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Lithuanian Presidency  
of the Council of the EU  
**Parliamentary Dimension**

LITHUANIAN PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION 1 JULY — 31 DECEMBER 2013



## MEETING OF THE CHAIRPERSONS OF THE COMMITTEES ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND LABOUR DEBATED ON EMPLOYMENT POLICY

Implementation and development of the EU policy guidelines were addressed at the first session of the Meeting of the Chairpersons of the Committees on Social Affairs and Labour which was titled Employment Incentives to Implement the Europe 2020 Strategy and took place in the Seimas. In her [opening address](#) Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, welcomed the participants and noted that “although forecasts predict economic recovery in many European countries and most EU Member States should see economic growth next year, the unemployment level remains unacceptably high. There are 26 million unemployed in the European Union, including 5.5 million unemployed young people, that means every fourth young European citizen is unemployed.”

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## LITHUANIA IS ON THE RIGHT PATH IN ITS EFFORTS TO ADDRESS YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT



The Meeting of the Chairpersons of the Committees on Social Affairs and Labour “Employment Incentives to Implement the Europe 2020 Strategy” discussed youth employment and initiatives to increase employment and share good practice in implementing youth employment measures. The European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, László Andor, made an overview of the trends in the policies aimed at employment and increase of youth employment by 2020. He noted that the European Commission put a lot of emphasis on combating high unemployment, social exclusion and low income.

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*For more detailed information, please visit the page dedicated to [the event](#) on the website of the parliamentary dimension of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU [www.eu2013-lrs.lt](http://www.eu2013-lrs.lt).*

## LITHUANIAN EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING RATE IS AMONG THE BEST BUT HAS TO BE IMPROVED FURTHER



The three-day Conference on Early School Leaving for the participants of the EUNEC (European Network of Education Councils) has started in the Seimas. The Conference deals with the problem of early school leaving.

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## COMMERCIAL DISPUTES SOLVED BY ARBITRATION IS AN APPEALING UP-TO-DATE COMPONENT IN DEVELOPING INTERNATIONAL TRADE RELATIONS

This idea is expressed at the two-day international conference “International arbitrage: experience of European Union Member States and prospects of development in Lithuania” in the Seimas. The participants expect to share international experience in solving disputes between business entities by arbitration when disputes arise from transactions entered into with foreign partners. Welcoming conference participants, Vydas Gedvilas, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas, said that international business brings together people from different cultures with different customs and different understanding of business principles. “It is natural that constant competition and a human factor inevitably lead to misunderstandings or disputes during intensive cooperation.

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## PARLIAMENTARY DIMENSION EVENT DISCUSSES CONTRIBUTION OF EU INSTITUTIONS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF MACRO-REGIONAL STRATEGIES



The final session of the Meeting of the Chairpersons of the Committees on Environment Protection and the Committees on State Administration and Local Authorities focused on contribution of EU institutions to the development of macro-regional strategies. Johannes Hahn, European Commissioner for Regional Policy, thanked Lithuania for an extremely important initiative to discuss the matter on a parliamentary level. According to J. Hahn, this matter is of particular relevance in terms of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014–2020, as “It was always a common understanding

that the real implementation of the strategy can only start with the next financial perspective. Why? Because Member States have to take care in their programme planning about the different projects they envisage within the macro-regional strategy, so they have to plan in their national and regional operational programmes adequate allocation and adequate budget for the implementation of the different projects belonging to macro-regional strategies”.

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## EU EASTERN PARTNERSHIP WAS DISCUSSED AT THE LITHUANIAN PARLIAMENT: TOWARDS MORE AMBITIOUS COOPERATION



“After Lithuania and other Baltic and Central European countries acceded to the EU, the new borderline of the Union moved eastwards. This is exactly the place where the great global powers continue to wage the battle of interests today, as they did in the past. Their spheres of influence overlap here, resulting in the processes we have witnessed in the run-up to the Eastern Partnership Summit,” Benediktas Juodka, Chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, said in his opening address at the Meeting of the Chairpersons of the Committees on Foreign Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union and the

Parliamentary Forum for Democracy, Parliaments for democracy: towards more ambitious global cooperation, held at the Seimas today.



*Meeting of the Chairpersons of the Committees on Foreign Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union and the Parliamentary Forum for Democracy has supported the statement of members of the Parliamentary Forum for Democracy*

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## PARLIAMENTARY BUSSINES

### **NOT ONLY PARTIES BUT ALSO PUBLIC COMMITTEES ON ELECTIONS WILL BE ABLE TO NOMINATE CANDIDATES FOR ELECTIONS TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**

The Seimas adopted the amendments to the Law on Elections to the European Parliament (draft No XIIP-970(2)) and to the Law on Presidential Elections (draft No. XIIP-969 (2)) in order to harmonise these Laws with other electoral laws and thus legally provided for the establishment and status of a public committee on elections. The amendments to the Law on Elections to the European Parliament stipulate that candidates may be nominated not only by parties but also by a public committee on elections. The explanatory note to the Law states that thus the ruling of 9 November 2010 of the Constitutional Court is enforced and voters are entitled to elect not only parties, but also other entities. The legislative amendments provide that the committee will be composed of voters whose number at least twice exceeds the number of MEPs elected in Lithuania. The same voter may sit only on one committee. Parties and committees which present their lists of candidates must have the support of at least 10 000 voters.

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### **IMPROVED PROCESS OF DONATION AND TRANSPLANTATION OF HUMAN TISSUE, CELLS AND ORGANS**

In its plenary sitting the Seimas adopted amendments to the Law on Donation and Transplantation of Human Tissues, Cells and Organs (Draft No. XIIP-682(3) EU) aimed at improving the process of donation and transplantation of human tissues, cells and organs. The new version of the Law was passed by 91 votes in favour, 1 abstention and no votes against. According to the new Law, any person with legal capacity, who has given his consent to the use of his tissues, cells and organs for transplantation purposes in accordance with the procedure set by the Minister of Health, may be a donor. Any person with legal capacity will also have the right to deny his organs for transplantation after his death.

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### **NEW VERSION OF THE LAW ON POLITICAL PARTIES HAS BEEN ADOPTED**

The Seimas adopted new versions of the Law on Political Parties (draft No XIIP-971(3)) and the Law on Amending the Law on Funding of, and Control Over Funding of, Political Parties and Political Campaigns (draft No XIIP-972(3)). Both of them systemically regulate the foundations of political parties' activities, including funding of political parties. Matters relating to funding of political parties are separated from regulation of funding of political campaigns; funding of a new institution – non-governmental electoral committee – is provided for. The Law on Political Parties lays down that in order to establish a political party it is necessary that a political party has, in the Republic of Lithuania, not less than two thousand founders (as compared to one thousand founders required by the previous Law).

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### **SEIMAS RESOLUTION ON UKRAINE'S COMMITMENTS AND ASPIRATIONS TOWARDS EU INTEGRATION**

Underlining the strategic significance of the Eastern Partnership region to the European Union, the Seimas invites the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine to use every effort and at its next week's session to pass the laws ensuring respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law, the step which is needed by Ukraine and expected by the international community. The Resolution calls on the Parliaments of the EU Members States, the European Parliament, other EU institutions and the Verkhova Rada of Ukraine to consolidate their efforts to sign the Association Agreement between the European Union and Ukraine, including the provisions concerning the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area, at the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius in order to pave the way for long-term security, democratic development and economic prosperity in Ukraine and throughout the region.

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## THE SEIMAS URGES UKRAINIAN AUTHORITIES TO REFRAIN FROM VIOLENCE AGAINST PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATORS

The Seimas, supporting Ukraine's determination to strengthen the political association and economic integration with the EU and assessing the political situation in Ukraine after the Eastern Partnership Summit held in Vilnius, calls for the immediate holding in Vilnius of a 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 to discuss the current situation.

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## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS. MEETINGS

### SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS, LORETA GRAUŽINIENĖ: GEORGIA IS MOVING TOWARDS EUROPE



The Speaker of the Seimas met with David Usupashvili, Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia, on his official visit to Lithuania. The meeting discussed the smooth running of the presidential election in Georgia and the prospects of the country's integration into Europe. "I welcome the efforts made by all political parties in Georgia in order to reach a consensus on many issues arising in the course of European integration. We hope that the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius will take historical decisions that are essential for the future of the Eastern Partnership. We believe that Georgia will be

able to initial the Association Agreement in Vilnius in late November this year and to sign it next year," said Loreta Graužinienė.

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### SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS: "LITHUANIA AND POLAND SHOULD FURTHER MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS SEEKING PROSPERITY OF BOTH COUNTRIES"



The Speaker of the Seimas, Loreta Graužinienė, has met Jarosław Czubicki, Polish Ambassador to Lithuania, today. The Speaker of the Seimas thanked Poland for support in the implementation of the Eastern Partnership policy. "I appreciate the efforts of Polish politicians in consistently supporting Lithuania on the Eastern Partnership issues. Let me once again thank Bogdan Borusewicz, Speaker of the Polish Senate, for backing Lithuania's initiative and co-signing the letter to the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. In this letter we urge Ukraine not to stop halfway and implement conditions

required for signing the Association Agreement in Vilnius," Loreta Graužinienė said.

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### CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENCE: LITHUANIA'S ARMED FORCES HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFULLY COOPERATING WITH THE US PENNSYLVANIA NATIONAL GUARD FOR TWENTY YEARS NOW



The Seimas Committee on National Security and Defence met with the delegation of the US Pennsylvania National Guard to discuss defence cooperation. "Lithuania attaches particular importance to the strategic partnership with the US, which translates into specific actions, including the NATO air policing mission in the Baltic States, the existing defence plans, and the training under the collective defence scenario," Artūras Paulauskas, Chair of the Committee on National Defence, said.

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## COMMITTEES ON EUROPEAN AFFAIRS AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS: RELATIONS BETWEEN LITHUANIA AND BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA ARE GAINING PACE



Gediminas Kirkilas, the Chair of the Seimas Committee on European Affairs, and Benediktas Juodka, Chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, have met with Kemal Muftić, the Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina, residing in Copenhagen, Denmark, who has just presented letters of credence to President Dalia Grybauskaitė today. The issues of bilateral relations, internal political situation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and its EU integration prospects have been discussed during the meeting.

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## SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS LORETA GRAUŽINIENĖ MET WITH LATVIAN PRESIDENT ANDRIS BĒRZIŅŠ AND DISCUSSED BILATERAL RELATIONS



During her visit to Latvia, where the Speaker of the Seimas Loreta Graužinienė is taking part in the 32nd Session of the Baltic Assembly, Speaker of the Seimas met with Andris Bērziņš, President of the Republic of Latvia, and reiterated her condolences to the Latvian nation. According to the Speaker of the Seimas, everything must be done to avoid such tragedies in Latvia or Lithuania in future. "I hope that your people will summon up the strength to get over the pain inflicted by the tragedy and that life will be back to normal," said Loreta Graužinienė.

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## EVENTS

### DOCUMENTS ILLUSTRATING THE TRAGEDY OF THE UKRAINIAN NATION ON DISPLAY IN THE SEIMAS



On 27–28 November 2013, participants of the Meeting of the Chairpersons of the Committees on Foreign Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union and the Parliamentary Forum for Democracy had an opportunity to visit the exhibition of the Ukrainian National Museum "Memorial in Commemoration of Famine's Victims in Ukraine" titled The 1932–1933 Holodomor – Genocide against the Ukrainian People. The exhibition features photos, archive documents and memories of witnesses of the 1930s as well as recipes for surrogate dishes which people used to eat to survive. The exhibition of documents illustrating the genocide of the Ukrainian nation through artificially caused famine was organised in cooperation with the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania, the Ukrainian National Museum, Ukrainian Community in Lithuania and Ukrainian Embassy in Lithuania.

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