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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**



#### DALIA GRYBAUSKAITĖ, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA: THE PRESIDENCY WILL REQUIRE SMART COORDINATION OF ACTIONS



The Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU) will require smart coordination and mediation in brokering the best solutions to global challenges. This was emphasized by President Dalia Grybauskaitė at her State of the Nation Address at the Seimas.

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#### PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EU AND RELATIONS WITH THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP COUNTRIES AND RUSSIA DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING OF THE LITHUANIAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY POLITICAL GROUP AND HANNES SWOBODA, CHAIR OF THE GROUP OF THE PROGRESSIVE ALLIANCE OF SOCIALISTS AND DEMOCRATS IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT



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#### CHAIR OF THE SEIMAS COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND LABOUR: EUROPE DOES NOT NEED POPULIST SLOGANS AND ACTION FOR ACTION'S SAKE; EUROPE NEEDS REAL MEASURES AND RESULTS



Kristina Miškinienė, Chair of the Seimas Committee on Social Affairs and Labour, welcomed the Workers' Group of the European Economic and Social Committee to their extraordinary meeting held at the Seimas on 1 July 2013, entitled Social dialogue and rights: a guarantee for a fair society. She thanked the Lithuanian trade unions for their initiative to organise this meeting on a historical occasion for Lithuania, noting that 1 July 2013 is an exceptional day marking the beginning of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU. Ms Miškinienė expressed her hopes that the country would deal with all the forthcoming challenges in flying colours.

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#### SPECIAL WEB PAGE ABOUT THE EVENT:

[http://www.lrs.lt/intl/presidency.show?theme=261&lang=2&p\\_sp\\_reng\\_id=26](http://www.lrs.lt/intl/presidency.show?theme=261&lang=2&p_sp_reng_id=26)

## SEIMAS SOLEMNLY LAUNCHES THE PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION



### The solemn sitting of the Seimas on 4 July 2013 marked the launch of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

In her welcome address, President Dalia Grybauskaitė noted that the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU proves that Lithuania is a reliable EU Member State and puts it on a par with other 27 Member States. “Lithuania is taking over the Presidency at a time of continuing economic difficulties in Europe. Unemployment, especially among young people, has reached a record high in Lithuania as well as in other EU Member States. We still need to work hard towards long-term financial stability that goes along with economic growth and structural reforms,” the Head of State said. In her words, Europe should move ahead slowly but steadily and both create an internal energy market and reach agreement on the European external energy policy. “Lithuania holds the Presidency of the EU Council, but initiative and concrete action are required from EU institutions and Member States alike.”

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## VILNIUS DECLARATION BY THE SPEAKERS OF PARLIAMENTS OF IRELAND, LITHUANIA AND GREECE SIGNED IN THE SEIMAS



Today, on 4 July, the Vilnius Declaration by the Speakers of Parliaments of Ireland, Lithuania and Greece has been signed at the solemn sitting of the Seimas marking the start of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

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### SPECIAL WEB PAGE OF THE EVENT:

[http://www.lrs.lt/intl/presidency.show?theme=182&lang=2&p\\_sp\\_reng\\_id=19](http://www.lrs.lt/intl/presidency.show?theme=182&lang=2&p_sp_reng_id=19)

## PARLIAMENTARY BUSSINES

### THE SEIMAS HAS CLOSED ITS SECOND ORDINARY (SPRING) SESSION

The Seimas has closed its second ordinary (spring) session with 54 plenary meetings held and as many as 230 laws, 90 resolutions and 10 other legal acts adopted from 10 March to 4 July.

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### FOREIGN NATIONALS WILL BE ALLOWED TO FORM TRADE UNIONS

The Seimas has adopted amendments to the Law on Trade Unions and the Civil Code that will allow both citizens of the Republic of Lithuania and foreign nationals having professional and legal capacity to form trade unions and join them. For the meantime, only persons working under employment contract in the territory of the Republic of Lithuania or on other grounds, as provided by the law, have the right to take part in trade unions' activities.

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### THE STABILISATION AND ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES AND THEIR MEMBER STATES AND THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA RATIFIED

Acting on the basis of the Constitution and in view of the Decree of the President of the Republic of Lithuania of 7 March 2012, the Seimas has ratified the Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Serbia, of the other part, which was signed in Luxembourg on 29 April 2008.

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## AMENDMENTS TO THE STATUTE OF THE SEIMAS RELATED TO THE CONSIDERATION OF EU MATTERS ADOPTED

The Seimas has adopted the amendments to the Statute of the Seimas modifying the provisions on the consideration of EU matters in the Lithuanian Parliament. The amendments were adopted by 85 votes in favour, with 16 against and 6 abstentions. The authors of the draft argued that the existing legal regulation did not meet the current needs. "Due to the lack of explicitness and clarity in the legal regulation, the Seimas, as the national Parliament of an EU Member State, faces difficulties in proper exercise of its powers, including the scrutiny of the application of the principle of subsidiarity," reads the explanatory note of the document.

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## PROFIT TAX INCENTIVES FOR ENTITIES INVESTING IN ESSENTIAL TECHNOLOGICAL RENOVATION EXTENDED FOR FIVE YEARS

The Seimas has adopted, subject to special urgency procedure, amendments to the Law on Corporate Income Tax (Draft No XIIP-718(2)) providing for the extension of the term of the application of profit tax incentives for entities investing in essential technological renovation. The amendments were supported by 99 MPs, 4 MPs abstained and no one voted against. "This would serve as a further promotion of business competitiveness and productivity of entities. The analysis conducted suggests that the number of employees and the level of salaries have been growing faster in the entities enjoying the incentives, as compared to the country average", the explanatory note of the document points out.

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## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

### SEIMAS SPEAKER INVITES SWISS ENTREPRENEURS TO MAKE A MORE ACTIVE USE OF BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES IN LITHUANIA



Vydas Gedvilas, Speaker of the Seimas, has met Ueli Maurer, President of the Swiss Confederation, on his official visit to Lithuania. The Speaker of the Seimas briefed the Swiss President on Lithuania's preparation for the Presidency of the Council of the EU, its priorities and events planned. Vydas Gedvilas also expressed appreciation of the intensifying inter-parliamentary relationship between Lithuania and Switzerland. "We are also pleased with growing economic cooperation between our countries. It offers really great opportunities for expansion and, therefore, we would like to invite Swiss

businessmen to be more active in using them. We see the potential for investment not only in traditional sectors such as agriculture, food processing and textiles but also cutting edge technologies, including biotechnologies," said the leader of the Seimas.

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### SEIMAS SPEAKER VYDAS GEDVILAS HAS MET WITH MIROSLAVA NĚMCOVÁ, PRESIDENT OF THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC



On behalf of the Seimas, Vydas Gedvilas expressed his sympathy to Miroslava Němcová on the massive flooding in the Czech Republic that had already claimed people's lives. The President of the Chamber of Deputies was assured that the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union would make every effort to ensure that the Czech Republic would receive comprehensive aid for dealing with the consequences of the natural disaster.

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### ECONOMIC AND ENERGY MATTERS IN FOCUS AT THE MEETING BETWEEN MEMBERS OF THE SEIMAS AND MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE OF THE UK'S HOUSE OF COMMONS



The meeting between Members of the Seimas and Members of the European Scrutiny Committee of the House of Commons of the United Kingdom focused on the revival and growth of EU's economy, the impact of austerity measures aimed at fighting the economic and financial crisis, the ultimate Financial Framework (MFF) 2014–2020, energy security and the Eastern Partnership.

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## SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS VYDAS GEDVILAS: WE CALL FOR THE EU NOT TO PUSH UKRAINE AWAY



Vydas Gedvilas, Speaker of the Seimas, met with Thierry Repentin, Minister Delegate for European Affairs of the French Republic, to discuss topical issues on the agenda of the European Union. The Speaker of the Seimas stressed the importance of energy independence and enhanced Eastern Partnership. “When we speak about the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement with a country, which pursues EU membership, we have to realise that we should not turn our backs on Ukraine and other countries demonstrating genuine willingness to communicate and cooperate. However, it is obvious that these countries

need to do a lot of homework to meet the values the EU is based on”, Vydas Gedvilas said

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## COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS APPROVES OF ESTABLISHING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH CUBA

At the meeting on 3 July 2013, the Seimas Committee on Foreign Affairs approved by consensus of the establishment of diplomatic relations with the Republic of Cuba.

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## SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS, VYDAS GEDVILAS: WE ARE DELIGHTED WITH CROATIA'S LEADERSHIP IN THE BALKANS



Speaker of the Seimas, Vydas Gedvilas, met with Vladimir Matek, Ambassador of the Republic of Croatia to Lithuania. Mr Gedvilas expressed his appreciation of the good relations between the two countries and Croatia's upcoming membership of the EU as of 1 July which coincides with the start of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Lithuania will hold the presidency of the largest EU in its history while Croatia will join the European family.

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[Speaker of the Seimas, Vydas Gedvilas, congratulated Speaker of the Croatian Sabor, Josip Leko, on Croatia's membership of the European Union](#)

## EVENTS

### THE SEIMAS MARKS THE 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE LITHUANIA REFORM MOVEMENT *SAJŪDIS*



The 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lithuanian reform movement *Sąjūdis* was commemorated at the solemn sitting of the Seimas. At the beginning of the solemn sitting, [the Speaker of the Seimas Vydas Gedvilas said](#) that it was an excellent occasion to recall the developments of 25 years ago and remember the unity of the people in the name the common and essential goal, the unity which was universal. “It was a noble goal, which gave an immense moral and spiritual strength. This strength surpassed any material goods. People did not

discern ‘mine’ from ‘yours’ or ‘ours’ from ‘yours’. They were united as never before. It was universal awakening and revival.”

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### SEIMAS MARKED TWENTY YEARS OF LITHUANIAN MEMBERSHIP OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE



On 18 June 2013, the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Lithuania's membership of the Council of Europe was marked at the Seimas sitting. At the commemoration, Emanuelis Zingeris, Member of the Supreme Council – Reconstituent Seimas, Signatory to the 11 March Act of Independence of Lithuania, Deputy Chair of the Seimas Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, former chair and member of the Delegation, said that in 1993, when Lithuania joined the Council of Europe, it felt like a huge attainment and a break out from encirclement. “We are all well aware that we were the first country to leave the Soviet bloc, the first country to escape the Soviet Union, and the first one to become part of the democratic world and join the Council of Europe,” Mr Zingeris said.

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## 73<sup>RD</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF LITHUANIA'S OCCUPATION MARKED AT THE SEIMAS

On 14-15 June 2013, Lithuania marked the Day of Mourning and Hope and the Day of Occupation and Genocide. On 15 June 1940, the Soviet troops entered Lithuania, beginning a period of persecutions and destruction of the state. The development of Lithuanian statehood and parliamentarianism was suspended for a half a century. 14 June 1941 marked the beginning of the first mass deportations to remote regions of the Soviet Union.

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## EXHIBITION IN THE UNITED EUROPE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITHUANIA'S STATEHOOD OPENED IN THE SEIMAS



*Opening of the exhibition*



*Bogdan Borusewicz,  
Marshal of the Senate  
of the Republic of Poland*



*Seán Barrett, T.D.,  
Ceann Comhairle*

Celebrating the launch of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the Seimas Exhibition Gallery hosted the opening of the exhibition In the United Europe featuring original historical documents, books, photographs and other exhibits that show the links between Lithuania and Europe as well as key moments in the development of the state, starting with the first mention of Lithuania in written sources in 1009 and ending with Lithuania's accession to the European Union in 2004. The introduction to the exhibition was made by Vydas Gedvilas, Speaker of the Seimas, and Dr Rimantas Miknys, Director of the Lithuanian Institute of History.

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