the annual Conference of the Speakers of the NB8 Parliaments (Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Iceland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia). Lithuania received delegations led by Mogens Lykketoft, Speaker of the Folketing, Denmark; Eiki Nestor, President of the Riigikogu, Estonia; Einar Kristinn Gudfinnsson, Speaker of Althingi, Iceland; Solvita Āboltiņa, Speaker of the Saeima, Latvia; Olemic Thommessen, President of the Storting, Norway; Eero Heinäluoma, Speaker of the Eduskunta, Finland; and Per Westerberg, Speaker of the Riksdag, Sweden.

Oleksandr Turchynov, Chairperson of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, also took part at the annual Conference of the Speakers of the NB8. Mr. Turchynov made a presentation and participated in the discussion.

The event began with an opening address by Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania. The Speakers of the NB8 Parliaments exchanged their views on matters topical for the region. Special focus was given to the Eastern Partnership prospects after the 2013 Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius while looking forward to the next summit to be held during the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union (in the second half of 2015). The politicians also covered the latest security challenges to the region in the context of the events in Ukraine, the EU fiscal and monetary union, and matters pertaining to the Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the Arctic Strategy. Effective implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and strengthened regional cooperation were among the top priorities within the programme of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU. Further discussion on this subject is expected to continue the dialogue which was previously launched.

Other items on the agenda: 4th World Conference of Speakers of Parliament to be held in New York in 2015; forthcoming visits of NB8 Speakers abroad; the venue of the next Conference of the Speakers of the NB8 Parliaments; etc.

SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS, LORETA GRAUŽINIENĖ: “WE MUST JOINTLY CONTRIBUTE TO STABILITY IN THE REGION AND STOP MILITARY THREATS”



In her address to the annual Conference of the Speakers of the NB8 Parliaments held in Palanga, the Speaker of the Seimas, Loreta Graužinienė, presented the agenda of the annual meeting. She also stressed the necessity to properly, responsibly and jointly react to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, as its scope may, amid the tensions, expand in geography, which is an apparent threat to the security of the entire region.

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[Welcome address of the Speaker of the Seimas at the annual meeting of the Speakers of the Nordic and Baltic Parliaments](#)

US CONGRESSMEN VISITED THE SEIMAS



On 22 August 2014, US Congressmen Steve Chabot, Luke Messer, and Lloyd Doggett visited the Seimas. Mr Zingeris, Chair of the Group for Interparliamentary Relations with the United States of America, thanked the United States for the 50-year-long non-recognition policy of the occupation of the Baltic States by the communist-led Moscow and appreciated the current US focus on regional security in the Baltics.

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BALTIC SEA COUNTRIES' MPS VOICE THEIR CONCERN OVER THE CRISIS IN UKRAINE



The Head of the Seimas Delegation to the Baltic Assembly, Giedrė Purvaneckienė, Deputy Head Rytas Kupčinskas and members of the Delegation Raimundas Paliukas and Valerijus Simulik participated in the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference held in Olsztyn, Poland, on 24–26 August 2014. MPs of the countries bordering the Baltic Sea and representatives of regional parliaments discussed cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region, environmental legacy, the Baltic Sea cultural heritage, sustainable future of the Baltic Sea Region and innovations in social and health care sectors. A resolution expressing concern over the crisis in Ukraine and welcoming all the steps that contribute to peaceful settlement of the crisis was adopted.

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[Statement of the Seimas Committees on European Affairs and Foreign Affairs Regarding Illegal Detention of Nadezhda Savchenko, Ukrainian Military Air Force Pilot, by the Russian Federation](#)

EVENTS

SIGNATORIES TO THE GOTLAND COMMUNIQUÉ MARKED THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF ITS SIGNATURE AND DISCUSSED ITS IMPORTANCE IN THE CURRENT CONTEXT OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS



The Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania marked the 25th anniversary of signing the Gotland Communiqué that had paved the way to Lithuania's national independence. The participants of the event were addressed by Speaker of the Seimas Loreta Graužinienė. According to her, the Gotland Communiqué had a special meaning, "This was when Lithuanians from all over the world united in a common goal for the first time since the Soviet occupation." According to the Speaker of the Seimas, the document is still meaningful in the current context of international politics, "The Gotland Communiqué achieved its main objective: an independent Lithuanian state was restored. But life does not stand still, it poses new challenges.

Given the complex geopolitical situation, the new threats to national security, and the unpredictable behaviour of the neighbouring countries involving the use of force, it is time to revisit the ideas expressed in the Communiqué and consolidate the efforts of all Lithuanians worldwide so that the independence of the State of Lithuania is preserved."

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LITHUANIA, LATVIA AND ESTONIA COMMEMORATED THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BALTIC WAY



COMMEMORATION PROGRAMME

AN OAK TREE PLANTED CLOSE TO THE SEIMAS BUILDINGS TO COMMEMORATE THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BALTIC WAY



On the initiative of the Baltic Assembly, trees were planted close to the buildings of the national Parliaments of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia to mark the 25th anniversary of the Baltic Way.

An oak tree was planted near the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania by the Speaker of the Seimas, Loreta Graužinienė, and the Head of the Seimas Delegation to the Baltic Assembly, Giedrė Purvaneckienė. The Deputy Speaker Algirdas Sysas and members of the Seimas Delegation to the Baltic Assembly also attended the event.

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A TOTAL OF 23 INFORMATIVE SIGNS COMMEMORATE THE BALTIC WAY ACROSS THE BALTIC STATES



Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, unveiled one of the billboards commemorating the Baltic Way on the road of national importance A2 Vilnius–Panevėžys. A total of 23 billboards were concurrently unveiled across the three Baltic States: nine in Lithuania, ten in Latvia, and four in Estonia. In her welcome address, Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, called on the audience to preserve the memory of the sense of community which was at the core of the Baltic human chain 25 years ago. “Exactly 25 years ago, a human chain connected the people in Vilnius, Riga, and Tallinn. Two million Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians of all ages joined hands to demonstrate to nations across the globe that the

Baltic States stood in unity and were determined to be free. Never will we forget the genuine feeling of unity and togetherness.”

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SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS, LORETA GRAUŽINIENĖ, UNVEILED THE MONUMENT TO THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BALTIC WAY AND LIT THE BONFIRE OF UNITY TOGETHER WITH HER FELLOW SPEAKERS FROM LATVIA AND ESTONIA



Speaker of the Seimas Loreta Graužinienė met with the President of the Riigikogu, Eiki Nestor, and the Speaker of the Saeima, Solvita Ābolčiņa, at the final point of the Linkup of the Baltic Way on the Lithuanian-Latvian Border in Saločiai.

“Our nations expressed their will and were determined to pursue their choice – a peaceful road of liberation. That was the courageous message of the three nations to Europe and the whole world. We are happy today for the new generation of our citizens who see freedom as part and parcel of their lives. They must continue with our history lessons teaching that

freedom is the dearest asset of every nation,” Loreta Graužinienė said.

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