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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**



THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE FOCUSES ON THE EU COMMON FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY AND THE CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS OF THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP



On 4 September 2013 the Inter-Parliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy opened in the Seimas. It focused on the strategies and priorities of the EU common foreign and security policy, the current developments of the Eastern Partnership and the promotion of democratic values. The participants of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference were welcomed by Dalia Grybauskaitė, President of the Republic of Lithuania; Vydas Gedvilas, Speaker of the Seimas; and Elmar Brok, Chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the European

Parliament. Prof Benediktas Juodka, Chair of the Seimas Committee on Foreign Affairs, and Artūras Paulauskas, Chair of the Seimas Committee on National Security and Defence, also addressed the opening session.

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HIGH REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNION FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND SECURITY POLICY AT THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE IN THE SEIMAS



The Inter-Parliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy held in the Seimas on 5 September 2013 was attended by Baroness Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission. During the In Camera Session Baroness Ashton spoke on the priorities and strategies of the EU in the context of the Common Foreign and Security Policy.

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NATO SECRETARY GENERAL RASMUSSEN: WE NEED TO INVEST IN A STRONG PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN NATO AND THE EU



Anders Fogh Rasmussen, NATO Secretary General, believes that security necessitates investment not only in NATO but also in a strong partnership between NATO and the European Union. "As a believer in both Europe and NATO, I am convinced that Europeans should not be content with playing the role of a global spectator. We can be and must be global actors," stated the NATO Secretary General at the Inter-Parliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy held at the Seimas.

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THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE REFLECT ITS ATTENTION TO THE CONFLICT IN SYRIA, THE EU EASTERN PARTNERSHIP, THE SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY AND ENERGY SECURITY



At the end of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy, which was one of the most important events of the parliamentary dimension of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, its participants adopted the summarising conclusions which reflect the Conference's focus on the conflict in Syria, the reinforcement of the Eastern Partnership, EU energy security and relations with its strategic partners, as well as its policy in the area of security and defence.

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More about the event see [here](#).

THE EURONEST PA COMMITTEE WORKSHOP: COOPERATION WITH THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP COUNTRIES OPENS UP EXCELLENT PROSPECTS IN CONNECTION WITH ENERGY SECURITY



The Seimas hosted the workshop Eastern Partnership prospects on energy efficiency and renewable energy of the Committee on Energy Security of the EU-Neighbourhood-East Parliamentary Assembly (EURONEST PA). Welcome addresses were given by Irena Degutienė, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas, Borys Tarasyuk, Co-President of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly and Member of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, and Kęstutis Daukšys, Chair of the Energy Commission of the Seimas. Opening remarks were made by Algirdas Saudargas, MEP, Member of the Committee on Energy Security of the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly, and Fuad Muradov, Member of the Milli Mejlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Co-Chair of the EURONEST PA Committee on Energy Security.

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More about the event see [here](#).

THE SEIMAS-BASED INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE DISCUSSES MULTILINGUALISM IN THE EU



The Seimas hosted an international conference entitled Unity in Diversity: Languages for Mobility, Jobs and Active Citizenship. It is aimed at promoting a debate on the importance of language teaching and learning with a view to increasing competitiveness in the labour market and enabling mobility of the citizens and active participation in public life.

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More about the event see [here](#).

PARLIAMENTARY DIMENSION EVENT OF THE LITHUANIAN PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EU FOCUSES ON MULTILINGUALISM AND THE IMPORTANCE OF ITS PRESERVATION IN THE DIGITAL AGE



The Meeting of the Chairpersons of the Committees on Education, Science and Culture and the Committees on the Development of Information Society United in Diversity: Political and Social Development Aspects of EU Languages and Cultures held in the Seimas was opened by Vydas Gedvilas, Speaker of the Seimas; Audronė Pitrėnienė, Chair of the Committee on Education, Science and Culture; and Rimantas Sinkevičius, Minister of Transport and Communications.

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EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND THE COUNCIL ARE CALLED ON TO SUPPORT ALL EUROPEAN LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY



The Meeting of the Chairpersons of the Committees on Education, Science and Culture and the Committees on the Development of Information Society of the EU Parliaments entitled United in Diversity: Political and Social Development Aspects of EU Languages and Cultures was held in the Seimas on 27 September 2013. The Meeting was attended by representatives of the European Parliament and the European Commission; the participants of the academic conference of European linguists presented their findings. Session II of the Meeting focused on the problems and initiatives of digitalisation of

a language as a part of cultural heritage, the promotion of multilingualism in Europe and the importance of its presence in digital media.

At the end of the Meeting, the conclusions of Meeting of the Chairpersons of the Committees on Education, Science and Culture and the Committees on the Development of Information Society were adopted, which stress that due to the processes of globalisation and migration, the importance of knowledge of languages has particularly increased in today's European societies while language teaching has become one of the key objectives of EU language policy in the area of education.

More about the event see [here](#).

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PARLIAMENTARY BUSSINES

AUTUMN SESSION WORK PROGRAMME PRESENTED TO MEMBERS OF THE SEIMAS

The Seimas started its third (autumn) session. In his [welcome address](#), Vydas Gedvilas, Speaker of the Seimas, invited Members of the Seimas to do their jobs qualitatively. "I ask each and every one of you to put greater focus on the quality, rather than quantity, of laws. If every draft law is sufficiently and as widely as possible discussed with society, public organisations and all stakeholders, legislation will no longer resemble the mass production of laws while laws of dubious necessity or in violation of the Constitution will not be adopted.

While presenting the Draft Resolution No XIIP-948 on the Work Programme of the Third (Autumn) Session of the Seimas as one of the key issues on the agenda of the first sitting of the regular session, Vytautas Gapšys, First Deputy Speaker of the Seimas, singled out the following areas to be covered by draft laws: stimulation of economic growth, increase of employment, reduction of poverty and social exclusion, financial sustainability of the country's economy and gradual increase of budget revenue, increase of energy efficiency and security, implementation of the policy on education, science and culture as well as on healthcare, strengthening of the security and defence policy, environmental protection, legal affairs, state administration, local authorities, agriculture, rural development and protection of human rights.

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ON 3 OCTOBER VYDAS GEDVILAS DISMISSED FROM OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS

At the plenary sitting of 3 October 2013 the Seimas decided to accept the resignation of Vydas Gedvilas, Speaker of the Seimas. The Seimas Resolution (Draft No XIIP-1058) on the Dismissal of the Speaker of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania was adopted by 76 votes in favour, 7 against and 35 abstentions.

"This is my decision and I would like no heated debate or passion. Nothing will collapse; it is just a change of speakers of the Seimas, which will not affect the work of the Seimas. I think that you all qualify for the post of the Speaker of the Seimas, anyone of you could be a Speaker. All that I ask you to do is to endorse my resignation," said Vydas Gedvilas requesting to dismiss him from office.

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LORETA GRAUŽINIENĖ ELECTED SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS



Pursuant to its Statute, the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania elected, through alternative voting, the Seimas Member Loreta Graužinienė as Speaker of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania. The Seimas Member Eugenijus Gentvilas was also nominated as a candidate for the office of Speaker. During voting by secret ballot, 125 voting papers were handed out and returned, 116 of them were declared valid and 9 invalid. The motion to appoint Ms Loreta Graužinienė as Speaker of the Seimas received 77 for votes while the nomination of Eugenijus Gentvilas was supported by 39 parliamentarians.

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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS MET WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE BELGIAN CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES



On 5 September 2013, Vydas Gedvilas, Speaker of the Seimas, met with André Flahaut, President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Kingdom of Belgium. Noting that the Lithuanian and Belgian parliamentary leaders met for the first time, Vydas Gedvilas briefly introduced the guest to the priorities of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union and past and future parliamentary events of the Presidency. The Speaker of the Seimas expressed his satisfaction with the close economic cooperation between the two countries and the hope that the inter-parliamentary relations between

Lithuania and Belgium would strengthen in the future.

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SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS: WE WILL AIM TO CONSISTENTLY INCREASE FINANCING FOR THE NATIONAL DEFENCE



At his meeting with Anders Fogh Rasmussen, NATO Secretary General, Vydas Gedvilas, Speaker of the Seimas, underlined that Lithuania aimed to consistently increase financing for the national defence. "All the parliamentary parties are unanimous on this matter. We are making steady and consistent efforts towards increasing financing for the national defence. I hope that in 2016 it will make at least 1% of GDP," stated Vydas Gedvilas.

NATO Secretary General assured being positive towards Lithuania's efforts and recalled that investment was essential in guaranteeing the reliable defence. "We are talking here about solidarity, and the investment obligation of all the Alliance's partners and finally about Europe's role and weight in the global context," said Anders Fogh Rasmussen.

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SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS, VYDAS GEDVILAS: UKRAINE OPTS FOR A EUROPEAN COURSE



On 6 September 2013, Vydas Gedvilas, Speaker of the Seimas, met with Volodymyr Rybak, Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. The Speaker of the Seimas assured his support for Ukraine's ambition to sign an Association Agreement with the EU already this year at the EU Eastern Partnership Summit to be held in Vilnius in November.

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SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS, PAID AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Vydas Gedvilas, Speaker of the Seimas opened an interactive UNESCO exhibition Lithuania in the Mail Parcel at the headquarters of the World Bank in Washington to mark the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. [READ MORE](#)

Vydas Gedvilas, Speaker of the Seimas met with Senator Richard Durbin, Deputy Senate Majority Leader of Lithuanian origin, and Co-Chairs of the House Baltic Caucus, Members of the Congress: John Shimkus, who has his roots in Lithuania, and Adam Shiff. [READ MORE](#)

During his working visit to the United States of America, Vydas Gedvilas, Speaker of the Seimas, met with John A. Boehner, Speaker of the US House of Representatives. [READ MORE](#)

Vydas Gedvilas, Speaker of the Seimas, participated in the Parliamentary Forum for Democracy held in the United States Congress. [READ MORE](#)

SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS: ROMANIA SHARES WITH LITHUANIA THE INTEREST IN SHALE GAS EXTRACTION



Vydas Gedvilas, Speaker of the Seimas, met with Victor Ponta, Prime Minister of Romania. The Speaker of the Seimas highlighted that both countries needed to enhance interparliamentary cooperation which was insufficiently active as of late. “The fact that this is the first visit of the Romanian Prime Minister to Lithuania also demonstrates that we have to engage and cooperate more actively,” Mr Gedvilas said.

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EVENTS

THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VISIT OF BLESSED POPE JOHN PAUL II TO LITHUANIA COMMEMORATED AT THE SITTING OF THE SEIMAS

The 20th anniversary of the visit of Blessed Pope John Paul II to Lithuania was commemorated at the first sitting of the autumn session of the Seimas. Blessed John Paul II, who was the only Pope to visit our country, came to Lithuania on 4-8 September 1993 and visited the Seimas on the first day of his visit.

[Read more](#)

SEIMAS PAYS TRIBUTE TO THE LITHUANIAN CUSTOMS OFFICER AUDRIUS ŠENAVIČIAUS KILLED IN KOSOVO BY A MINUTE’S SILENCE

At the plenary sitting of 19 September, the Seimas held a minute’s silence in remembrance of the Lithuanian customs officer Audrius Šenavičius killed in Kosovo.

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GEDIMINAS KIRKILAS, DEPUTY SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS WELCOMED PARTICIPANTS OF THE DISCUSSION THE HOLOCAUST AND ITS HISTORICAL CONSEQUENCES

On 22 September 2013, the Seimas hosted a discussion titled The Holocaust and its Historical Consequences together with ambassadors of the EU, Israel and other countries. This was one of a series of events of the IV World Litvak Congress dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the liquidation of the Vilnius Ghetto.

[Read more](#)

[Speech by Petras Auštrevičius, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas, at the conference dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the liquidation of the Vilnius Ghetto](#)

70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GHETTO LIQUIDATION COMMEMORATED AT THE SEIMAS



The solemn sitting to mark the 70th anniversary of the liquidation of the Vilnius Ghetto took place at the Seimas on 24 September. The meeting was addressed by Vydas Gedvilas, Speaker of the Seimas; Faina Kukliansky, Chair of the Lithuanian Jewish Community; Fania Brancovskaja, Markas Petuchauskas and Simon Malkes, former prisoners of Vilnius ghetto; Emanuelis Zingeris, Member of the Seimas and Signatory to the Act of Independence; Ronaldas Račinskas, Executive Director of the International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania; Dr Arūnas Bubnys, Director of the Genocide and Resistance Research Department of the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre, and others. The sitting was chaired by Petras Auštrevičius, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas.

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