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PARLIAMENTARY BUSSINES

SEIMAS ALLOWED EU CITIZENS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ACTIVITIES OF LITHUANIAN POLITICAL PARTIES

The Seimas approved the amendments to the preamble to the Law on Political Parties No XIIP-875(4) implementing the requirement laid down in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to guarantee citizens of the Union who are not nationals of that State the right to stand as candidates in municipal elections and in elections to the European Parliament, under the same conditions as nationals of that State.

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CONSTITUTIONAL LAW ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FISCAL COMPACT ADOPTED

At its plenary sitting, the Seimas adopted the Constitutional Law on the Implementation of the Fiscal Compact and amendments to secondary legal acts (draft Law No XIIP-1761(2)) aimed at securing the sustainability of general government finances and stable economic development and implementing the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union signed by 25 Member States. The Constitutional Law was adopted by 103 votes in favour, 1 against and 2 abstentions.

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THE SEIMAS IS TO START DELIBERATIONS ON THE PROPOSAL TO LEGALISE ONLINE VOTING



Juozas Bernatoniš, Minister of Justice, submitted to the Seimas five draft amendments to the laws (Law on Presidential Elections No XIIP-1835, Law on Referendum No XIIP-1836, Law on Elections to the European Parliament No XIIP-1837, Law on Elections to Municipal Councils No XIIP-1838, and Law on Elections to the Seimas No XIIP-1839) aimed at facilitating voter participation in elections and providing them with wider opportunities to vote by introducing an online voting system.

“Online voting will reduce the possibility to falsify election results and will eliminate the possibility to buy votes. The results will be processed much faster and the protection of individual rights and personal data as well as privacy of personal data will be ensured. The opportunity to vote online in elections and referendums in Lithuania could be used not only by citizens residing in the Republic of Lithuania, but also by Lithuanians living abroad who are deprived of the opportunity to express their opinion in elections mostly due to the current voting procedure,” said the Minister.

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LANDFILL TAX ON HAZARDOUS EFFECTS ON ENVIRONMENT TO BE INTRODUCED IN 2016

Following a little more than one year's discussions, the Seimas has adopted amendments to the Law on Pollution Tax No.XIIP-1428(2), which provide for the introduction of a tax on landfill waste pollution. The amendments were supported by 68 MPs, nobody voted against and 20 MPs abstained.

The tax on landfill waste pollution, just like the currently applied tax on polluting the environment with product and/or packaging waste, will be paid to the national budget. The landfill tax will be paid by a landfill site operator and its amount will be estimated based on the amount of de facto landfilled waste during a certain period of time. Landfill operators will be exempt from the landfill tax for the removal of phospho-gypsum plaster waste.

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REVENUES FROM EXCISE DUTY ON MANUFACTURED TOBACCO (2%) TO BE ALLOCATED FOR PREVENTION

In its plenary sitting, the Seimas decided to allocate 2 per cent of revenues from excise duty on manufactured tobacco to the Programme for the Prevention of Use of Psychoactive Substances (Inter-institutional Action Plan) approved by the Government. The initiators of the amendments said it would account for approx. LTL 14 m of the state budget.

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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

BALTIC PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES WILL DEVELOP COOPERATION AND REGULARLY DISCUSS POLITICAL TOPICALITIES



On 3 November 2014, Riga (Republic of Latvia) hosted the meeting of chairs of Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian parliamentary committees responsible for public administration, local self-government and regional policy.

Valentinas Bukauskas, Chair of the Committee on State Administration and Local Authorities of the Lithuanian Seimas and initiator of the meeting, Sergejs Dolgopolovs, Chairman of the Public Administration and Local Government Committee of the Latvian Saeima, and Rait Maruste, Chair of the Constitutional Committee of the Estonian Riigikogu, exchanged views on potential prospects for cooperation,

fundamental principles of cooperation, and topics for discussion at future meetings.

“The meeting was very useful and showed that the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian parliamentary committees are ready to actively cooperate, share best practices in implementing reforms, and discuss the challenges and burning issues encountered both at national and international levels,” noted Mr Bukauskas after the meeting. He stated that in the future the parliamentary committees would like to discuss the following topics of common concern: involvement of citizens in decision-making, administrative-territorial reforms, municipal financial empowerment and defining of municipal functions, regulation of elections (online voting, eligibility to vote from 16 years of age, codification of electoral laws), and other current affairs.

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SEIMAS COMMITTEES APPROVED THE STRATEGY ON LITHUANIA'S SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE, PROVIDING FOR A NEW MARSHAL PLAN FOR UKRAINE

On 14 November 2014, the joint meeting of the Seimas Committees on European Affairs and Foreign Affairs adopted a Decision on the Fundamental Principles of the Position of the Republic of Lithuania on Ukraine and Lithuania's Support Measures for Ukraine.

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SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS LORETA GRAUŽINIENĖ MET WITH THE SPEAKER OF THE RIKSDAG



Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, has met with Urban Ahlin, Speaker of the Riksdag of the Kingdom of Sweden. During the meeting, the parliamentary leaders discussed Nordic-Baltic co-operation and development of and prospects for inter-parliamentary and economic relations and shared insights into the complex geopolitical situation in the region.

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LORETA GRAUŽINIENĖ: "WE ARE READY TO SHARE THE EXPERIENCE OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION WITH TURKEY"



Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, has met with Aydan Yamancan, Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey. The Speaker stressed the importance of dialogue as an excellent tool for developing and deepening mutual relations.

"Lithuania has consistently supported Turkey's further integration into the European Union, which is beneficial for both sides. Bilateral relations between our countries will be additionally strengthened by the agreement on cooperation in the field of European integration and communication of Lithuania's experience in European integration to be signed in the near future. The Seimas has accumulated a lot of experience in this field, and we are ready to share it," said Loreta Graužinienė.

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LORETA GRAUŽINIENĖ, SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS, MET WITH INĀRA MŪRNIECE, SPEAKER OF THE LATVIAN SAEIMA



Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, met with Ināra Mūrniece, Speaker of the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia. This was the first official foreign visit of Ms Mūrniece who was elected as the new leader of the Latvian Parliament in early November.

"I am glad that brotherhood between the two Baltic nations is symbolically expressed through parliamentary diplomacy, exchange of visits after elections, and the development of cooperation between the groups for inter-parliamentary relations. I do hope that this will successfully continue in the same vein," said Loreta Graužinienė at the meeting with the Speaker of the Saeima.

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EVENTS

FREEDOM PRIZE 2014 AWARDED TO POLISH DISSIDENT ADAM MICHNIK



The Seimas awarded the Freedom Prize 2014 to Adam Michnik, a Polish public figure, dissident, one of the leaders of Solidarity, journalist, essayist, political publicist and editor-in-chief of one of the most popular and most progressive Poland's dailies, Gazeta Wyborcza, who positively portrayed Lithuania a number of times.

A total of 80 Members of the Seimas present at the sitting voted unanimously in favour of the Resolution on Awarding the Freedom Prize 2014 to Adam Michnik (draft Resolution No XIIP-2521).

“In 1991, Adam Michnik and other Polish politicians showed unconditional and complete support for the freedom of Lithuania by championing the fight of Lithuanian citizens against the aggression by the Soviet Union. Michnik always favoured Lithuania in his activities. He urged the Polish Government to recognise Lithuania as soon as possible and to help Lithuania receive diplomatic recognition on the international scene. Adam Michnik repeatedly and unambiguously argued

against the undermining of Polish–Lithuanian relations by exploiting national minorities,” said Irena Degutienė, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas and Chair of the Freedom Prize Commission, presenting the draft Resolution.

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