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## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



### NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

Spring Session  
Vilnius, 30 May - 1 June 2014

WELCOME TO THE SPECIAL WEB PAGE OF THE NATO PA SPRING SESSION IN VILNIUS:

[WWW.LRS.LT/EN2014NATO-PA](http://WWW.LRS.LT/EN2014NATO-PA)

**ANDRIUS MAZURONIS, HEAD OF THE SEIMAS DELEGATION TO THE NATO PA: NATO PA SPRING SESSION TO BE HELD IN VILNIUS IS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR PARLIAMENTARIANS TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR SOLIDARITY**



From 30 May to 1 June, the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania will host the Spring Session of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly in Vilnius. The Session will bring together some 500 people: parliamentarians from the 28 NATO member countries, NATO PA associate countries, regional partners, European Parliament and various international organisations. This is the second NATO PA Spring Session to take place in Lithuania. The first was held in Vilnius in 2001.

“Over the past few decades, we witnessed even several events critical for our country: restoration of Lithuania’s Independence, collapse of the Soviet Union, and Lithuania’s accession to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union. Today, membership of the transatlantic community is the best security guarantee for our region. Therefore, it is extremely significant that the Spring Session of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly takes place in Vilnius when we mark the 10th anniversary of Lithuania’s accession to NATO. This is a great opportunity for the Alliance parliamentarians and partners to jointly discuss the most pressing security issues and demonstrate solidarity and determination to fulfil the commitments enshrined in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. This is essential in the current climate of instability in Europe facing a threat to its security,” says Andrius Mazuronis, Head of the Seimas Delegation to the NATO PA.

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*More about the NATO PA Spring Session read in the next issue.*

## **THE SEIMAS CALLS ON EU PARLIAMENTS AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT TO GET READY FOR A FASTEST POSSIBLE RATIFICATION OF THE EU ASSOCIATION AGREEMENTS WITH GEORGIA, MOLDOVA AND UKRAINE**

In its plenary sitting the Seimas adopted a [Resolution](#) presented by the Speaker of the Seimas, Loreta Graužinienė, calling on the parliaments of the EU Member States and the European Parliament to start preparations for a fastest possible ratification of the EU Association Agreements with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

The Seimas Resolution On signing, ratifying and implementing the EU Association Agreements, including Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements, with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine was supported by 91 MPs; one MP abstained and nobody voted against it.

### **LORETA GRAUŽINIENĖ, SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS: “LITHUANIA SUPPORTS MOLDOVA’S DETERMINATION TO TAKE THE EUROPEAN PATH”**



Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, during her visit to Moldova together with other speakers from the Nordic and Baltic countries took part in the meetings organised in the framework of the NB8 in Chisinau. Moldova’s European integration prospects and its plans to sign the Association Agreement this summer have been discussed in the meeting with Igor Corman, President of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova.

“It is my pleasure to meet you in Moldova. Lithuania supports Moldova’s determination to take the European path. We pledged our support last week by adopting a resolution of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania,

expressing support to the signing, ratification and implementation of the EU association agreements with Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine. So let me once again reiterate this here in Chisinau,” Ms Graužinienė said in the meeting with the President of the Parliament of Moldova.

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### **SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS: “THE LITHUANIAN SEIMAS WILL SEEK TO RATIFY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE THE EU–MOLDOVA ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT TO BE SIGNED IN JUNE**

On her official visit to Moldova, Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, and other speakers and deputy speakers of the NB8 Parliaments, expressed their support for Moldova’s aim to take the European path. The leader of the Seimas promised that Lithuania would strive to ratify as a matter of priority the EU–Moldova Association Agreement to be signed in late June.

“At the recent [Conference of Speakers of European Union Parliaments](#) in Lithuania, Member States demonstrated unanimous support for Moldova’s integration into the European Union. After ten years of membership of the European Community, Lithuania cannot imagine its future outside the European Union. We therefore understand Moldova willing to take the European path. The Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania will seek to ratify as soon as possible the Co-operation Agreement between the EU and Moldova, which is planned to be signed after a little more than a month,” said Loreta Graužinienė.

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### **COMMUNICATION FROM GEDIMINAS KIRKILAS, CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE ON EUROPEAN AFFAIRS: CRISIS IN UKRAINE FORCED US TO TAKE ENERGY SECURITY MORE SERIOUSLY**

“Energy security has become a matter of urgency in Lithuania as well as in the European Union, and because of the crisis in Ukraine we have to take it yet more seriously. The Government therefore maintains the position that immediate reduction of fragmentation in the internal energy market, elimination of isolation of some Member States and reduction of energy dependence on Russia is imperative,” says Gediminas Kirkilas, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas and Chair of the Committee on European Affairs, when referring to the issues currently discussed by the EU General Affairs Council.

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### SUSPICIOUS MONETARY OPERATIONS AND TRANSACTIONS TO BE SUSPENDED FOR A LONGER TERM

At the plenary sitting, the Seimas has adopted the amendments to the Law on the Prevention of Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing (draft No XIIP-1431(2) EU) in order to improve legal regulation of the prevention of money laundering and terrorist financing. The amendments have been passed by a vote of 72 to 0 with 3 abstentions.

The Law establishes that enhanced customer identification will be always applied in respect of natural persons involved in politics and permanently residing in another EU Member State or a third country. Financial institutions and other entities may decide not to apply enhanced customer identification in respect of other natural persons involved in politics if the Law does not provide for that.

The Law on the Prevention of Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing is supplemented by new provisions on complex or unusually large transactions and unusual patterns of transactions. The amendments provide that financial institutions and other entities will have to pay attention to the activities, which, by their nature, could be related to money laundering and/or terrorist financing and in particular to complex or unusually large transactions and all unusual patterns of transactions that do not have an apparent economic or visible lawful purpose and to business relations or monetary operations with customers from third countries, where preventive measures against money laundering and/or terrorist financing are inadequate or do not meet international standards according to the information announced officially by international intergovernmental organisations.

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### COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS HAS CONSIDERED MIGRATION POLICY ISSUES

The meeting of the Seimas Committee on Foreign Affairs has discussed the position of the Republic of Lithuania on the Communication from the European Commission of 11 March 2014 entitled “An open and secure Europe: making it happen” (COM(2014) 154), which has been presented by Elvinas Jankevičius, Vice-Minister of the Interior. The Committee has approved the main provisions of the position, but stated that the document prepared by the European Commission fails to assess the changed security situation in Europe after Russia’s aggression against Ukraine and occupation of the part of the territory of Ukraine. The Committee notes that the new EU strategic guidelines in the area of justice and home affairs have to appropriately reflect these new challenges to the security in Europe. The Committee also observes that the aspect of information security in EU Member States is not assessed either and therefore calls for practical initiatives to fight tendentious propaganda and disinformation spread by third parties. The Committee expresses its support for the idea to set up democratic, objective and independent TV and other media channels in Russian in Eastern Europe.

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### COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS: RESCUERS OF JEWS SHOULD BE GRANTED THE FREEDOM FIGHTER STATUS

On 14 May 2014, the Seimas Committee on Human Rights considered the Draft Law Amending the Law on the Legal Status of the Participants of the Resistance to the 1940–1990 Occupations (XIIP-1968 (2)) aimed at restoring historical justice. If the Seimas adopts the draft, the rescuers of the Holocaust victims will belong to the group of resistance movement participants regulated by this law. The law in force defines freedom fighters as persons who participated in the resistance movement efforts and contributed to the struggle for Lithuania’s independence by other ways or actions. By rescuing Jews during the Holocaust, the rescuers resisted the orders of the occupation regime of the Nazi Germany, intentionally opposed racial genocide, and put their own lives and the lives of their families at risk. Therefore, the Committee considers that the rescuers of Jews should be entitled to the freedom fighter status.

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### SEIMAS MARKS LITHUANIA'S 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF EU MEMBERSHIP

#### THE SEIMAS HELD A PLENARY SITTING DEDICATED TO MARK LITHUANIA'S TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF EU MEMBERSHIP



Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, gave a welcome address. She congratulated everyone on the occasion of Lithuania's tenth anniversary of EU membership. She noted that a lot had been done during the decade and went on to say, "The recent situation in Europe has once again reminded us that Lithuania has chosen the right way to go together with the European Union". The Speaker recalled of the Conference of Speakers of European Union Parliaments hosted by Lithuania last month and said that the Speakers adopted the Presidency conclusions of the Conference by consensus that reflected the priorities of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU and the topical geopolitical matters of the region.

"Successful Lithuanian Presidency has helped Lithuania earn a reputation as an expert; I would, therefore, like to reiterate my gratitude to everyone for their concerted effort and hard work during the ten-year membership and during a very brief but extremely responsible Lithuanian Presidency period," Graužinienė said.

According to Dalia Grybauskaitė, President of the Republic of Lithuania, we all witnessed that ten years ago Lithuania made a very correct historic decision to be in the European Union. "We pursued EU membership because we felt that living and working in freedom and democracy together with many different countries seeking the same objective was better and more dignified," the President said. She believed it was symbolic that the country was celebrating ten years of membership at the time when Lithuania had successfully passed the test of EU Presidency. "The six months of the Presidency were really tight. Lithuania was the first of the Baltic States to have proven by own example that it is not the size of a nation, but coordinated and consistent work focused on consensus that makes the Presidency a success. While presiding over the Council of the European Union, we strengthened our self-confidence. The most important thing we have gained from this qualitatively new stage in the life of our country is our faith in Lithuania," the President of the Republic noted. At the solemn sitting, Dalia Grybauskaitė invited everyone to continue building up Lithuania within the European Union. "We are a model example of change. Throughout these years, the name of Lithuania has resounded among the best of Europe in the fields of economy, sports, innovation, investment, and many others. Europe has appreciated the efforts made by the people of Lithuania. So let us be proud of our success, our unique country and our people. But at the same time, let us not forget that we would hardly be where we are without the European Union. Faith in a free and open Europe is a powerful counterbalance to any kind of doubts about the significance of the European Union, which are spread by populist and extremist forces. Our experience is a telling example, so let us never doubt the historic decision we have made," the Lithuanian President said.

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#### COMMITTEE ON EUROPEAN AFFAIRS ADOPTED A STATEMENT ON THE OCCASION OF LITHUANIA'S 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF EU MEMBERSHIP AND THE EUROPE DAY

At the meeting of 7 May 2014, the Seimas Committee on European Affairs adopted a statement on the occasion of Lithuania's tenth anniversary of EU membership and on the European Day. The statement congratulates citizens on the achievements of Lithuania, as an EU Member State.

"The Committee on European Affairs of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, recognising the long-standing support of the major part of society for EU membership and Lithuania's active engagement in EU affairs; noting that during the decade Lithuania became an acclaimed, highly regarded and active EU Member State promoting European values; and being conscious that the EU enlargement is the strategic objective of the Community that safeguards stability and welfare in the region, congratulates the citizens of the Republic of Lithuania on the occasion of Lithuania's 10th anniversary of EU membership and on the coming Europe Day," the statement of the Committee on European Affairs reads.

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## EXHIBITION ON LITHUANIA'S EU MEMBERSHIP OPENED IN THE SEIMAS



An exhibition of documents and photos titled *Lithuania: 10 Years of EU Membership* was opened today at the Stained Glass Gallery of the Seimas. The exhibition compiled by the Office of the Seimas was opened by Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, and Česlovas Juršėnas, Signatory to the Act of Independence, Speaker of the Sixth and Ninth Seimas, acting Speaker of the Seimas at the time of Lithuania's accession to the EU.

When presenting the exhibition, the Speaker emphasised that Lithuania's membership of the EU ensured security and fostering of European values. It opened up new opportunities for our country to become a strong and modern state and continue striving for economic growth and prosperity for our people.



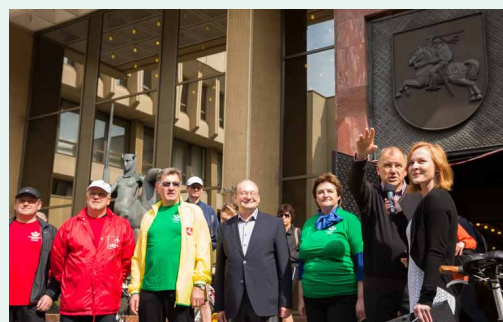
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## OVER 300 CYCLISTS PARTICIPATE IN THE 10TH BICYCLE RIDE TAKE YOUR OWN BIKE TO EUROPE



Over 300 cyclists have left from the Grand Courtyard of the Seimas, to participate in the 10th jubilee bicycle ride Take Your Own Bike to Europe to mark the 10th anniversary of EU membership and Europe Day. The cyclists were seen off by Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas; Česlovas Juršėnas, who headed the Seimas when the first bicycle ride was held 10 years ago, and Vytenis Povilas Andriukaitis,

incumbent Minister of Health, the then-Chair of the Seimas Committee on European Affairs, who organised the first bicycle ride in 2004.



Algirdas Butkevičius, Prime Minister; Juozas Olekas, Minister of National Defence; Andrius Kubilius, Leader of the Opposition, and other MPs have taken part in the bicycle ride alongside with other enthusiasts.



The cyclists headed to the Geographical Centre of Europe where oak trees have been planted to commemorate Lithuania's accession to the EU, and flags of the EU Member States have been hoisted during the ceremony attended by foreign countries' ambassadors.

## SEIMAS COMMITTEE DISCUSSIONS EUROPEAN WEEK AT THE SEIMAS

Seimas committees and the Seimas Information Office have been hosting discussions *European Week at the Seimas* for eleven years. The 2014 discussions were held to mark a decade of Lithuanian membership of the European Union.

*Read more in the next issue.*

## SEIMAS MARKED THE DAY OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

On 15 May, the Seimas marked the Day of the Constituent Assembly at its plenary sitting. Vydas Gedvilas, the presiding First Deputy Speaker, noted that this day signified a symbolic and, at the same time, major turning point in the history of parliamentarianism and development of its traditions in Lithuania.

“It was 15 May 1920, 94 years ago, that saw the setting up of the Constituent Assembly, the first representative body of the Nation, elected in the first democratic general and direct elections in Lithuania. The same day, 15 May 1920, witnessed the unanimous adoption of the Declaration of Independence of Lithuania by members of the Constituent Assembly,” said Vydas Gedvilas at the sitting.

The First Deputy Speaker of the Seimas stressed that the tasks carried out by the parliamentarians had undoubtedly pointed to the worthiness of the Constituent Assembly. “The Constituent Assembly passed, from 1920 to 1922, 268 laws to set the basis for an emergent state of Lithuania. Then, there came international recognition and membership in the United Nations. Finally, the Constituent Assembly adopted, 1 August 1922, the first permanent Constitution of the State of Lithuania,” said Mr Gedvilas.

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## GAME BETWEEN GARRY KASPAROV, CHESS GRANDMASTER, AND A CHESS PLAYER FROM VILNIUS CHESS SCHOOL ENDED IN A DRAW



Garry Kasparov, a legend of the chess world, took part in a simultaneous display against eight junior chess players from Lithuania. A game against Paulius Vaitkevičius, a 12 year old player from the chess school Vilniaus Fortas, resulted in a draw. The young chess player has once won the traditional Seimas Cup.

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