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PARLIAMENTARY BUSSINES

SEIMAS APPROVED INCENTIVES FOR THE FULFILMENT OF MILITARY SERVICE

On 14 April 2015, at its plenary sitting, the Seimas adopted the provisions of the Law on Military Conscription and the Law on the Organisation of the National Defence System and Military Service, which would lay down new incentives for the fulfilment of military service and ensure adequate organisation and administration of military conscription. The new provisions of the Law on Military Conscription received 90 votes in favour, with no votes against and 2 abstentions. These amendments were drawn up in the light of the Seimas' earlier decision to reintroduce drafting of conscripts into continuous mandatory initial military service.

The adopted amendments impose conscription only on men aged 19–26 (inclusive). However, mandatory initial military service will be available for volunteers aged 18–38.

In addition, the new provisions lay down a new incentive, monthly benefits, for the citizens of Lithuania in continuous mandatory initial military service or basic military training depending on their performance. Excellent service will entitle individuals to a total of four basic social benefits (BSBs) (EUR 152), good service to a total of three BSBs (EUR 114) and satisfactory service to a total of two BSBs (EUR 76). Benefits for volunteers in continuous mandatory initial military service or basic military training will be increased by 25 per cent.

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SEIMAS DECIDED TO SET UP THE MIGRATION COMMISSION

On 14 April 2015, at its plenary, the Seimas decided to set up a standing [Migration Commission](#) that will be composed of members of political groups in accordance with the principle of proportional representation. The draft amendments to the Statute of the Seimas were approved by 76 votes in favour, with 16 against and 15 abstentions.

Following the new provisions adopted, the Migration Commission, in cooperation with the Seimas committees, will have to consider matters pertaining to migration management; to prepare and discuss draft laws, other legal acts and proposals on matters within its competence; to consider and submit, to the Seimas, the assessment of migration impacts on social and economic development of Lithuania; to analyse international law, foreign national legislation and practices aimed at reducing migration flows; to hear the reports of responsible public authorities and non-governmental organisations on enforcement of laws and other legal acts passed by the Seimas and pertaining to matters within its competence while exercising parliamentary scrutiny of these matters; to submit relevant proposals and recommendations to the Seimas and the Government.

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SEIMAS ADOPTED REGULATION ON PRIVATE DETECTIVE ACTIVITIES

On 16 April 2015, at its plenary, the Seimas adopted the law regulating private detective activities. The law sets up the legal framework and the principles governing the work of private detectives, lists qualification requirements for pursuing the trade of a private detective, regulates the organisation, execution and oversight of private investigative activities, and identifies the services, rights and duties of private detectives. A total of 83 MPs voted in favour of the draft with no votes against and four abstentions.

Under the new law, in order to work as a private detective, an individual must have a good repute; a degree in law issued by a higher education institution; a certificate of completion of private detectives' training programme or at least two years of professional experience in law enforcement or intelligence agencies; and pass the qualifying examination.

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ARTŪRAS PAULAUSKAS, CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENCE: THE STATE SECURITY DEPARTMENT WILL ADVISE ON REMOVAL OF THREATS



Following consideration of the 2014 Annual Activity Report of the State Security Department (VSD), the Seimas Committee on National Security and Defence marked that the scale of VSD tasks had significantly changed due to a major change in the geopolitical situation.

“Better funding of direct functions and tasks would enable the VSD to more effectively prevent the increased activities of hostile security and intelligence services. The Committee therefore proposes targeted improvements of the proportion between the VSD running costs and costs of the intelligence and counter-intelligence operations. The need to strengthen Lithuania’s intelligence institutions, in particular human intelligence and active counter-intelligence measures, was agreed

upon in the accord between the political parties On Strategic Guidelines for the Foreign, Security and Defence Policy of the Republic of Lithuania for 2014–2020,” said the Committee Chair, Artūras Paulauskas.

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SEIMAS PROHIBITED MINORS FROM SMOKING AND HOLDING TOBACCO PRODUCTS

On 23 April 2015, at its plenary sitting, the Seimas has adopted amendments to the Law on Tobacco Control, thereby prohibiting persons under the age of 18 from smoking/consuming or holding tobacco products. The amendments to the Law were adopted by 75 votes in favour, with no votes against and 6 abstentions.

According to the initiators of the proposal, smoking is a growing problem, particularly among minors. “Statistics show that the number of smokers is constantly increasing worldwide and that people start smoking at a dangerously younger age,” the explanatory note to the draft Law reads. The authors of the amendments to the Law hope that prohibiting persons under the age of 18 from smoking/consuming and holding of tobacco products will strengthen smoking prevention measures and reduce smoking/consuming of tobacco products among minors.

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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS, LORETA GRAUŽINIENĖ, MET WITH THE CANADIAN AMBASSADOR



On 15 April 2015, the Speaker of the Seimas, Loreta Graužinienė, met with the recently appointed Canadian Ambassador to Lithuania, Allain Hausser. The meeting focused on the bilateral cooperation, the geopolitical situation in the region and the evaluation of the changes that took place in the European security environment in 2014.

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GEDIMINAS KIRKILAS, DEPUTY SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS AND CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE ON EUROPEAN AFFAIRS: IRELAND SUPPORTS IT INVESTMENTS IN LITHUANIA



Ireland remains a sincere friend of Lithuania. It supported Lithuania's accession to the European Union (EU) and gave its backing to our country during its Presidency of the Council of the EU in the second half of 2013. Ireland has now voiced its support for Lithuania in its pursuit of membership in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. The accession talks are due to start already this summer," the Deputy Speaker of the Seimas and Chair of the Committee on European Affairs said after the meeting with the Ambassador of Ireland to Lithuania, David Robert Noonan.

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SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS ATTENDED THE CONFERENCE OF THE SPEAKERS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION PARLIAMENTS HELD IN ROME

SPEAKER GRAUŽINIENĖ DISCUSSED THE CONFERENCE AGENDA WITH THE PRESIDENTS OF THE TROIKA AND EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT



Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, attended the Conference of the Speakers of the European Union Parliaments held in Rome as the last parliamentary dimension event of the Italian Presidency of the Council of the EU.

The meeting discussed the conference agenda containing the most relevant EU issues: Europe beyond the crisis, fundamental rights of freedom, solidarity and security, the role of parliaments in negotiations on international treaties, etc. The Conference of the Speakers of the EU Parliaments ended with the adoption of the conclusions of the Presidency Parliament.

It is the first time in the history of the Lithuanian Parliament that the Seimas Speaker was keynote speaker at the Conference of the Speakers of the EU Parliaments. Mrs Graužinienė delivered a speech on strengthening political dialogue, the Barosso Initiative, between National Parliaments and the European Commission.

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ADDRESSING THE HEADS OF EU PARLIAMENTS LORETA GRAUŽINIENĖ, SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS, CALLED FOR STRENGTHENING POLITICAL DIALOGUE



At the Conference of the Speakers of the European Union Parliaments in Rome, Italy, Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, stressed the need to strengthen political dialogue of national Parliaments with the European Commission and European Parliament.

Addressing the Conference, Loreta Graužinienė noted that national Parliaments wanted and had to be heard. However, the political dialogue held so far between individual national Parliaments and the European Commission was insufficient. According to the leader of the Parliament, the political dialogue had to be strengthened and developed looking for new instruments to promote greater involvement of national Parliaments in the decision-making process of the EU. All of this could be done by using the provisions of the existing Treaties.

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[*Speech by Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, at the Conference of Speakers of EU Parliaments*](#)



SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS INVITED THE POPE TO VISIT LITHUANIA



Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, met with Pope Francis in Vatican. During the meeting, the Speaker of the Seimas, on behalf of the people of Lithuania and in particular on behalf of the disabled, invited the Pope to pay an official visit to Lithuania. The Pope thanked her for the invitation.

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PHOTO MOMENTS



Meeting with the participants of the March of the Living at the Seimas. On the initiative of the Association of Jews from Vilna and its Surroundings in Israel, Holocaust survivors and their descendants visited Lithuania on 12–20 April 2015. Traditionally, they travelled round Vilnius, Kaunas and other Lithuanian cities to see places of historical, religious and cultural heritage of the pre-WWII Jewish community in Lithuania and paid tribute to Holocaust victims at the memorial of Ponary. 13 April 2015.



Vydas Gedvilas, First Deputy Speaker of the Seimas, met with Ambassador Manuel Marcelo Curto, Special Representative of the Portuguese Republic for the Baltic States. 14 April 2015. Photo by Ilona Šilenkova.



Lamberto Zannier, OSCE Secretary General, visited the Seimas. 20 April 2015.



Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, met with Mars Di Bartolomeo, President of the Luxembourg Chamber of Deputies, in Rome. 20 April 2015. Photo by Živilė Pavilonytė.



Opening of the exhibition 'Timeless City Istanbul and Faces' by Mustafa Dedeoğlu, a Turkish photo artist. 23 April 2015.



The delegation of the Landtag of Salzburg of the Republic of Austria met with Vydas Gedvilas, First Deputy Speaker of the Seimas. 23 April 2015.



Conference on the experience of cooperation between Lithuania and Austria and between Lithuania and Salzburg. 24 April 2015.



Opening of the graphic and photo exhibition 'Price of Freedom' by Austrian artists Hanne Engelhardt, Peter Rieder and Regina Rieder. 24 April 2015.



The European Forest was planted in the Strošiūnai landscape reserve (Kaišiadorys District) to mark the 25th anniversary of Lithuania's independence. 25 April 2015.

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

TEXT

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