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## PARLIAMENTARY BUSINESS

### SEIMAS CONSIDERS THE DRAFT LAW ON THE EURO ADOPTION IN THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

The Seimas has started to consider the draft Law on the Euro Adoption in the Republic of Lithuania (No XIIP-1450) that establishes the procedure for the preparation for the euro adoption, changeover from the litas to the euro, conversion of values in litas to values in euro after the euro adoption in the Republic of Lithuania, and withdrawal of the litas from circulation. Rimantas Šadžius, Minister of Finance, presented the draft Law and amendments to accompanying legislation at the Seimas sitting.

The submitted document sets out that the Bank of Lithuania would exchange the litas banknotes as well as the litas and cent coins to the euro free of charge for an unlimited period and without any limitation on the amount. The Minister of Finance stated that on 1 January 2015, i.e. on the euro adoption date, the money held in all client accounts would be converted to the euro free of charge. Commercial banks would exchange the litas to the euro for six months following the euro adoption date in the Republic of Lithuania free of charge in all bank units. After the expiry of this term, commercial banks would exchange the litas to the euro free of charge for another six months in bank units, the list of which would be drawn up in advance by the Bank of Lithuania.

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## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

### LITHUANIAN POLITICIANS EXPRESS THEIR POSITION CONCERNING THE EVENTS IN UKRAINE

- [Statement of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania on the Current Events in Ukraine.](#)
- [Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, urges the Ukrainian government to be reasonable.](#)
- [Gediminas Kirkilas: Ukrainian government's steps back to authoritarianism is a huge mistake.](#)
- [Statement of the Chairmen of the Foreign Affairs Committees of Parliaments of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania on Situation in Ukraine.](#)
- Committee on Foreign Affairs adopts a [statement](#) on the events in Ukraine.
- Members of the Seimas Group for Inter-Parliamentary Relations with Ukraine: members of the Group expressed their [support](#) for peaceful protesters in Ukraine.

### SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS MET WITH THE KAZAKH MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, met with Erlan A. Idrissov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, on his official visit to Lithuania. They discussed the bilateral relations between Lithuania and Kazakhstan and the scope for strengthening parliamentary cooperation. Mr Idrissov handed Loreta Graužinienė the invitation of Nurlan Nigmatulin, Speaker of the Mazhilis of the Republic of Kazakhstan, to pay an official visit to Kazakhstan.

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### GEDIMINAS KIRKILAS, DEPUTY SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS: LITHUANIA AND IRAN REINFORCE BILATERAL RELATIONS



Lithuania and Iran are in the process of reinforcing their bilateral relations in trade, culture, education, tourism and other areas. This does not come as a surprise if we recall that diplomatic relations between Lithuania and the Persian Empire can be traced down to 1930 when a bilateral friendship agreement between the two countries was concluded. It was subsequently endorsed as an effective treaty by Iran in 1991. Today it is also obvious that Iran is opening up to the world and to the West. This creates even more cooperation opportunities to all stakeholders," Gediminas Kirkilas, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas and Chair of the Committee on European Affairs, said after having met in the Seimas with Samad Ali Lakizadeh, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Lithuania, residing in Warsaw.

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## SEIMAS AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

### SECRETARIES GENERAL OF EU PARLIAMENTS MET IN THE SEIMAS

With the Conference of Speakers of European Union Parliaments – the last event of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU to be held by the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania in spring – approaching, Secretaries General of European Union Parliaments met in Vilnius on 26–27 January 2014. Participants of the event were welcomed by **Loreta Graužinienė**, Speaker of the Seimas:



“Well before the start of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU, the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, as the Presidency Parliament, decided to aim at, even in these difficult post-crisis times, concluding every event within the Lithuanian Presidency that is hosted by the Seimas with concrete results – joint political documents and conclusions. I therefore hope that future meetings of the Presidency parliamentary dimension will also produce specific conclusions. Not only politicians but also the electorate, citizens of the European Union, have the right to know about the decisions adopted,” she

said and noted that during the Lithuanian Presidency a total of 141 legislative and almost 300 non-legislative dossiers were concluded.

#### WELCOME SPEECH BY MRS LORETA GRAUŽINIENĖ, SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS



At the first session of the meeting, Jonas Milerius, Secretary General of the Seimas, presented the draft agenda of the Conference of Speakers of the European Union Parliaments to the heads of parliamentary administrations. Under the draft agenda, four subjects are offered for discussion to speakers of parliaments.

Session 2 of the Meeting of the Secretaries General of the European Union Parliaments was devoted to IPEX (Interparliamentary EU Information Exchange) related issues. Following the presentation of the IPEX Annual Report by Dr Horst Risse, Secretary General of the German Bundestag, who has been the Chair of the IPEX Board for the last four years, the Secretaries General by consensus approved the composition of the IPEX Board and appointed a new Chair of the IPEX Board.



In line with this decision, after the Conference of Speakers of European Union Parliaments, the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania will take over the duties of Chair of the IPEX Board from the German Bundestag for the period of the Italian Presidency of the Conference of Speakers of EU Parliaments in 2014–2015.

[More about the event](#)

### CHANCELLERY OF THE RIIGIKOGU INTERESTED IN THE EXPERIENCE OF THE SEIMAS IN ORGANISING EU PRESIDENCY EVENTS



Maria Alajõe, Secretary General of the Riigikogu of the Republic of Estonia, and heads of structural units of the Estonian Parliament are visiting the Seimas. The staff of the administration of the Estonian Parliament have come to Lithuania to get acquainted with the experience of the Seimas in organising parliamentary dimension events of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. They were interested in the planning and use of funds, awareness raising among society, use of human resources and issues pertaining to interpretation/translation and technical equipment.

Estonia will take over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2018.

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## GEORGIAN PARLIAMENTARY STAFF DELEGATION VISITS THE SEIMAS



On 4–8 February 2014, a delegation made up of members of staff of the Parliament of Georgia visited the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania. The visit was organised by the Office of the Seimas in cooperation with the International Republican Institute.

During the scheduled meetings, Mr Česlovas Juršėnas, Signatory to the Act of Independence of Lithuania of 11 March, former Speaker of the Seimas and a long-standing former member of the Seimas, outlined the history of the Seimas and talked about the legislative process with the guests from Georgia. Mr Gedeminas Aleksonis, Deputy Secretary General of the Seimas, made a presentation on the structure, functions and tasks of the Office of the Seimas.

The staff of the Georgian Parliament had an opportunity to learn about the activities of the Seimas committees and commissions and met with representatives of the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party Political Group and the Homeland Union – Lithuanian Christian Democrat Political Group. Ms Loreta Raulinaitytė, Director of the Communications Department of the Seimas and Coordinator of the Parliamentary Dimension of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU, briefed the guests on the Seimas experience gained in the process of preparation for the Lithuanian presidency of the Council of the European Union and during the presidency itself. Aušra Bodin, Head of the Legislation Indexing Unit of the Department of Information Technologies and Telecommunications, informed the delegation about the Seimas electronic legislative information system.

## EVENTS

### TRIBUTE PAID TO THE DEFENDERS OF FREEDOM AT THE SOLEMN SITTING OF THE SEIMAS



On 13 of January 2014, the Seimas held a solemn sitting to mark the 23rd anniversary of the Day of the Defenders of Freedom and to award the Freedom Prize 2013.

Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, delivered her introductory speech and welcomed the participants of the solemn sitting. The floor was also taken by Vytautas Landsbergis, first Head of State of the restored independent Lithuania and Chairman of the Supreme Council – Reconstituent Seimas, Archbishop Gintaras Grušas, Česlovas Juršėnas, Signatory to the Act of Independence, and Evaldas Bucininkas, youth representative and pupil of Mikalojaus Katkaus Gymnasium in Kėdainiai.

In her speech, Mrs Graužinienė underlined the importance of this historical date. “The 13th of January is not only a living memory of our unity in our fight for freedom; it is much more, as it comes from the bottom of our hearts: love to Lithuania, the proof that if needed, we are ready to die for our homeland over and over again.”

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