

2011

ISSN 1392-3528



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Lithuanian  
Parliamentary  
*Mirror*





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## Lithuanian Parliamentary Mirror

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Circulation 380 copies

Printed by  
*Petro ofsetas  
UAB*

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# Anniversaries, significant events

13 January 2011

## Solemn commemoration in honour of those who perished for Lithuania's Independence

On the night of 13 January 1991, that is twenty years ago, at the TV Tower, the lives of Loreta Asanavičiūtė, Virginijus Druskis, Darius Gerbutavičius, Rolandas Jankauskas, Rimantas Juknevičius, Alvydas Kanapinskas, Algimantas Petras Kavoliukas, Vytautas Koncevičius, Vidas Maciulevičius, Titas Masiulis, Alvydas Matulka, Apolinaras Juozas Povilaitis, Ignas Šimulionis, and Vytautas Vaitkus were lost.

A solemn commemoration **Battle for the Freedom of Nations** on the occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Day of the Defenders of Freedom was held at the Seimas on 13 January 2011.





*Crowds of armless people from all over Lithuania guard the Parliament building in January 1991*

Mrs. **Irena Degutienė**, Speaker of the Seimas, made a welcome address. Speeches were delivered by H. E. **Dalia Grybauskaitė**, President of the Republic of Lithuania; Prof. **Vytautas Landsbergis**, Chairman of the Supreme Council - Reconstituent Seimas, Signatory to the 11 March Act of Independence, and Member of the European Parliament; Cardinal **Juozas Audrys Bačkis**, Metropolitan Archbishop of Lithuania; Mrs. **Giedrė Prialgauskienė**, sister of Titas Masiulis, defender of freedom who was killed on 13 January 1991; Prof. **Jury Afanasyev**, Russian, historian, politician, and public figure, Mr. **Richard Joseph Durbin**, US politician of Lithuanian descent, Member of the Democratic Party, former Congressman (1982–1996) and now Senator (since 1997), Chairman of the Baltic Caucus of the US Congress; and Mr. **Jon Baldvin Hannibalsson**, former Member of the Icelandic Parliament and Minister of Finance and Foreign Affairs.

**The solemn commemoration was attended by H.E. Dalia Grybauskaitė, President of the Republic of Lithuania; President Valdas Adamkus; Prof. Vytautas Landsbergis, Chairman of the Supreme Council - Reconstituent Seimas and Member of the European Parliament; Mr. Andrius Kubilius, Prime Minister of the Republic of Lithuania;** relatives of those who perished; people injured on 13 January; defenders of freedom; Signatories to the 11 March Act of Independence; Members of the first Government of the restored independent Republic of Lithuania; Members of

the Seimas; H.E. Mr Valdis Zatlers, President of the Republic of Latvia; Dr. László Kövér, Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Hungary; Mr. Per Westerberg, Speaker of the Riksdag of the Kingdom of Sweden; Deputy Speakers of Parliaments of the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Poland, and Norway; Deputy Prime Minister of Georgia which had adopted the resolution in commemoration of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 13 January events; distinguished foreign guests who despite the looming danger arrived in Lithuania on these tragic days; heads of foreign diplomatic missions in Lithuania; freedom fighters; journalists; heads and representatives of Lithuania's churches; members of national communities in Lithuania; and other eminent guests.

In her welcome address to the participants of the solemn commemoration Mrs. **Degutienė** noted that 13 January is not only the day of Lithuania's victory. "Had it not been for the victory of 13 January, we would not have witnessed the collapse of the Soviet Empire; Europe and the world would look different now. By choosing a non-violent path Lithuania reminded the world that the future must be built on the highest human values rather than on force or hatred," the Head of the Seimas observed.

**H. E. Dalia Grybauskaitė**, President of the Republic of Lithuania, underlined that the vision pursued in the days of the *Sąjūdis* to create a Lithuania free, progressive, and fair to

every citizen would continue to be the ultimate destination for many generations to come. "Let us remember, experience and revive that feeling of solidarity and brotherhood when all of us were looking in one direction and when Lithuania was what mattered the most. Strangers standing shoulder to shoulder were bound together by sincerity and unconditional faith in the future of their country," the President called for on the occasion of the Day of the Defenders of Freedom.

Recalling the developments of that time, **Vytautas Landsbergis**, Chairman of the Supreme Council - Reconstituent Seimas, reminded that on that night, Lithuania did not betray itself and did not betray the solidarity of nations. "There were those who simply hated free Lithuania and who were already happy to see the return of the foreign dictatorship – the kingdom of evil and the future of humanity. But there were many more of those who did not want the kingdom of evil to return. They wanted to be free and go for freedom together; they committed themselves to resistance without hesitation and turned into the nation again. They represented 90 percent of Lithuania's residents who soon came to vote in the plebiscite for Lithuania to become an independent democratic republic. And before that – on 13 January – there were thousands of courageous people who placed their hearts in front of the tanks," Prof. Landsbergis recalled.

**Cardinal Bačkis**, Metropolitan Archbishop of Vilnius, suggested that it is only by accumulating experience thanks to one's memory and demonstrating the best creative powers that a human being can build a society based on peace,



Fragment of barricades at the Seimas buildings: various posters, banners, thrown away Soviet military identity cards and passports (1991)

solidarity, and honour. "This day is seared in our memory as a painful experience of loss and grief. However, 13 January is also the lesson which teaches us that evil, aggression, and violence can be defeated by peaceful means though it may require a costly sacrifice," the Cardinal said.

Focussing on those who perished for Lithuania's freedom, Mrs **Prialgauskienė**, sister of Titas Masiulis, suggested that idealism, the aim to improve things for the entire nation were leading us forward back then, 20 years ago. "Let's do heart-search and think: maybe it is the right time to remember and to renew the feelings that prevailed during the time of



Barricade fragments. Inscriptions: "Lithuania, Our Homeland", "We Will Die in Order to Live" (1991)

rebirth. Would we manage today to leave our property, social status, posts and go to defend the freedom of our state? Would we manage to become a live and singing barricade again?" asked the sister of the freedom defender at the solemn commemoration.

The Russian historian **Afanasyev**, who compared the history of the Russian and Lithuanian states, maintained that with the collapse of the idiocratic Empire, the period of imitation and simulacra began for the Russian population. "Life did not improve in this period. Quite the opposite, Russia became more unpredictable and thus more dangerous. But the attempts of the current authorities in Russia to transfer the fading historical relicts to the future are much more perilous to both the country and the surrounding world. We witness authoritarianism turn into neototalitarianism. Both the Russian system and what is left of it can neither be reformed nor modernised. The paradigm of life order in Russia needs to be changed. I do not know whether it is possible or whether necessary forces capable of dealing with the growing entropy of the Russian society will emerge. I still have hopes. If this happens, and if such forces emerge, Lithuania's experience will undoubtedly be appreciated," the founder of the Russian State University for Humanities stated.

**Mr Durbin**, US Senator of Lithuanian descent, expressed his appreciation of the achievements that Lithuania attained in

twenty years and underlined that it is thanks to the freedom of faith, the freedom to speak, and the freedom to vote in a free election that characterise Lithuania as free now and at any time. "May our families never again be divided. May we always remember the courage and sacrifice of the heroes who fought for Lithuanian independence. And may we continue to honour their memories by working together to protect the values for which they gave their lives," said the active supporter of the restoration of Lithuania's independence, our security interests, and especially our integration into NATO and other Western structures.

"Let us not forget that during the dark days of occupation from the deportation to the suppression of your cultural heritage, to the daily hardships, it took courage to keep the flame of freedom alive. You, therefore, owe it to them [defenders of freedom] to never let that flame be extinguished. You owe it to them to do everything in your power to preserve your hard-won freedom and to prove by your deeds to their descendents and ours that it was well-deserved. You owe it to them that free Lithuania shall always stand by the weak and the oppressed and speak up against the arrogance of power, also when others dare not to do so," urged **Jon Baldvin Hannibalsson**, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iceland which at his initiative was the first country to recognise the restored independence of Lithuania in 1991.



*Independence Square in the winter of 1991*

## SPEECHES DELIVERED AT THE SOLEMN COMMEMORATION “BATTLE FOR THE FREEDOM OF NATIONS”

***Mrs Irena Degutienė, Speaker of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania***

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Twenty years ago, unarmed citizens of the restored Lithuania resisted the cruel attacks of the soviet aggressors and defended the freedom of our Homeland with their fortitude and desire of freedom. Lithuania lost 14 heroes while more than 700 people were injured, but Lithuania's freedom was saved.

On the night of 13 January 1991, the soviet military troops occupied the strategic buildings but did not enslave our hearts. The best proof of this is the seven-month long war at the border between the armed soviet OMON forces and the defenders of the Lithuanian border following 13 January, which took the lives of eight men at the Lithuanian border and one life near the Seimas during the August Putsch. We will commemorate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this heroic sacrifice next summer.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

20 years have brought us better awareness that 13 January is not only the day of Lithuania's victory. Had it not been for the victory of 13 January, we would not have witnessed the collapse of the Soviet Empire; Europe and the world would look different now.

By choosing a non-violent path Lithuania reminded the world that the future must be built on the highest human values rather than on force or hatred. Lithuania demonstrated the power of spirit, which forced the tanks to retreat. Lithuania fought for the victory of democratic values across Europe. It was our battle for the freedom of nations.

Recalling the historic moments of overwhelming determination, self-sacrifice, and resolute spirit, let us begin the solemn commemoration of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Day of the Defenders of Freedom *Battle for the Freedom of Nations*.

Recalling the names of those who perished for freedom and all those who fought, stood guard, fulfilled their duty, and laid down their lives for freedom and independence of our Homeland, let us observe a minute of silence in their memory.



*At the tribune – President of the Republic Dalia Grybauskaitė, in the presidium: Deputy Speaker of the Seimas Česlovas Vytautas Stankevičius, Speaker of the Seimas Irena Degutienė, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas Algis Kašėta*

***Speech by H. E. Dalia Grybauskaitė,  
President of the Republic of Lithuania***

Dear Participants of the January 13 Events,  
Dear Family Members of Victims,  
Distinguished Members of the Seimas,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

There are days in the life of every nation when the power of will, unity and resilience of its people are tested and when their fate is determined.

For us that day was January 13.

People from all over Lithuania, each individually and all together, stood up to defend their homeland. We clearly realised then that only freedom could preserve our homeland and independence. We rejoiced in the support extended by other nations and we were proud to see their flags of freedom flying side-by-side with Lithuanian tricolours.



*Guests of the solemn commemoration*

We summoned the people and their faith in truth and freedom to protect independence. We summoned their aspiration to live in dignity and respect of our fundamental values and heritage.

Freedom was not given as a gift. We had to fight for it. January 13 took the lives of many. The paratroopers attacked in the dark of the night, with the numbers of their tanks and armoured vehicles painted black. They were afraid of daylight, just like they were afraid of truth. They did not want to be identified because they knew very well they were committing a hideous crime. They killed unarmed people. But the power of truth was on our side – not theirs – making us strong and free.

We passed the test of history and courage with blazing bonfires and resounding songs of hope, and it will be always etched in our minds.

As we honour those who fell for freedom, we do not doubt that the guilty will be brought to justice. There is no room for uncertainty here. Time always serves truth and justice. There is no limitation for crimes against humanity.

The vision pursued in the days of the *Sjūdis* to create a Lithuania free, progressive and fair to every citizen will continue to be the ultimate destination for many generations to come.

Let us remember, experience and revive that feeling of solidarity and brotherhood when all of us were looking in one direction and when Lithuania was what mattered the most. Strangers standing shoulder to shoulder were bound together by sincerity and unconditional faith in the future of their country.

These memories commit us to build a Lithuania that we fought for on January 13.

Let our resolve and determination to continue on this path be strengthened and upheld by the ideals of the defenders of freedom. January 13 is the day of our victory and the source of our unity.

May it stay with us forever and fill our hearts with the spirit of freedom!



At the tribune – Vytautas Landsbergis, in the presidium – Members of the Board of the Seimas, in the background: President Valdas Adamkus and his wife Alma Adamkienė, Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius, foreign representatives

**Mrs Irena Degutienė, Speaker of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

20 years ago, those who stood guard of the Printing House, TV Tower, the building of the Lithuanian Radio and Television, around and inside the Parliament, as well as other objects of state importance in Vilnius, Kaunas, and other cities and towns, experienced crucial moments of determination and choice. Members of the Supreme Council – Reconstituent Seimas and Signatories to the Act of Independence assembled here, in this hall, on the night of 13 January 1991 also took this test. Twenty years ago, on the night of 13 January 1991, Vytautas Landsbergis, the first Head of the independent state and Chairman of the Reconstituent Seimas, repeatedly appealed to the conscience of Mikhail Gorbachev, the leader of the USSR, requesting to terminate violence. Unfortunately, Mr. Gorbachev was asleep.

In his interview to the Hungarian Television on 13 January 1991, Vytautas Landsbergis said, “The world is beginning to realise that Lithuania is fighting not only for its own rights, that this is the fate of democracy in Eastern Europe, which may determine the fate of the whole world.”

**Speech by Prof. Vytautas Landsbergis, Chairman of the Supreme Council - Reconstituent Seimas, signatory to the 11 March Act of Independence, Member of the European Parliament**

Citizens! Leaders of the state and honourable guests! Let’s take a glance at what is in our thoughts and on our lips; let’s take a glance at what Lithuania faced 20 years ago. First and foremost, let’s consider it from Lithuania’s and the Lithuanian perspective. This entails the core moral perspective as the things that were noble and hideous, honourable and not honourable at all, even mean, were contesting and intertwining. Let’s see the whole truth. Our Homeland had to be betrayed that night.

There were plenty of those who were afraid and who wanted to rescue themselves on their own. There were those who hoped that the invader would have mercy on them or even appoint them governors of the reclaimed province.

There were those who simply hated free Lithuania and who were happy to see the return of the foreign dictatorship – the kingdom of evil, the future of humanity. But there were many more of those who did not want the kingdom of evil to return. They wanted to be free and go for freedom together;

they committed themselves to resistance without hesitation and turned into the nation again. They represented 90 percent of Lithuania's residents who soon came to vote in the plebiscite for Lithuania to become an independent democratic republic.

And before that – on 13 January – there were thousands of courageous people who placed their hearts in front of the tanks. And Homeland was not betrayed on that night. Lithuanian citizens who had no new passports, except the most modest honourable certificates of a citizen, carried their citizenship in their hearts. For us to be governed again by the strangers – so strange in their attitudes to life and honour? No! Governed by the invaders? Violent people? No! For Lithuania being broken down and humiliated once again? – No! For adulation to the fanatics of coercion, the tyrants of the East to be chanted? – No! Non-Lithuanians stood shoulder to shoulder with Lithuanians.

No! – the answer of thousands, was the only and the greatest event of that night. Aggression, invasion of paratroopers and *Alfa* killers, terror and killing of armless people should not be referred to as the “events”, unless somebody would like to use the plural form of the word to cover the above-mentioned war crimes and crimes against humanity. Of course, there were events of the hour and of the minute, each death was a tragic event, but what do you want to hide, leaders from the East and the West when you speak about the “events” in general, instead of naming the crime and the perpetrators? The great event is worth the meaning of the word as it surpassed the definition of place and time, it was the self-determination of the armless people in the presence of death: No, I do not allow this! We object!

We need such people every day. Let's understand that evil has not disappeared; it exists in various shapes; it continues to invade lands with tanks and banks, with the poison of information and epidemics of greed and selling one's soul. Evil is marching to conquer consciousness and mind, because once this is done, everything else is easy. Therefore, the ostensibly new front lines are drawn but we are put to the same test: won't our Homeland be betrayed this time? Won't you, a flustered Lithuanian, betray yourself? After all, it is so easy to step into the abyss of indifference and say: I don't care. It is easy to enjoy the pseudo-philosophers' pieces of advice: do what's beneficial. If you do the right thing, you will “not be understood” by scrubs and Pharisees or even worse – they won't stand you. The latter with glass eyes incited by the former can come and even kill you. That's what it was. So what is our answer today and tomorrow? What are we?

Back then, our brothers and a sister went to die of love. And how much love have we got in our hearts today for a person chosen or every neighbour, for parents or a coming child, for our Homeland, a gift from heavens, the great and daily truth

which is still our daily spiritual bread that we pray for? The apostle said it directly and painfully, as if opening the disease of humanity with a scalpel: if I had no love, I'd be nothing.

Let's hear this lesson 2000 years later, which is the lesson of the 13<sup>th</sup> of January as well. If we hadn't had love for our Homeland, the truth and the person standing next to us, we would be nothing today.

Thus Lithuania and the state of Lithuania 20 years ago.

On that night, when the tanks moved, the chairman of the nation's representatives called: let us all gather at the Supreme Council! Not a fraction of doubt that the representatives would respond, wouldn't scatter in villages or hide under beds in the *Draugystė* Hotel. However – what if that had happened, what if only several people had come? This did not happen. The greatest majority of those who signed the Act of 11 March gathered to undertake genuine responsibility of the signatories. And Homeland was not betrayed. Everyone received absolution in this plenary chamber, because the armless defenders had already fallen near the TV tower. Those who were too terrified and had resigned from their posts came the next day to do penance, babbled and were forgiven. Those who were hiding pragmatically all through the night and came to see what was going on in the morning – they know who they are and they carry their guilt.

The political personality showed up at the government premises in the morning and campaigned to rebel against the Parliament that was on guard and fighting, and, ignoring the Constitution, to appoint the head of the executive power and assume alternative management of the state, and communicate with the aggressor. The Minister of Justice said: Madam, your seat is in the Parliament. The Minister of Forestry responded: I will not work with those who are killing people. Nobody present there today supported the ideas of internal destruction of power. And Homeland was not betrayed.

On that night, Lithuania did not betray itself and did not betray the solidarity of nations. So many people watched us, supported us and prayed for us to withstand.

It was Sunday. In St. Peter's Square, in Rome, John Paul II paused the service when he saw Lithuanians among the crowd – probably our tricolour flags – and addressed them by saying: I join you in your pain and prayer for your Homeland.

The parliamentarians from Russia, Poland and other countries tired of Communism were on their way to Vilnius. The thought was simple and clear: if the aggression continued and the Parliament was attacked the following night, we would meet our fate together. Solidarity was the great word



*Guests of the solemn commemoration*

that was turning into flesh. Not to mention the Lithuanian and foreign journalists who defended Lithuania and justice with the weapon of information on the very front line, the doctors who knew for certain that the war was going on and were rescuing the dying and the wounded under the field of war conditions.

The work of talented and inventive communications experts was of special importance. The enemy's device to take away the channels of information and to cut Lithuania from the rest of the world failed.

In the 13 January battle for the freedom of nations, our 11<sup>th</sup> of March that stands for the restored state of Lithuania and the universal idea of freedom was defended. This is the second essential point. The door was opened to the other countries freeing themselves from the Soviet communist or KGB dictatorship. This was important as it predetermined the future of Europe. If Lithuania had capitulated and fallen then, the map of Europe would look different today.

It is easy to imagine or remember the political geography of 1989 with the huge red patch extending from the Japanese Sea to the Baltic Sea, with the latest annexation of the Königsberg Region included. Europe has not understood yet what a strike was made to the Berlin Wall from the

East when, in the summer and at the end of that year, the representatives from the Baltic countries and Russian democrats made efforts for the Congress of the USSR Peoples' Deputies to discuss, condemn and denounce the pact between Stalin and Hitler, signed by Molotov and Ribbentrop to start the war and to divide the nations. Had we broken down a year later, on 13 January, the red patch would be still there on the maps with Europe divided, maybe, rejoicing and celebrating, as it did a year and two years ago, that beyond the red patch Germany was reunited, Poland and other Central European countries were no longer communist – they even were in the European Union. So what else was needed? – there were people in the Baltics who also wanted that, yes: they had the right, but nothing doing... Well, at least their red colour would be shaded a bit differently – with greater autonomy from Russia, so the true Europeans, more valued ones, would be happy about the Soviet rule preserved and some things improved anyway.

Nobody would have denied that this picture entailed the perestroika type opportunities, but Lithuania denied it; a small Lithuania did not allow this! Notably, on 13 January, we did not allow the differently planned Potsdam-Gorbachev-type version and shift of history to win. As soon as in September we, together with Latvia and Estonia, returned to



*Balcony of Signatories to the March 11 Act*

the family of free nations in the UN, the so-called Soviet Union was sized down to the twelve if not fewer quasi-members as Georgia was also proclaiming its independence. The process that started in Lithuania was unstoppable. Finally, at the end of 1991, the then democratic Russia together with Ukraine and Belarus put a stop to the empire of communism, the last one in Europe and even... to the colonialism of the ancient tsarist Russia. Ukraine would be a state; Belarus would be a state! Of course, in Lithuania, we endorsed and welcomed it by immediately signing a friendship and cooperation agreement with independent Belarus.

Post-colonial periods are always hard; therefore, this one would also cause pain not only for Georgia. Anyway, geopolitical changes occurred in Eastern Europe, the entire Caucasus and touched Central Asia 20 years ago. Eastern Europe is now the neighbour acknowledged by the European Union; it is diverse and is looking for its own way; it is not really quite red on the map. It can become democratic and cooperating. Although the largest Eastern European state is still officially rejecting democracy by saying, "It is not for us!", although the president is being elected by one or two voters, this will not continue forever. We can! The nations will say. Lithuania of 13 January and the Russian democrats will have made the unforgettable anti-stagnation, i.e. progressive impetus to the last effort by the uniting continent.

It is a pleasure to welcome them here today. It is important to stretch a hand to those who are still being punished in prisons for defiance to the dictators. Lithuania had a real Parliament of great reforms and a freedom loving nation, matured by the Lithuanian Reform Movement *Sąjūdis*, thus God helped us.

### ***Mrs Irena Degutienė, Speaker of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania***

The Holy Mass was celebrated near the building of the Seimas on the night of 13 January 1991. Priest Robertas Grigas blessed thousands of the Parliament defenders and granted them the general absolution. The bells of Lithuania's churches tolled at noon on 13 January.

At his Noon Prayer, Pope John Paul II said to the people assembled in St. Peter's Square, "I can see a group of Lithuanians in the Square, I want to assure the Lithuanian people that I join them in their pain and prayer."

Faith was one of the key sources of national strength at that time. Therefore, I give the floor to His Eminence Cardinal Audrys Juozas Bačkis, Metropolitan Archbishop of Vilnius.



*Juozas Bačkis*

***Speech by Cardinal Audrys Juozas Bačkis,  
Metropolitan Archbishop of Vilnius***

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Memory helps the person who abides by the Laws of God ingrained in our conscience to develop his own identity. It is only by accumulating experience thanks to one's memory and demonstrating the best creative powers that a human being can build a society based on peace, solidarity, and honour. This day is seared in our memory as a painful experience of loss and grief. However, 13 January is also the lesson which teaches us that evil, aggression, and violence can be defeated by peaceful means though it may require a costly sacrifice.

The historical experience of our nation shows that thanks to their faith, the majority of our brothers and sisters deported to Siberia, dumped in cold, and imprisoned in labour camps did not break down but preserved their human dignity, national identity, and hope. The same applies to the memory of today. The tanks of the aggressor and its military might were stopped by unarmed courageous people that trusted in God and resisted the occupants with faith and prayer. Our brothers and sisters who perished proved a high price of our independence. They proved the existence of human freedom whereby they chose to sacrifice their lives bravely so that others can live.

The famous psychologist Professor Viktor Frankl, who was imprisoned in a Nazi camp for four years, said that in the hardest times "we saw some of our comrades behaving like pigs and others behaving like saints." Why is it so? It all

depends on how a person realises the real meaning of his life, since one can always choose good. In prison camps, where death was a constant companion, under inhumane conditions, humiliation, hunger, and violence, those who had faith, prayed, and helped others by encouraging and supporting them became solid personalities and managed to survive. While those who tried to obtain power, become superior to their brothers in fate, and save their own lives, became cruel and merciless whereas anger and aggression destroyed them first.

I am convinced that those who died for freedom can already enjoy eternal happiness. Therefore, I would like to address those who are alive and must choose today to live and create in a free homeland. The choice between good and evil, loyalty and betrayal, helpfulness and egoism is not so dramatic or sudden as it was during those January days but it requires openness to our freedom and the Maker who has given it. Let the historical memory help us realise that we build our lives on love and mercy rather than by weapon, anger, intrigue or hatred.

Mercy does not contradict justice. On the contrary, mercy is above any justice and gives determination and hope that evil will never overcome love and good. Mercy teaches us great courage and sacrifice in order to resist evil, anger, withdrawal, or resort to the same weapons that we are threatened with. Mercy encourages us to trust in good, which God has engrained in our conscience, to seek it and share it with others.

Mercy encourages us to condemn evil but preserve hope that a person can change and find his internal power to reject evil and choose good. We need mercy in our families so that everyday sorrows do not kill spouses' love to each other. We need mercy in our workplaces so that employers' low esteem does not become the reason for downgrading and persecution of employees. We need mercy in politics so that personal or group benefit does not undermine the duty to consider the interests of each and every individual, especially the poor and needy one.

The mercy that God showed to us by the love of the crucified Christ gives us strength and courage; it inspires us with sacrifice, heroism, and valour to give our lives for a noble goal. "Greater love has no one than this," says the Christ, "to lay down one's life for one's friends." Giving one's life is the greatest sacrifice that one can make so that others can live.

In public today, we hear about disappointment and dissatisfaction with the current situation. We hear complaints about growing prices and the same level of salaries. These are well-grounded preoccupations. However, who can reward a mother who dedicates her days and nights to her child, a teacher who gives his knowledge, goodness, love,

and honesty to his pupils, a doctor or nurse who spare no time or effort in saving their patients' lives? Who can reward volunteers who visit old people, seriously ill, lonely and abandoned, take care of homeless children, help drug addicts and alcoholics? Who can reward for love and mercy? The only answer is that real love is unconditional and uninterested in reward. This love is the foundation of a nation. As long as we have people who dare to love and sacrifice themselves, our life will blossom and the future generations will enjoy the fruits.

God, please help our nation to nurture much healthy fruit that would make Lithuania famous for its honest, good, and merciful people who listen to the word of God who, as the Holy Scripture says, "will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore."

***Message of Pope Benedict XVI read out by Archbishop Luigi Bonazzi***

I have the honour to convey to this assembly representing all Lithuanian people the message that, through his Secretary of State, Pope Benedict XVI has sent to Cardinal Audrys Bačkis, Archbishop of Vilnius, for this solemn commemoration. I will read it partly in Lithuanian and partly in Italian.

Your Eminence,

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of January, twenty years ago, the Lithuanian Nation suffered a lot; therefore, defended and strengthened its independence. My memory has noted the Message of Pope John Paul II to Cardinal Vincentas Sladkevičius that he was praying and expresses his solidarity, that he urges to go further along the way of peace in a patient and steady manner and resolve the challenges and tensions by mutual respect- and understanding-based dialogue.

Today, twenty years later, the Holy Father – Benedict XVI feels united with the Lithuanian nation that is commemorating this date and with its leaders. He thanks God for the Devine that helps on the road of achievements and plenitude. He knows very well it takes consistent effort to secure the flame of freedom that was not easy to light. This is why relying on the supporting stable foundations of the just and peaceful society of men, which the Christ's Gospel does, the Holy Father calls for addressing current challenges and the economic crisis in particular by the power of faith and soul, the spirit of renewed solidarity and sharing of the common good. He encourages to defend freedom and independence on the basis of the solemn love for the Homeland and with the commitment to support it as well as stand for it on the grounds of the precious legacy received from the parents –



Luigi Bonazzi

catholic identity, which must be preserved and be the source of new continuous wealth.

***Mrs. Irena Degutienė, Speaker of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania***

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Unfortunately, not all the defenders of freedom survived to see the dawn of 13 January 1991, because the enemy armed with tanks and automatic guns mercilessly attacked, crushed, and shot at the unarmed people. That morning, not all fathers, children, and brothers returned home. None of the metaphors or speeches can describe the tragedy and grief of Lithuanian citizens, as well as pride for their loved ones.

Now I would like to kindly give the floor to Giedrė Prialgauskienė, sister of Titas Masiulis, the defender of freedom, who was killed close to the TV Tower on 13 January 1991.

***Speech by Mrs. Giedrė Prialgauskienė, sister of Titas Masiulis, the defender of freedom, who was killed close to the TV Tower on 13 January 1991***

Your Excellency Madam President, Members of the Seimas, Defenders of Freedom, relatives of those who perished at the Television Tower, at the Parliament, at the border and in Medininkai, guests, Ladies and Gentlemen!

Today is a special day marked by tears of tragic victory and pain of the relatives of the perished, but it is a very



*Giedrė Prialgauskienė*

special day for the entire Lithuania. It is a special day even for me, sister of Titas Masiulis who perished 20 years ago; it is a sacred day, because if not for that day, I would not be here now; I could not speak to you because the truth would simply not be allowed in Lithuania; and maybe there would be no Lithuania. Then, on 12 January 1991, there were nine of us who left Kaunas for Vilnius to be on guard at the then Supreme Council building. A twelve-year old girl then, I felt I was a fully-fledged citizen like thousands of the Lithuanian people who travelled to be there. We sang all together, we prayed all together, we chanted 'Lithuania!' all together. Unfortunately, several of the thousands did not return home. Loreta Asanavičiūtė, Virginijus Druskis, Darius Gerbutavičius, Rolandas Jankauskas, Rimantas Juknevičius, Alvydas Kanapinskas, Algimantas Petras Kavoliukas, Vidas Maciulevičius, Titas Masiulis, Alvydas Matulka, Apolinaras Juozas Povilaitis, Ignas Šimulionis, Vytautas Vaitkus, and Vytautas Koncevičius perished for the freedom of Lithuania. Almost a thousand people were injured. Let me ask: why they, why us, Lithuanians, were here at the building of the Supreme Council, at the TV Tower and at the other buildings that needed guarding across Lithuania? We were there because we could not be anywhere else; because our parents, grandparents and all earlier generations lived to see this day; because of the turning point that resulted in a true breath of freedom in the independent Lithuania. After all, the desire for freedom has been ingrained in our souls for ages. Yes, there was a period when we had to study the history of the foreign nation as if it were our own. The true history of Lithuania, our history, was spread by the word of mouth: grandparents told it to parents and parents told it to their children. Unfortunately, not everybody did so – some were afraid and broke this chain of truth.

My brother Titas and my sisters Rima and Vilija were fortunate to be born in the family where grandfather was not afraid of keeping the Lithuanian coat of arms *Vytis* openly even during the soviet times. My father taught me the anthem of Lithuania and told me about the times of Antanas Smetona. The truth inspired me to go and defend the things that were the most important for the entire nation – freedom and independence. When the Lithuanian Reform Movement *Sąjūdis* was established, we learned that there were many families like ours in Lithuania; they had a common aim and were united; therefore, we lived to the day when the Lithuanian State was restored and this is why everybody travelled to Vilnius to defend the young state in January 1991.

Idealism, the aim to improve things for the entire nation were leading us forward then, 20 years ago. Let's do heart-search and think: maybe it is the right time to remember and to renew the feelings that prevailed during the time of rebirth. Would we manage today to leave our property, social status, posts and go to defend the freedom of our state? Would we manage to become a live and singing barricade again?

I would like to conclude by quoting the heralds of our nation, Bernardas Brazdžionis and Vytautas Kernagis:

*[free translation of the poem]* "On behalf of your ancestors, / I call on you to escape from the dark / and to light a new fire in your hearts, / and leave the horrible night to slaves".

***Mrs. Irena Degutienė, Speaker of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania***

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Lithuania was not left on its own on the night of 13 January 1991. Although Mikhail Gorbachev, the leader of the USSR, was fast asleep that night ignoring the calls for help, Russian democratic forces responded. Professor Yury Afanasyev telephoned the Supreme Council at two o'clock in the morning asking if Russian democrats could be of any help. Inspired by Mr. Afanasyev, his comrade Galina Starovoitova and a few other friends, dozens of thousands of people went out to rally on the streets in Moscow and Leningrad in the morning chanting, "Russia's honour is Lithuania's honour!" Thanks to Yury Afanasyev, Boris Yeltsin, Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Russian Federation, made a phone call to Vytautas Landsbergis and, despite the warnings of the Putsch organisers, flew to Tallinn on 13 January and signed the documents of solidarity between Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Russia and a joint appeal to the United Nations.

On behalf of the Republic of Lithuania, I extend my sincere thanks to the Russian democratic forces and I feel extremely privileged to give the floor to Professor Yury Afanasyev, the founder of the Russian State University for Humanities.



Yury Afanasyev

***Speech by Professor Yury Afanasyev, the historian and founder of the Russian State University for Humanities***

Honourable Members of the Seimas,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am extremely privileged to congratulate you on the Day of the Defenders of Freedom. I know that quite a few people in Russia would join me in my congratulations, but I am doing it exclusively on my own behalf since on this solemn and memorial day I, probably in contrast to some others, am torn by contradictory feelings. On the one hand, I feel absolute happiness and pride for Lithuania's regained opportunity of independent development back then. On the other hand, however, I am tormented by the feeling of bitterness, sorrow, and grief for what happened at that time and continues to happen in Russia.

I happened not only to share the sorrow of Lithuania those days but also to be an accomplice to a certain extent. On the night when with the help of the tanks the Soviet Special Forces made an assault on the National Radio and Television in Vilnius and the unarmed crowd of its defenders, I received a call from Vytautas Landsbergis at about three or four o'clock in the morning. He described the situation and said that he could not contact anybody, literally anybody from our authorities of the time, and asked me to do so. He probably assumed that they – our authorities – could be unaware of the developments and he hardly imagined that in my position in Moscow I could less easily reach the authorities than he could in his position in Vilnius. Nevertheless, before dawn I tried calling Yeltsin, Yazov, Kriuchkov, and somebody else. Certainly, it was useless.

Mr Landsbergis and a number of his supporters had a point in trying to reach Moscow in anguish of the freedom. While the official Moscow could not hear them because it acted as the suppressor of the freedom, the voice of the defenders of freedom reached the spontaneous Moscow, the Moscow of streets and squares. One of the most crowded rallies in Moscow of the time, which gathered around 400 thousand people in Manezhnaya Square and part of Gorky and Okhotny Ryad Streets and was probably the most massive event that is hardly imaginable now, was organised under the motto: *Freedom to Lithuania, and Hands off Lithuania*. As a co-chairman of the movement *Democratic Russia* and a co-chairman of the interregional MPs group, I was a co-organiser and a leader of the rally. I saw it and I know that it was a sincere impulse, a noble aspiration of the people assembled and united in the hope of being together *for our and your freedom*.

I do not wish to overestimate the importance of the feelings of the rally for the developments in Lithuania after 1990–1991 but one cannot deny that the feelings expressed by Russian people did have an impact on the decision not to escalate the military invasion in Lithuania.

However, soon after the events, only several days later, if we measure it in modern terms, the spontaneous, freedom-friendly Moscow of the streets and squares suddenly and irreversibly, and may be quite unexpectedly to some dispersed.

Since then, the vectors of historical dynamics towards freedom, democracy, and Europeanism in general emerged, then shrank to zero, and finally developed into diametrically opposite rather than only different direction trends.

The answer to the question why this happened and what it means is far from easy. Nevertheless, in my opinion, it can help to answer the question about the different directions of the historical dynamics of the two countries. This issue in mythologised way is still beyond understanding for the majority of Russian population, authorities, and even the intelligentsia. This type of thinking prevents them from understanding that Lithuania and Russia are two different countries and that the difference lies not just in some sketches or details but has a social and cultural basis. Both of them have not only equally deep rooted, at some points intertwined, somewhat similar and sometimes common but also different histories. Since the very ancient times of the Grand Duchy of Lithuanian and Moskovia, their differences have been based on a complicated and distinctive configuration and evolution made up of a number of different historical layers of Lithuania and Russia, including nature, mentality, social and geopolitical factors. The synthesis of different configurations of these layers based on specific mentality, opinion of the masses, patterns of social behaviour, values, and all possible



Fighters for the freedom and independence of Lithuania

mythologemes result in a different outcome in each country. Long ago, different combinations gave rise to two different types of statehood and two different types of historical entities with a specific cultural conscience. Lithuania had to return to Europe, and Russia, since it had never been there, had to discover it. These cultural and civilisation factors, that in a long perspective – *la longue durée* – developed differently in Russia and Lithuania, in my view, can explain the situation of a short juncture of these countries for a short period of time in 1990–1991. At that time, the union between a critical part of society and political elite was formed in Lithuania, which were able to communicate with each other and reach an agreement on fundamental and traditional democratic, legal, and moral values. This resulted in a resolute strength of the defenders of freedom and the stability of the course towards these European values.

The deeply rooted structures and a short-term juncture evolved in a different way in Russia. It saw no democratic revolution in 1991. There was no transition to an open society with European values. Yeltsin with Chubais and Gaidar were neither liberals nor democrats. The prevailing historical tradition did not offer any future perspectives. Autocracy and monarchy prevailed.

But what happened? The Soviet Union collapsed. The collapse itself was a specific form of juncture, a short-term event, and finally a sign that revealed its meaning – Russia had been for centuries building the content and means of life order, world view, and domination inadequate for future

times. All this led to the formation of the Russian system called idiocratic Russian Empire. In 1991, the collapse of the Soviet Union broke the backbone of the system or the foundations of all the reinforcements that once held the construction. Actually, it was the collapse of an archaic and medieval in nature eschatological idea, based on the notion of *it must be so*. The consistently changing historical epitomes of this idea-project: *to save the genuine orthodox faith, Moscow as Third Rome, global revolution, and building of communism* have faded away. The death of the *it must be so* idea-project has removed the supporting constructions of the system, which led to the fall and degradation of this life order, worldview, and domination. However, the historical death of the idea-project has not stopped the actual existence of the system. The entire social environment in Russia with all the imperialistic complexes saw this idea as very viable; therefore, it evolved through centuries and was reborn in new forms.

With the collapse of the idiocratic Empire, the period of imitation and simulacra began for the Russian population. Life did not improve in this period. Quite the opposite, Russia became more unpredictable and thus more dangerous. But the attempts of the current authorities in Russia to transfer the fading historical relicts to the future are much more perilous to both the country and the surrounding world. We witness authoritarianism turn into neototalitarianism. Both the Russian system and what is left of it can neither be reformed nor modernised. The paradigm of life order in Russia needs to be changed. I do not know

whether it is possible or whether necessary forces capable of dealing with the growing entropy of the Russian society will emerge. I still have hopes. If this happens, and if such forces emerge, Lithuania's experience will undoubtedly be appreciated.

***Mrs Irena Degutienė, Speaker of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania***

I am happy to remind you that the US Congress and Senate did not remain indifferent to the Soviet aggression on 13 January. They adopted resolutions to support our country and the delegation of US Congressmen and Senators came to Lithuania. Among them was US Senator Richard Joseph Durbin who had directly experienced our dramatic reality before 13 January 1991. Together with his colleagues Christopher Cox, John Miller, and Bill Sarpalius, he was coming to Lithuania to observe the 24 February 1990 election to the Supreme Council, when he and his colleagues were prevented by the Soviets and could meet the leadership of the *Sąjūdis* the following day only.

***Speech by US Senator Richard Joseph Durbin***

Madam Speaker Degutienė, President Grybauskaitė, Prime Minister Kubilius, President Vytautas Landsbergis – a Professor who found the right music when Lithuania needed a symphony of freedom, President Valdas Adamkus – a man who has served my country and your country with such honour and distinction, Members of the Seimas, Your Excellency Cardinal Bačkis, Father Grigas, who I met this morning, Ambassador Dersé of the United States of America, and from Chicago Rimas Dirvonis – it is good to see you back home, distinguished guests, family and loved ones of the heroes who sacrificed their lives for Lithuania's freedom, *ačiū labai*. I am so deeply honoured to be invited to stand before you today, before this great democratic assembly on this solemn and historic day.

In February of 1990, as the Speaker has said, I came to Lithuania as part of an official congressional delegation to observe your historic election. But the Soviets did not want to give a visa. So, I joined with my other members of Congress, marooned in Berlin, each day crossing the Berlin wall at checkpoint Charley, to beg for a visa to Lithuania so that we could observe the election. Finally, when it was almost too late, they gave us permission to come and observe the election only after the poles had closed and only to stay for 20 hours.

But I will never forget that visit. I will never forget that scene in the dead of winter when this historic city of Vilnius was alive with the energy of people ready to fight for independence.

This Parliament building, as you remember, was barricaded with sandbags. Groups of schoolchildren prayed the rosary,



*Richard Joseph Durbin*

lit candles, brought holly pictures out to stand by the barricades.

Some of my friends said, "Congressman, come with me inside. We want to show something very secret. We want to show you the military arsenal of the Lithuanian freedom-fighters." And in the corner of this building, not far from where we meet, were about five or six old rifles which might have served a hunter or farmer but were no match to a Soviet military machine.

One year later, on Bloody Sunday, the soviet tanks rolled in as we knew and always feared they would. Fax machines around the world were humming with the news that Moscow was setting out to crush the *Sąjūdis* and to end the battle for freedom in Lithuania. Here, in Vilnius, the crowds gathered to make their stand as Gorbachev massed his military forces. But Lithuanians had weapons far stronger than the Soviets – they were armed with faith and courage, family and song.

The flame of freedom that had survived throughout the long starless night of Soviet occupation grew into bonfires at the TV Tower and Parliament Square, and cast out darkness not only in Lithuania but also in Latvia and Estonia, and across the world. Those thirteen martyrs and the hundreds who were injured did not suffer or die in vain. I will bring back many memories of this trip but one will be with me for the rest of my life.

Last night at the TV Tower the wind was blowing, the snow was falling, and it was foggy. We stood on the ice and snow with hundreds of people and inched our way up the Tower itself. Many were carrying candles like those that are lit over here. And I watched and looked up at that Tower, and you



*Lithuanian and foreign journalists record the event*

could barely see it in the snow and the fog. But you couldn't miss those bonfires. And you couldn't miss those candles. And you couldn't miss the children – children who were being brought by their mothers and fathers and grandparents to remember, to never forget what happened on January 13. It is a memory I will take home to America.

And so, what of Lithuania today? What an amazing story in twenty years. Today the Republic of Lithuania has replaced tyranny with freedom, dictatorship with democracy, and the rule of the secret police with the rule of law. Lithuanians hold the presidency of the Community of Democracies and the chairmanship of the OSCE. You are a full and responsible member of the EU and UN.

Lithuania is more. It is a force for stability and peace not only in the Baltics but also throughout the world. And you've helped defend freedom in Bosnia, Kosovo, Georgia and Iraq. I remember when you came to me as a member of Congress and said, "Help us remove the Soviet troops once and for all from Lithuania." We did. And then you said, "Help us become part of NATO. We want to be part of this alliance that will guarantee that we'll never be crushed by the Soviet Union, Russia or anyone else." I remember seeing in the early days your military – it was small, without training, without equipment. But oh, how it has grown today.

As Lithuania has become part of NATO, you have done more in your membership in NATO than many other larger countries. You have stepped up as a nation to participate in this alliance with the kind of courage and determination which does not go unnoticed in the US and around the world. Lithuanian and American soldiers are fighting side by side, as we meet in the safety of this Parliament, as part of NATO in Afghanistan. You are training Afghan security forces and Lithuania is heading a provisional reconstruction team in Ghor Province.

Despite the difficult economic challenges you face, this small nation has contributed more in Afghanistan than many larger NATO partners, and America is grateful. Your sacrifice and contribution as a member of NATO has strengthened our alliance, enhanced our stability, and really proven what this alliance is all about – that you will stand with member nations in the cause of freedom and that we will not forget and we will stand with you if you ever call on us. The US and its NATO allies are committed to ensuring Baltic freedom so that January 13 never happens again.

America is proud that for decades we stood together rejecting Molotov-Ribbentrop, rejecting the forcible annexation of the Baltics by the Soviet Union. Rimas knows (we used to meet in Chicago), in February, it's cold in Chicago. Maybe not as cold as in Vilnius, but it's cold in Chicago. And we would meet outside for Captive Nations Day (Rimas, you remember?). And we would give speeches about all of the countries that had been taken under the control of the Soviet Union. And we would end with a prayer that someday in our lives that domination would end and freedom would return. We stood by you in the US through the years of darkness and the years of Soviet occupation and we stand with you today.

We know that security and energy are indivisible in this part of the world and support Lithuania's goal in increased energy self-sufficiency, including safe and responsible development of nuclear energy. Freedom must never be held hostage to fuel. We will strengthen our relationship with Lithuania based on mutual respect and shared purpose. We also welcome your efforts to reach constructive new understandings even with old enemies. All nations – large and small – have the right to be free. In the US we will never accept the claim of any nation that it has a sphere of influence that overshadows its neighbours. All nations – large and small – possess an inviolable right to choose their own alliances and chart their own destinies.

Members of the Seimas, the past left many painful scars in Europe and Lithuania. In designating this as the Year of Remembrance for the Victims of the Holocaust in Lithuania, you are helping to heal some of the deepest wounds ever inflicted on humanity. I applaud your President, your Prime Minister, and President Adamkus before Lithuania's unshakeable commitment to human rights and human dignity.

When I think, I listened so carefully about your family, coming from Kaunas to Vilnius, and how your grandfather and your parents inspired you to stand up and do things that were unpopular and, perhaps, even politically dangerous, and how that was passed along when your brother became a martyr to the freedom of Lithuania. And I thought about members of families across this great nation – people whose names are never in the newspapers, who have always lived to protect that idea of freedom in ways large and small.

Most of you know that my roots are here in Lithuania. My mother was born in Jurbarkas, near Kaunas. 100 years ago, in 1911, my grandmother picked up her three children, went to Bremen in Germany and caught a ship to the US. I cannot imagine how that woman with three little babies made it to the US. One of those babies was my mother – a two year-old infant Ona Kutkaitė. I don't know much about that journey, very little. And there is only one thing left from that journey, one remembrance, one thing that was part of that great voyage in our family. Hidden in my grandmother's baggage was this small Catholic prayer book. It was printed in Vilnius, here, in the year 1863, before printing in Lithuania was outlawed under the Tsar. My grandmother, whom I never knew, must have been one amazing woman. She kept this prayer book despite the Tsar. And she put it in her baggage and brought it with her three little children to America. This prayer book has been in my family now for 100 years or more. We have kept it safe in America while the Nazis occupied Lithuania, when the Soviets occupied Lithuania. It is the last cherished relic of my family's life in this beautiful and ancient land.

Today, in the name of my mother and my family, I am proud to bring this prayer book home to a free Lithuania. Because of the heroic sacrifices of the victims of January 13 and those who stood with them, because of the courage of Vytautas Landsbergis and other brave Lithuanian patriots, famous and unknown, no one in this nation lives in fear of the tyranny that once had punished Lithuanians who only wanted the freedom of their faith, the freedom to speak and the freedom to vote in a free election. Today we can proclaim fearlessly and proudly – *Laisva Lietuva!* Free Lithuania – now and always. May our families never again be divided. May we always remember the courage and sacrifice of the heroes who fought for Lithuanian independence. And may we continue to honour their memories by working together to

protect the values for which they gave their lives. *Tegyvuoja Lietuva! Long live Lithuania! Ačiū.*

### ***Mrs Irena Degutienė, Speaker of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania***

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are delighted that representatives of the majority of the parliamentary delegations from other countries, journalist and freedom fighters that offered us their support twenty years ago are here, in this hall, today. Nevertheless, Iceland deserves a particular place in Lithuania's history because the Parliament of Iceland adopted the resolution on 24 December 1990 in support of Lithuania's independence, whereas on 11 February 1991, Iceland was the first country in the world that had the courage to recognise the restored independence of Lithuania. We extend our sincere gratitude to Mr. Jon Baldvin Hannibalsson, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, for Iceland being the first country to offer its hand to Lithuania and to express its strict criticism of the brutal soviet aggression on 13 January 1991. Mr. Hannibalsson came to Lithuania to join us soon after 13 January.



*Jon Baldvin Hannibalsson*

### ***Speech by Mr. Jon Baldvin Hannibalsson, Former Foreign Minister of Iceland***

Madam Speaker, Madam President, Prime Minister, Vytautas Landsbergis, honourable Members of the Seimas, Defenders of Freedom, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

How often have we heard the high and mighty of this world saying, 'Pay lip service to the noble ideals of our common European political heritage – freedom, equality, solidarity, democracy, national self-determination, the rule of law, justice for all'? This rhetoric undeniably obscures the fact that those high ideals have never been realised in the affairs of humans without struggle and sacrifice. It has taken courageous individuals to wrestle what we now call universal human rights from the grip of power and privilege. Without courage those noble ideals will remain just that – noble but unattainable ideals.

We have come together here today to let ourselves be reminded of those simple facts of life and to honour the memory of those courageous individuals who 20 years ago gave their lives so that you might live on in freedom. Blessed be their memory. When the high and mighty in Kremlin had decided to crush your newborn freedom under the weight of their tanks, it took courage to face them alone and unarmed. When those tanks started rolling towards the TV Tower in order to suppress your freedom of expression, it took courage for the defenders of freedom to stand in their way with nothing but the courage of their conviction to keep them upright and push them forward. When those tanks pressed on, it took courage to resist, with nothing to stop them but the living pulsating bodies of the defenders of freedom and their quiet resolve, which was once expressed in memorable words, 'They shall not pass'. And when the perpetrators of injustice and violence started to falter and fail before the power of the people unarmed, it was a rare moment in history – a moment to prove when the right prevails over might.

Let us, therefore, never forget that those courageous persons paid the price for your freedom with their lives. From that day onwards you owe it to them to make sure in all your endeavours that their sacrifice was not made in vain. Let us not forget that during the dark days of occupation from the deportation to the suppression of your cultural heritage, to the daily hardships, it took courage to keep the flame of freedom alive. You, therefore, owe it to them to never let that flame be extinguished. You owe it to them to do everything in your power to preserve your hard-won freedom and to prove by your deeds to their descendents and ours that it was well-deserved. You owe

it to them that free Lithuania shall always stand by the weak and the oppressed and speak up against the arrogance of power, also when others dare not to do so. You owe it to them that the material wealth created by the toil of your people be justly distributed so that equality of opportunity shall be strictly secured without regard to economic means or social status. That way you will maximise your freedom and enable everyone to take part in what is called the pursue of happiness. You owe it to them to build a just society in Lithuania in which it is guaranteed that the young, the sick, the disabled and the elderly shall be well taken care of and that nobody shall be left behind forsaken and neglected while others enjoy power and privilege. All of this because you owe it to them to prove that their sacrifice was not made in vain.

Finally, dear friends, a few words of thanks. When President Landsbergis called upon the foreign ministers of your neighbouring democracies to come to Vilnius 20 years ago in your hour of peril to demonstrate their support for freedom, I had a good fortune to respond. Never shall I forget those days – holding hands, singing songs and looking into the eyes of each other, seeing the quiet determination of a nation unarmed, not to yield to brute force, never to surrender whatever the cause. That was the lesson for a lifetime for which I shall always be grateful. Thank you.



*Lobby of the Seimas Building I, in which the majority of events dedicated to the commemoration of the Day of the Defenders of Freedom were organised*



## Events of January 1991 and their commemoration in 2011

### 8 January

#### Attack by pro-Soviet forces and defence of freedom



On 8 January 1991, taking advantage of the increase in prices, the Socialist Movement for the Changeover in Lithuania Vienybė-Jedinstvo-Jedność (Unity), opposing the independence of Lithuania, and the Communist Party of Lithuania (part of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union [CPSU])) staged a protest rally outside the building of the Supreme Council – Reconstituent Seimas and attempted to storm the Parliament building. The Supreme Council – Reconstituent Seimas reached a decision to stop the rise in food prices. Prime Minister Kazimira Danutė Prunskienė announced the resignation of the Government. A column of more than a hundred military and armoured vehicles arrived in the North Town, Vilnius.



MP Auksutė Ramanauskaitė-Skokauskienė, Vilnius Mayor Raimundas Alekna, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas Česlovas Vytautas Stankevičius, Secretary General of the Seimas Jonas Millerius, Deputy Director of the International Relations Department of the Office of the Seimas Rimantas Stankevičius

## EVENT IN COMMEMORATION OF LITHUANIA'S RESTORED INDEPENDENCE AND DEFENCE OF FREEDOM

On 8 January, an event in commemoration of Lithuania's restored independence and defence of freedom was held in Independence Square. The event recalled the history of the Sąjūdis Movement, emphasised the restoration of Independence in particular and marked the events that had occurred in January 1991.

**Česlovas Vytautas Stankevičius**, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas, **Mahir Gamzajev**, Chairman of the Council of National Communities, **Raimundas Alekna**, Mayor of Vilnius\*, and **Jonas Burokas**, Chairman of the Board of the Union of Lithuanian Freedom Fighters, delivered their addresses to the participants in the event.

*In his address to Vilnius residents and guests of the capital, Mr. Stankevičius, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas, said the following:*

"We have gathered in this historic place in Lithuania to commemorate the days of January 1991 that were fatal to the independence of Lithuania. Twenty years ago, on 8 January 1991, the Soviet Empire resorted to violence to tame Lithuania which was moving forward on the road to independence.

From 11 March to the end of 1990, Lithuania withstood two ultimatums of the heads of the Soviet Union demanding the revocation of the Act of March 11, and the economic blockade that lasted for two and a half months. In that period, the Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania also withstood the efforts of the Government of the Soviet Union to enforce on Lithuania, through negotiations, a "sovereign status" in the so-called renewed Federation of the Soviet Union.

From 11 March to the end of 1990, Mikhail Gorbachev, President of the Soviet Union, was still keeping his promise

given to the US President not to use military force against Lithuania which had declared its independence. In October 1990, Mr. Gorbachev was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for the leading role in the peace process of the international community.

Already then the structures of the Soviet Union headed by Mr. Gorbachev were making thorough preparations for eliminating the disobedient Lithuanian Parliament, seizing the Lithuanian Radio and Television, intimidating peaceful citizens of Lithuania and suppressing further implementation of independence.

The organisation Jedinstvo set up by imperial forces, which was operating as a structure to cover military forces, had to implement the scenario of the assumed civil upheaval. The upheaval was staged before the UN-sanctioned international operation to liberate Kuwait from Iraqi occupation. The decision of the Government on the increase in prices was used as a pretext for storming the Supreme Council.

Twenty years ago, on 8 January, the Jedinstvo, having staged a rally of several thousand Russian-speaking employees of Moscow-controlled companies in this square and having deployed shock troops dressed in civilian clothes, attempted to storm the building of the Lithuanian Parliament. Thousands of unarmed defenders of independence bravely blocked the way to the Supreme Council then and made participants in the upheaval retreat.

As "the civil operation" of the Jedinstvo failed, the enemy began to enact the scenario of the military upheaval created in advance. Special units of the occupying army were carrying out an increasing number of attacks and seizing buildings. It became obvious that a large-scale open military aggression

\* Artūras Zuokas was elected the Mayor of Vilnius on 19 April 2011.

would represent a threat in the days to come. Thousands of people from all over the land then left their homes and relatives in need of care and came to the defence of Lithuania's freedom and independence. Crowds of the defenders safeguarded the major centres and radio, television and communications facilities in the State of Lithuania. Thousands of other people built barricades and provided food for the defenders.

A large number of you kept a vigil outside the radio and television buildings on that fateful night of the 13<sup>th</sup> of January when armoured vehicles and heavily armed shock troops of the USSR Empire headed by the laureate of the Nobel Peace Prize were sent to perform acts of aggression against the unarmed nation. Crushing of unarmed people by the tracks of the armoured vehicles and shooting of them were a deliberate war crime and a crime against humanity, which has and will have no period of limitation.

On that January night, the enemy's barbaric offensive united the nation and elevated it to the Supreme Being. The defenders of freedom realised that the enemy could destroy a considerable number of people and also believed that it would not be able to weaken the resolve of the nation to protect its freedom and independence. The will of peaceful and unarmed defenders became stronger than the steel of the enemy's armoured vehicles and the Empire's offensive choked. People of good will all over the world identified with Lithuania.

Defenders of Lithuania's freedom, the victims of the 13<sup>th</sup> of January oblige us to demand that all those who sanctioned the January war crimes and committed them, and who were

awarded bloody medals for them should be held liable. Lives of the defenders of Lithuania's freedom and martyrs that were sacrificed throughout the occupation period oblige us and present as well as future generations to keep a vigil and cherish the defended independence of Lithuania. Let us not forget our painful history.

Commemorating the events of the tragic history today which is still alive in our memory, we congratulate each other on the victory won in January 1991, which we were fortunate to contribute to. Congratulations on the victory!"

After the commemorative event, its participants were invited to open hours at the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania.

A solemn guard of the defenders change ceremony in commemoration of the defenders of Independence was held. The gate of the Seimas was opened to the visitors by former employees of the Security Unit of the Supreme Council.

During open hours, the volunteers recollected the defence of the Parliament in 1991 and video material was demonstrated.

The visitors had an opportunity not only to communicate with volunteers, but also to see photographic expositions dedicated to this date both in the Seimas Building I and II and at the Memorial of the 13<sup>th</sup> of January. By the Memorial, the visitors were able to examine the post of the defenders of the State of Lithuania – a wagon of volunteers.



*At the Great Courtyard of the Seimas*



*Open hours at the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania. Visitors see the exposition, talk to volunteers and recall the events of 1991*





*In the theatricalised battle for freedom, the car Zhiguli of the legendary volunteer Algimantas Remeika fought against the Soviet armoured vehicle*



*Gediminas Avenue by the Parliament*



*The volunteers*



*A sculpture "Message" devoted to the 11<sup>th</sup> of March was unveiled outside the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania in Independence Square*



*The Kiev Teachers' House Choir "Pektoral" (Ukraine), the Choir of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, the folk-song ensemble "Salvė" and other artistic groups performed for the guests of the Parliament*

# 11 January

## Attempt to suppress freedom of speech



On 11 January 1991, Soviet troops seized the headquarters of the National Defence Department, the Press House and other significant buildings in Vilnius. Chairman of the Supreme Council – Reconstituent Seimas Vytautas Landsbergis (the then head of state) tried to reach President of the USSR Mikhail Gorbachev by telephone. The answer was provided that the President was having lunch. Lithuanian Foreign Minister Algirdas Saudargas dispatched a note of protest to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR; however, Soviet troops seized other buildings. At 11 p.m. the troops stormed into the dispatcher office of Vilnius Railway Station. The train traffic was stopped; thousands of transit passengers were stuck on trains. Part of the employees of Vilnius Airport went on strike.

### MEMORIAL PLAQUES AT THE FORMER NATIONAL DEFENCE DEPARTMENT BUILDING, THE PRESS HOUSE AND THE PREMISES OF THE LITHUANIAN JOURNALISTS' UNION UNVEILED

On 11 January, a memorial plaque was unveiled **at the former National Defence Department**, currently the building of the National Defence Volunteer Forces (Viršuliškių g. 36, Vilnius). 20 years ago, on 11 January 1991, at about 11:50 a.m. Soviet paratroopers seized the building of the National Defence Department. After the aggressor's forces were withdrawn on 15 September 1991, the building was transferred over to the National Defence Volunteer Forces. Currently, the building houses the headquarters of Land Forces and National Defence Volunteer Forces as well as the Training and Doctrine Command of the Lithuanian Armed Forces.

The memorial plaque was unveiled by Minister of National Defence **Rasa Juknevičienė** and Chief of Defence Major General **Arvydas Pocius**. Deputy Seimas Speaker **Virginija Baltraitienė** greeted the participants of the event.

A memorial plaque **at the Press House in Vilnius** was unveiled and an address was delivered by Deputy Speaker of the Seimas, defender of the Parliament **Algis Kašėta**. On 11 January 1991, at about noon, Soviet troops seized the Press House, where journalists of editorial boards worked and a printing house was operating. During this military action, civilians, including women, were wounded. On 12 January,



At the microphone – Deputy Speaker of the Seimas Virginija Baltraitienė; from the left: Deputy Secretary General of the Seimas Gedeminas Aleksonis, Minister of National Defence Rasa Juknevičienė and Chief of Defence Major General Arvydas Pocius





Deputy Speaker of the Seimas Algis Kasėta

journalists from thirteen seized editorial boards issued a newspaper “Laisva Lietuva” (*Free Lithuania*).

A memorial plaque of an Attempt to Suppress Freedom of Speech was unveiled at the premises of the **Lithuanian Journalists’ Union**. Chairman of the Lithuanian Journalists’ Union **Dainius Radzevičius**, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas **Česlovas Juršėnas** and Director General of the Lithuanian National Radio and Television **Audrius Siaurusevičius** opened the event.



Memorial plaque at the Lithuanian Journalists’ Union. Česlovas Juršėnas, Dainius Radzevičius, Audrius Siaurusevičius

## EXPOSITION FEATURING DEFENCE OF THE PARLIAMENT BUILDING IN 1991 PRESENTED

An exposition featuring defence posts at the Parliament in 1991 was presented in the lobby of the Seimas Building I. The exposition contains seven stands with the schemes of arrangement of the defence posts at the Seimas buildings, post descriptions and photos. The exposition was arranged by the Office of the Seimas and the Union of Defenders of Independence. During the event, a photography exhibition “**Defence of Freedom in 1990–1991**” was opened in commemoration of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Day of the Defenders of Freedom. The expositions were presented by Deputy Speaker of the Seimas **Algis Kašėta** and the defenders of the Parliament building.

During the open hours at the Seimas, the memories and testimonies of eyewitnesses of January 1991 events were recorded, a documentary “*Laužai prie parlamento*” (*Bonfires at the Parliament*) by Leonas Glinskis was demonstrated, a folk ensemble of Vilnius Garrison Officer Club “*Vilnelė*” and a pupils’ band from Utena Adolfas Šapoka High School performed.

*Pupils – visitors to the Parliament – at the exhibition about >>  
defence of the Seimas in 1991*



*From the right – Deputy Speaker of the Seimas Algis Kašėta, in the middle – active figure of the Lithuanian Sąjūdis Movement, currently Head of the Unit for History and Commemoration of Parliamentarianism of the Communications Department Angonita Rupšytė*



## YOUNG JOURNALISTS CREATED ARTICLES AND REPORTAGES ABOUT JANUARY 13 EVENTS IN THE SEIMAS

On 11 January, the creative workshop for young journalists, dedicated to the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Day of the Defenders of Freedom, was organised at the European Information Office of the Seimas. The purpose of the event was to hear the voice of young people and find out their opinion about an aggression aimed to suppress freedom of speech 20 years ago.

The young journalists (journalism students, pupils and young people interested in journalism) were provided with the opportunity to simulate journalist work together with the journalists accredited at the Seimas. They gathered data for articles, held interviews, took photos and filmed.

About 60 young journalists from all over Lithuania (Vilnius, Kaunas, Šiauliai, Raseiniai, Kėdainiai) attended the event. Journalist **Eglė Bučelytė**, newscaster **Algimantas Sadukas** and others who stayed in their workplaces until the last moment shared their impressions about journalist work in January 1991. Assoc. Prof. Dr. **Andrius Vaišnys**, Dean of the Faculty of Communication of Vilnius University, delivered a lecture "Attempt to Suppress Freedom of Speech".

Reportages prepared by young journalists were placed on the Seimas website at <http://sausio13.lrs.lt> under "Young Journalists' Workshop".



At the European Information Office of the Seimas: Asta Markevičienė, chief expert of the Public Relations Unit of the Seimas Office, photographer Stasys Paškevičius, journalist Eglė Bučelytė, Chairman of the Lithuanian Journalists' Union Dainius Radzevičius



## DISCUSSION-MEETING OF JOURNALISTS “POWER OF A FREE WORD AGAINST AGGRESSION”

Disseminators of a free word – media workers, thanks to whose honourably fulfilled professional duty the world learned about the dramatic events of January 1991 in Lithuania, gathered in the Seimas on the occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Day of the Defenders of Freedom. The organised discussion-meeting of journalists “Power of a Free Word against Aggression” was attended by prominent Lithuanian journalists and honourable guests from abroad: **Miguel Bas Fernandez**, who recorded January events (currently Chief of the EFE Agency Bureau in Moscow); **Mikel Arregui**, former Spanish TV operator, wounded during January events; **Sergey Naumchik**, former Deputy of the Supreme Soviet of Belarus, who delivered a speech at a sitting on 15 January 1991 (currently working for “Radio svoboda” in Prague). **Jon Baldvin Hannibalsson**, former Member of the Icelandic Parliament (1982–1998), leader of the Icelandic Social Democrat Party (1984–1996), Minister of Finance (1987–1988) and Foreign Affairs (1988–1995) of the Republic of Iceland; later – Ambassador of the Republic of Iceland to the USA, Finland, and Baltic States, also participated in the discussion. On the initiative of the then Icelandic Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hannibalsson, Iceland was the first country

to recognise the restored independence of Lithuania in 1991. Jon Baldvin Hannibalsson was the only Minister of Foreign Affairs of a western state who arrived at Vilnius soon after the events of January 1991, thus expressing his solidarity. Mr. Hannibalsson was awarded the Commemorative Medal of 13 January, the Grand Cross of Commander of the Order of the Lithuanian Grand Duke Gediminas, the Cross of Commander of the Order for Merits to Lithuania, and title of honorary citizen of Vilnius.

“This discussion-meeting is natural and relevant when recalling the then role of journalism and journalists and their experience of being attacked by occupant military forces. During those dramatic days, the Kremlin wanted to strangle Lithuania’s independence and took deliberate and methodical actions. As you already know, the main battles of 11–13 January took place not at the Seimas building, but at the headquarters of media which had finally disengaged from censorship. The first and foremost aim of occupants was to silence a public word, maybe even to oppose journalists against each other or frighten them, in order to replace public communication between the legitimate



*Director General of the Lithuanian Radio and Television Audrius Šiaurusevičius, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas Česlovas Juršėnas, journalist Ginas Dabašinskas, Chairman of the Lithuanian Journalists’ Union Dainius Radzevičius*



Deputy Speaker of the Seimas Česlovas Juršėnas greets the guest from Iceland, Jon Baldvin Hannibalsson



Guests from Spain: Mikel Arregui and Miguel Bas Fernandez

authorities and the nation with disinformation. And then, a fatal blow would be delivered on the Parliament and the Government," said Deputy Speaker of the Seimas **Česlovas Juršėnas** in his welcome address.

The following topics were discussed at the journalist meeting: "Role of television and radio in January 13 events," "Foreign journalists in Lithuania, January 1991 – Lithuania's window to the world", "A Lithuanian journalist during the Soviet aggression: to survive or...," "Fight for freedom of speech 20 years later: is it still a fight?"



Mikhail Pustobaev, author of "Chronicles of the Aggression", journalists Edmundas Ganusauskas, Vidmantas Valiušaitis, Arkadijus Vinokuras

## 12 January

### Soviet aggression and defence of the State of Lithuania



On 12 January 1991, armoured vehicles and other Soviet military vehicles started intensively moving along Vilnius streets. Vytautas Landsbergis informed that he three times tried unsuccessfully to contact Mikhail Gorbachev, President of the USSR, during the sitting of the Supreme Council – Reconstituent Seimas. People from all over Lithuania came to the Parliament building, studios of the Radio and Television Committee, the Television Tower and the intercity telephone station. The Soviet armed forces continued to occupy major state institutions; at 11 p.m. an anonymous anti-constitutional group calling themselves “the National Committee of Salvation” declared that “...their duty was to take over all the power in Lithuania...”

#### CONFERENCE OF THE NATIONAL DEFENDERS OF 1990–1991 “SUPREME COUNCIL – THE LAST BARRICADE”

A conference of the national defenders of 1990–1991 “Supreme Council – the Last Barricade” dedicated to the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Day of the Defenders of Freedom was held in the Seimas. **An address to the country’s residents was adopted** at the conference; the citizens of the Republic of Lithuania were invited to cherish the sacred historical memory and not to forget our personal responsibility for the fate of Lithuania.

The conference also **adopted two addresses to the Seimas**, whereby the Parliament is requested to make public all information of the commissions set up by the Supreme Council – Reconstituent Seimas, which investigated the events of 8 and 13 January 1991, and to re-establish mandatory military service as a school of civic education.

According to the organisers of the event, the Supreme Council, which declared restoration of independence of Lithuania on 11 March 1990, remained the last obstacle – a barricade in both legal and physical terms – for those who

attempted to re-incorporate Lithuania into the Soviet Union by force and treachery from the date of the declaration of the Act until international recognition of the re-established State of Lithuania. 13 January 1991 was the turning point which resulted in a bold phrase expressed by Lithuanian citizens at the plebiscite held on 9 February 1991: the Republic of Lithuania shall be an independent democratic state.

Welcoming the participants of the conference, Speaker of the Seimas **Irena Degutienė** stressed\* that nobody else but the participants of those dramatic events could understand that there were no descriptors or discourses that could adequately describe the historical significance of these days and hours as it was the spiritual victory against the military power of the then strongest empire in the world. “The State of Lithuania is commemorating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 13<sup>th</sup> of January. The commemoration is stained with pain and sadness as Lithuania sincerely bows to those who sacrificed for our freedom and those who were wounded; it is tinted with gratitude to all defenders of freedom and with powerful

\*All speech of the Speaker of the Seimas: <http://www.lrs.lt> – EN – 2088-2012 Seimas – Speaker of the Seimas – Speeches



*Parliament defenders in the historical March 11 Hall*

spiritual light and pride that such a small and economically weak but spiritually mighty Lithuania performed a significant and unbelievable historical mission,” said the Seimas Speaker.

Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Council – Reconstituent Seimas, Signatory to the Lithuanian Act of Independence **Česlovas Vytautas Stankevičius** thanked the Defenders of Freedom for their demonstrated resolution and will, overviewed the events of 1990–1991 and recalled the key historical facts of that period.

Chairman of the Supreme Council – Reconstituent Seimas, Signatory to the Lithuanian Act of Independence, MEP Prof. **Vytautas Landsbergis** reminded of the world’s response: “Then, although it was Sunday, the Council of Twelve in Brussels categorically deplored the acts of the USSR and demanded an explanation: Which structure of the Soviet authorities ordered to shoot unarmed Lithuanians? Over 19 years, the Twelve has evolved into the Union of 27, yet we still don’t have the answer. We will wait together. Russia may become a democracy within another 19 years. So far there are no guilty ones, but orders have been awarded for the “deed” of that night,” said Mr. Landsbergis. However, according to him, “Addresses of the Lithuanian Seimas and Government concerning the apologies and compensations to the victims of January 13 may become the first test, and we wish so”.



*Presidium of the conference: Lt. Col. (Ret.) Gediminas Jurčiukonis, Parliament defender and Members of the Supreme Council – Reconstituent Seimas, Signatories Zigmās Vaišvīla, Vidmantas Povilionis*



*Speaker of the Seimas Irena Degutienė, MEP Vytautas Landsbergis, Minister of National Defence Rasa Juknevičienė, Chief of Defence Major General Arvydas Pocius*



*Conference participants*

## EXHIBITION OF PUPILS' WORKS "JANUARY 13 – VICTORY OF MY NATIONAL FREEDOM" PRESENTED

An exhibition of pupils' works from Kaunas schools "January 13 – Victory of My National Freedom" was presented in the gallery of the Seimas Building III. The exhibition, dedicated to the Year of Remembrance of Defence of Freedom and Great Losses, was held at the Seimas on the initiative of Chairwoman of the Brethren of the Defence of Freedom of January 13, MP **Auksutė Ramanauskaitė-Skokauskienė**.



*At the microphone – MP Auksutė Ramanauskaitė-Skokauskienė >>*

## CADETS DISCUSSED THE EXPERIENCE OF JANUARY EVENTS AT THE SEIMAS

An interactive educational event "**What Lesson January 1991 Teaches**" was held in the Parliament. General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania was the organiser of the event. It was the first event of this kind in the history of the academy. Its purpose was to provide 3<sup>rd</sup> year cadets with the opportunity to make an independent decision concerning the defence of the Seimas building complex, thus forming their attitude and understanding of how useful the experience of January events may be to would be officers.

During the event, cadets introduced their ideas to the instructors and later listened to the comments and statements by officers of the Military Academy of Lithuania, former defenders of the Parliament. The event is expected to help future defenders of the state better perceive the historical, military and spiritual aspects of the events of 1991.

*Cadets in the Constitution Hall of the Seimas*

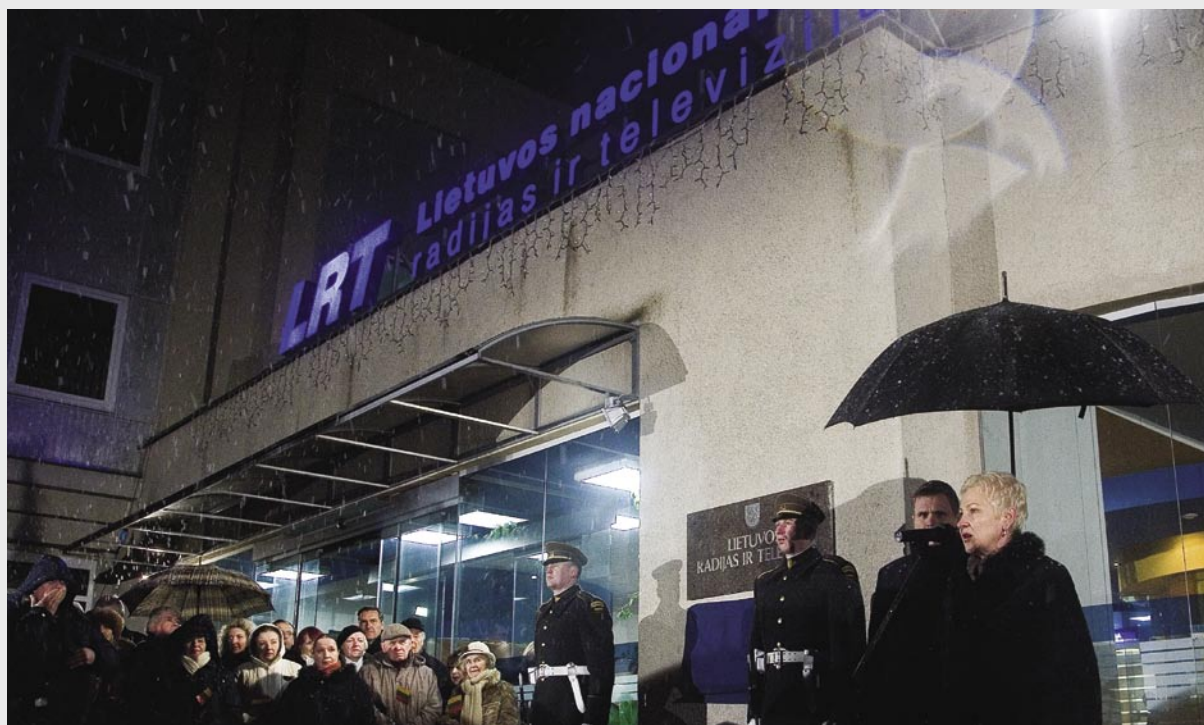


## COMMEMORATIVE BONFIRES

The Flame of Freedom is carried from the building of the Lithuanian National Radio and Television to the Seimas building in Independence Square.



*Speaker of the Seimas Irena Degutienė and Speaker of the Latvian Parliament Solvita Ābolīņa paid tribute to those who perished at the Lithuanian Radio and Television Tower*



*Memorial plaque was unveiled at the Lithuanian Radio and Television*



*Evening at the Independence Square*



*Commemorative event in Independence Square*



*Speaker of the Seimas Irena Degutienė*



*Member of the Seimas Juozas Olekas (on the right) with his family*

**13** January

## Day of the Defenders of Freedom



On the night of 13 January 1991, Soviet armoured vehicles that were heading towards the Vilnius Television Tower began firing blank cartridges. The armoured vehicles surrounded the Television Tower and the building of the Radio and Television Committee. An announcement was made through the loudspeakers that all the power had been taken over by "the National Salvation Committee" and a curfew from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. had been imposed. During the military action, 14 people were killed and hundreds were injured by fighting cartridges and fragments, by the tracks of the armoured vehicles and blows. Sixty Deputies convened at the Supreme Council – Reconstituent Seimas at night. The information service of the Government reported that the Government did not suspend its activities in the conditions of the active occupation by the USSR armed forces. An interim defence authority of the Republic of Lithuania was set up. The Lithuanian Parliament issued an address to all people of the Soviet Union, to governments of the world, to soldiers and officers of the Soviet army. The Supreme Council granted the status of legation to the representative office of the Republic of Lithuania in Moscow and the rank of envoy to Egidijus Bičkauskas, a representative of the Government. The following resolution was adopted: if a legitimately elected authority of the Republic of Lithuania is no longer able to function, Mr. Saudargas, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania, will be assigned the task of forming a Government in emigration.

## CITIZENS BEGAN THE 13<sup>TH</sup> OF JANUARY WITH THE CAMPAIGN “MEMORY IS ALIVE THROUGH TESTIMONY” AND THE LESSON ON THE PUBLIC SPIRIT

The civic campaign “**Memory is Alive through Testimony**” was conducted on the Day of the Defenders of Freedom. During the campaign, citizens lit candles in all schools, public institutions, embassies and homes in Lithuania in memory of those who had perished for Lithuania’s Freedom on 13 January 1991.

After the campaign, Lithuanian schoolchildren could watch the lesson on the public spirit prepared and broadcasted by the Lithuanian National Television. The lesson was given in the programme “Good Morning” by **Janina Sургailienė**, deputy headteacher and senior teacher of history of Vilnius Sausio 13-osios Secondary School, who had taught history to Vidas Maciulevičius, Rolandas Jankauskas and Ignas Šimulionis, defenders of freedom who had perished on 13 January 1991.



*Secretary General of the Seimas Jonas Milerius*

✦ **Ceremony of commemoration of the victims in the Antakalnis cemetery. In the centre – Chairman of the Supreme Council – Reconstituent Seimas, currently MEP Prof. Vytautas Landsbergis, on the right – President Valdas Adamkus**



## SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS IRENA DEGUTIENĖ: THE 13<sup>TH</sup> OF JANUARY IS AN OBLIGATION TO ALWAYS BEHAVE IN THE SAME DIGNIFIED AND NOBLE MANNER AS DEMONSTRATED 20 YEARS AGO

After a solemn commemoration (see p. 4–22), Speaker of the Seimas **Irena Degutienė** attended the **State Flag hoisting ceremony** to mark the twentieth anniversary of January 13.

Welcoming the people of Lithuania, the Defenders of Freedom and the Lithuanian youth, the Speaker of the Seimas recalled that at this hour twenty years ago this square had been overcrowded with tens of thousands of people and streets by the Seimas building had been barricaded.

“Hundreds of tricolours were fluttering over the Seimas building and the heads of the people. Thousands of the Defenders of Freedom were chanting: “Lithuania is already free!” After the tragic and heroic night, we anxiously waited for new attacks and a delegation from the Kremlin. The Lithuanian Parliament addresses all the governments in the

world in relation to the Soviet Empire waging an undeclared war against Lithuania,” said Mrs. Degutienė.

The Head of the Parliament noted that even twenty years later the emotion and mood of those times remained. “On the night of January 13, the small Lithuania won against the world’s most powerful empire. The heavily armed enemy retreated. Seven months later the entire Soviet Empire collapsed. Let eternal gratitude accompany everyone who defended Lithuania, the truth and freedom with their words, actions and heart twenty years ago,” stated Mrs. Degutienė.

The Speaker of the Seimas stressed that the 13<sup>th</sup> of January was an obligation to always behave in the same dignified and noble manner as demonstrated 20 years ago.

∨ *Gediminas Avenue and Independence Square*





*Flag hoisting ceremony at the Independence Square*



## SCHOOLCHILDREN'S CAMPAIGN "THE FLAG AGAINST THE TANK"

Pupils, teachers, students, academics, members of public organisations, Vilnius residents and guests took part in the campaign "The Flag against the Tank" on 13 January – they carried a sash (200 metres in length) in Lithuanian Flag colours along Gediminas Avenue from the Cathedral to the Seimas building.

The campaign was organised by pupils and teachers from Anykščiai Antanas Vienuolis's High School. Artistic director of the high school **Erikas Druskinas**, the author of the idea, and eighth-form pupil **Mantas Ragauskas**, his assistant, sewed the sash (200 metres in length and 4.5 metres in width) in Lithuanian Flag colours on their own.

"After all, unarmed people with national flags also flocked outside the Parliament building to defend their country's independence twenty years ago. We can say that the flag pushed out armoured vehicles of the invaders. And, today, the event "The Flag against the Tank" is aimed at uniting the Nation, in particular the youth, in the name



of our country's future and, of course, thus paying tribute to those who perished for Lithuania's freedom," stressed **Irena Andriukaitienė**, the initiator of the event, Signatory to the Act of Independence, principal of Anykščiai Antanas Vienuolis's High School (photo above).



*Irena Andriukaitienė – at the center*

## “CHRONICLES OF THE AGGRESSION” BY MIKHAIL PUSTOBAEV PRESENTED AT THE SEIMAS

On the occasion of the Day of the Defenders of Freedom, the book “Agresijos kronika” (*Chronicles of the Aggression*) by **Mikhail Pustobaev** was presented at the Seimas. The book was presented by its author, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas **Algis Kašėta** and Minister of National Defence **Rasa Juknevičienė**.

Mr. Pustobaev first visited Lithuania in spring 1991; however, on 13 January, when the world was shocked by the news of the massacre outside the Vilnius Television Tower, he felt a sense of responsibility for the tragedy that struck our country. Major Mikhail Pustobaev returned the decorations received during the period of his service and demanded that Marshal Dmitrij Jazov resigned and an article prohibiting the use of the army against civilian population be included in the Constitution.

“The book by Mikhail Pustobaev published in Lithuanian is both living memory and history already. The book is a valuable source for those who want to have a better understanding of obstacles that had to be overcome on the way to freedom. For those who remember those days and months and who participated in the then events in one way or another, this book not only painfully recreates that incredibly tense period of time, but also asks the following question: How hard did



*Mikhail Pustobaev signs his autograph for MP Algirdas Sysas (on the left)*

striving for freedom have to be for people to go against a huge military vehicle without looking around?” commented **Liudvikas Gadeikis**, translator of the book.



*Book presentation in the lobby of the Seimas Building II. At the microphone – Minister of National Defence Rasa Juknevičienė*

The book by Mr. Pustobaev brings us back to the reality of those times and presents true facts that the fight was not simple. In his book, Mikhail Pustobaev cites passages from the stenographs of the USSR Supreme Council, categorical comments of politicians and generals, statements of the leaders of the state when the deputies asked about specific events, the massacres in Tbilisi, Baku and Vilnius, and the heads of the state spoke as if it was a different reality.

Part 1 of the book entitled “Baltic Way” brings us back to the year 1939. It begins with powers conferred on Joachim von Ribbentrop by Adolf Hitler to negotiate spheres of influence in the Eastern area with the Soviet Union. Part 1 next examines the Treaty of Nonaggression, the correspondence between the world powers and other documents that decided the fate of the Baltic States. After comparing the Stalin’s telegrams sent in 1939–1940 with the directives of the leadership of the Soviet army issued in 1990–1991, the author convincingly shows that only acting persons changed, while the essence remained the same even half a century later.

Part 2 of the book entitled “Baltic Firing Ground” begins with the visit of Mikhail Gorbachev to Lithuania at the beginning

of 1990. The USSR President tried to withhold Lithuania in a “renewed federation”, for the meantime only giving hints about a gloomy future and tragic consequences; however, a week before the visit, probably with his knowledge, the KGB had taken over the three most mobile combatant divisions from the army, thus instantly increasing the USSR repressive structures by twenty-three thousand servicemen. Later, on 11 March, the Act of Independence was signed and the deputy commander of sky troops sent a ciphered telegram to Moscow stating that units of the Soviet army deployed in Lithuania were in a state of military preparedness. Every major event – operations of Soviet servicemen or their planning – is described and illustrated with documentary photographs.

According to Mikhail Pustobaev, he did not write the history of Lithuania, but rather wanted to show how a foreign force came to Lithuania and left it. The unique documentary evidence confirms the following: what is built on the foundations of lies and deceit from the very beginning, eventually collapses. When tragic stages of the existence of states and fates of nations are discussed, this old wisdom becomes far more valuable and more understandable.

## LITHUANIAN PUPILS DISCUSSED THE MEANING OF THE VICTIMS OF FREEDOM AND THE 13<sup>TH</sup> OF JANUARY

On the Day of the Defenders of Freedom, the Lithuanian Pupils Parliament held a youth sitting at the Seimas. Welcoming participants in the sitting, **Radvilė Morkūnaitė**, the youngest Member of the European Parliament, noted that she was pleased with the fact that the 13<sup>th</sup> of January was commemorated not only in Lithuania, but owing to the representatives of Lithuania it would also be marked at the European Parliament next week.

Recalling the events of the 13<sup>th</sup> of January, **Česlovas Vytautas Stankevičius**, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas, Signatory to the Act of Independence, stressed that it had been impossible to defeat those unarmed people. “It is possible to destroy, rather than defeat,” emphasised the Deputy Speaker of the Seimas and added that the Parliament had been carrying out its usual work then, ignoring real threat.

Professor **Vytautas Landsbergis**, Member of the European Parliament, Chairman of the Supreme Council – Reconstituent Seimas, Signatory to the Act of Independence, highlighted the importance of the Parliament as the principal democratic institution. “The Seimas has a direct mandate from people, from the nation that is sovereign,” stressed the speaker. Mr. Landsbergis also presented an overview of the road of the Sąjūdis Movement, calling it a wonderful time



MEP Radvilė Morkūnaitė

when everyone was young. "A young soul has enormous significance. The greatest tragedy is people of your age with old souls. I believe that there is none of this kind today, but watch out," the Signatory to the Act of Independence expressed his wish.

Recalling the events of the 13<sup>th</sup> of January and speaking about arms for achieving and maintaining freedom, Prime Minister **Andrius Kubilius** asserted that mind, knowledge and wisdom were the main weapon of youth.

In reference to the concept of freedom, **Audrius Matikiūnas**, former Speaker of the Lithuanian Pupils Parliament, invited young parliamentarians to deliberate on whether they were worth the events that had occurred twenty years ago. "I doubt this," expressed his sorrow Mr. Matikiūnas, "since

we still tackle all our problems by words [...] or expect that problems will disappear. [...] Twenty years ago, however, the people perished so that we could raise a question as to whether we are free".

**Vilius Bartninkas**, a member of the Lithuanian Pupils Parliament, emphasised that the Defenders of Freedom were the true aristocrats of the country. "We will never be able to repay the Defenders of Freedom for the present they gave us, yet, our duty is to preserve this present and to hand it over in due time," said the pupil.

**The sitting in principle welcomed the idea of the address to pupils of Iceland. The address expressed gratitude to the people of Iceland for their courage and support twenty years ago.**



*Young participants of the event*

## EXHIBITION OF GRAPHIC ART “MY LITHUANIA” TO MARK THE 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE DAY OF THE DEFENDERS OF FREEDOM

An exhibition of graphic art “My Lithuania” by **Vladas Liatukas** was displayed at the Exhibition Gallery in Seimas Building II. The exhibition was presented by MP **Rasa Juknevičienė**, Minister of National Defence, and Colonel **Jonas Gečas**, Chief of the National Defence Volunteer Service.

Graphic artist **Vladas Liatukas**, a member of the Lithuanian Artists’ Association, completed studies of graphic art at the State Art Institute of Lithuania in 1979. He has been working at the printing-house for teaching graphic art at Vilnius Academy of Arts.

“Then, in 1991, I was 36 years old. I tried to be present where the nation’s support and approval were needed most. For me as an artist, every experienced event was not only an experience, but also a new page of creation giving an overview of our past and present. I am pleased today that among the sheets of graphic art on display I can also show the preserved drawings from that period. These are mostly improvisations of impressions and views, and compositional ideas for further work,” the artist presented his creation. “The events that occurred on 13 January 1991 are already history today, generalising the resolve and self-sacrifice of our nation. Blood and bonfires on that uncanny night merged into a torch of eternal glory and freedom which has been burning for as long as twenty years. I was looking for the expression form of thoughts with not too much of elaboration and chose the technique of creation that would rather sum up my and our nation’s inner experiences. The night of 13 January became a symbol of fight and freedom inspiring for new aspirations not only representatives of the older generation, but also young people. Bowing our heads to those who perished, let us not forget today that the freedom and welfare of our nation depend on us,” said Mr. Liatukas.



*Vladas Liatukas and Jonas Gečas*

## UNVEILING OF A MEMORIAL PLAQUE FOR THE DEFENDERS OF FREEDOM AT THE SEIMAS CHAPEL OF JOHN PAUL II

A memorial plaque for the victims was unveiled at the Seimas Chapel of John Paul II. It was unveiled and an address was delivered by Speaker of the Seimas **Irena Degutienė**. During the event, symbolic Flame of Freedom bonfires were lit.

After the event, representatives of the Seimas leadership and Members of the Government met with the relatives of those who perished.

## 16 January

### Commemoration of Lithuanian freedom fighters

*On 16 January 1991, in the Antakalnis cemetery in Vilnius, the whole Lithuania paid last respect to freedom fighters who had perished on 13 January. A statement of eight senior officers at USSR KGB unit in Lithuania was sent to the Government of Lithuania, in which they condemned the use of force against the independent Republic of Lithuania and bloodshed, and announced their refusal to continue working on the USSR Committee for State Security.*

*The Supreme Council – Reconstituent Seimas adopted a Resolution on the Public Opinion Poll in the Republic of Lithuania to find out whether people agreed with the following statement given in a newly drafted Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania: the State of Lithuania shall be an independent democratic republic.*

*The roof of the Parliament building was equipped with a television transmitter. The television of the independent Lithuania renewed its programmes.*

### **SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS IRENA DEGUTIENĖ: THE PEOPLE WHO WERE ARMED WITH THE PRAYER ONLY CAPTURED THE HEADLINES ON 13 JANUARY TWENTY YEARS AGO**

The Speaker of the Seimas **Irena Degutienė** attended the unveiling ceremony of a commemorative plaque dedicated to the defenders of the State and the liturgical prayer outside the Seimas Building I. Addressing the assembled crowd, the Speaker of the Seimas recalled the words of the writer Juozas Grušas that were heard by the entire world on 13 January 1991: “When the whole nation understands that it is an honour to die for freedom and it is a shame to live in slavery, you will not enslave such a nation!”

“There were an unarmed girl and a young man with the tricolour against armoured vehicles and submachine-guns by the Television Tower. General indulgence for thousands of people who already know what has happened this night and know what awaits them before dawn, but who do not retreat from the Seimas building and are armed with the “Lord’s Prayer” only,” said Mrs. Degutienė.

The Speaker of the Seimas stressed that this kind of Lithuania had been seen in the news of the world’s major television companies and on the first pages of dailies.

The Head of the Parliament emphasised that the commemorative plaque which was unveiled outside the Seimas building commemorated this unrepeatable night, this one of the highest notes in the millennial history of Lithuania and a spiritual victory of the unarmed people against the most powerful empire in the world.

“It will mark the heroism of those who defended our Homeland, truth and freedom twenty years ago. “The hearts of the defenders of Lithuania’s freedom rose for eternal life in

Lithuania. The Homeland confers immortality and glory upon Them”. Let the above words of the eminent poet Justinas Marcinkevičius also be an eternal obligation for us and future generations to behave in the same brave and noble manner as demonstrated twenty years ago, on 13 January 1991,” stated Mrs. Degutienė.

At the unveiling ceremony of the commemorative plaque to honour the defenders of freedom, **Česlovas Vytautas Stankevičius**, Deputy Speaker of the Supreme Council – Reconstituent Seimas, Signatory to the Act of Independence, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas, read out a speech by Prof. **Vytautas Landsbergis**, Speaker of the Supreme Council – Reconstituent Seimas, Signatory to the Act of Independence, Member of the European Parliament:

“Twenty years ago we buried valiants without swords who barred the way of the cruelly armed enemy and foreign soldiers with their bare hands and hot hearts.

Lithuanian-speaking collaborators who were going together with the intruders had already been recruited by another state which fooled and engaged them.

However, Lithuania was defended and survived. The Seimas building today and the erected commemorative plaque are a testimony that must be understood correctly. It was not so that people gathered and defended the Members of the Seimas who were doing their job. The nation defended the Supreme Council – Reconstituent Seimas as a body, soul and symbol of the authority elected by them. Should the



16 January 2011



Supreme Council not remain, Lithuania, the state of Lithuania will not exist. Is it still unclear to anyone?

The people were standing and perished outside the Television and Radio Tower so that Lithuania would not be a silenced mute. The people were standing here so that Lithuania would live. The representation of the nation survived, Lithuania survived and is living, becoming stronger.

We saw several days ago that children, new citizens of the independent Lithuania, were already coming. Let them also come here with the aim of familiarising themselves with the Seimas and improving it as a new force that is not indifferent society. Let them recall what they learned from their parents and grandparents, from newsreels and textbooks of true history. And let the defence of not only the building, but also international justice, conscience and Lithuania's honour always come to their minds."



*Youth representative*



*Church representatives*



Speaker of the Seimas Irena Degutienė and Deputy Speaker of the Seimas Česlovas Vytautas Stankevičius together with children at the unveiled memorial plaque. Inscription on the plaque: **"13 JANUARY 1991, FOR THE DEFENDERS OF THE STATE OF LITHUANIA. The hearts of the defenders of Lithuania's freedom rose for eternal life in Lithuania. The Homeland confers immortality and glory upon Them"**



## 17 January

On 17 January 1991, the Supreme Council – Reconstituent Seimas adopted the Law on the Establishment of the National Defence Volunteer Service (NDVS). After an attempt by the Soviet Union to overthrow the legitimate government of Lithuania by using armed force, the establishment of NDVS legitimated volunteer activity and officially involved society in the defence of the state. Society could legally defend their re-establishing state. This decision made legal already existing volunteer formations that began appearing as early as 1990. NDVS was provided with the background to appoint top management and form units.

### **SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS IRENA DEGUTIENĖ: 20 YEARS AGO WE CELEBRATED A HISTORICAL VICTORY OF THE SMALL LITHUANIA AGAINST THE STRONGEST EMPIRE IN THE WORLD**

Speaker of the Seimas **Irena Degutienė** received a solemn military formation dedicated to the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the National Defence Volunteer Forces.

“Several days ago we commemorated the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of January 13. We remembered the defence of the TV Tower and the Seimas, and also the first volunteers who were determined to lay down their lives for their freedom and for their Homeland. 20 years ago we celebrated a historical victory: the small Lithuania won against the strongest empire in the world!

It is your resolution and love for Homeland that today Lithuania is probably the most secure in its history of one

thousand years. We are members of NATO and those with bad intentions know: today Lithuania would defend itself not by hunting rifles; Lithuania now has powerful allies.

Our present, modern and powerful security started back then, in January 1991, in the Parliament, next to sand sacks, grandparents’ guns and Molotov cocktail bottles. Back then, when the power of hearts defeated the power of tanks. I wish you this power of hearts in your defending the Homeland, freedom, truth and humanity. Dear servicemen, volunteers, defenders of Freedom! Congratulations on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of re-establishment of Lithuanian armed forces! Long live free Lithuania!” exclaimed the Seimas Speaker.



*Seimas Speaker and commanders of volunteers*



Moments from the event





*Moments from the event*



## Other commemorative events

### “ROAD OF LIFE AND DEATH”, THE RUN IN COMMEMORATION OF JANUARY 13

On 9 January, the 20<sup>th</sup> Traditional International Run “**Road of Life and Death**” in commemoration of those perished for Lithuania’s freedom was organised in Vilnius.

*This great tradition has been pursued in commemoration of the perished Loreta Asanavičiūtė, Virginijus Druskis, Darius Gerbutavičius, Rolandas Jankauskas, Rimantas Juknevičius, Alvydas Kanapinskas, Algimantas Petras Kavoliukas, Vytautas Koncevičius, Vidas Maciulevičius, Titas Masiulis, Alvydas Matulka, Apolinaras Povilaitis, Ignas Šimulionis, Vytautas Vaitkus.*

Runners started at midday from the Antakalnis cemetery, where they first left flowers on the graves of Defenders of Freedom in 1991, and finished at the Television Tower, in Sausio 13-osios Street.

This run of honour, which is being held for the 20<sup>th</sup> time already, is not a competition; there are no winners or prize-winners. Those who manage to successfully complete the distance of nine kilometres from the Antakalnis cemetery to the Television Tower are awarded the commemorative medals and booklets.



This event attracts about 3,000 runners each year. The Lithuanian Amateur Runners’ Association is the organiser of the event.

*The “Road of Life and Death” Run was held for the first time in 1992 and has been organised annually since then.*



## JANUARY 1991 EVENTS FEATURED IN THE PHOTO EXHIBITION BY VOLUNTEER ROMAS EIDUKEVIČIUS AT THE SEIMAS

Between 7 and 27 January, an exhibition of the works of a volunteer and professional photographer **Romas Eidukevičius** (born in 1962) was displayed on the initiative of the Seimas Commission for the Affairs and Rights of Participants of Forces of Resistance to Occupational Regimes and Victims of Occupations in the gallery joining Seimas Buildings II and III. The photographs capture the events of January 1991.

In 1990, Mr. Eidukevičius filled in a volunteer's application form; in 1991, he joined the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union and Voluntary National Defence Service. Together with riflemen and volunteers from Marijampolė, he defended

the building of the Supreme Council – Reconstituent Seimas and was on guard at various strategic objects in Vilkauskis. In 1993, he fulfilled guard tasks during the withdrawal of the Russian Army. Romas Eidukevičius received the Parliament Defender's Medal, the Commemorative Medal of 13 January and the Medal of the Founding Volunteers of the Lithuanian Army.

By his photographs, reportages and exhibitions, Mr. Eidukevičius has been strengthening the relations between the national defence system and volunteer forces and society. His works have been published in various publications and presented in exhibitions.



## SPECIAL AMATEUR RADIO CALL SIGNS INFORMED THE WORLD ABOUT JANUARY 13

Marking the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Day of the Defenders of Freedom and reminding radio amateurs worldwide of the aggression pursued by the Soviets back in 1991, the Lithuanian Amateur Radio Society organised a two-week (13–27 January 2011) marathon of special call signs on the air.

During this campaign, tens of thousands of call signs were transmitted to radio amateurs worldwide. Those

who established a contact with this occasional Lithuanian amateur radio station had the chance to remember or discover Lithuania's road to Independence, an aggressive attempt by the Soviet Union to crush down the Lithuanian nation and force the people refuse legitimate Independence. The postcards of confirmation of radiocommunication, the so-called QSL cards, were sent to colleagues from all around the globe.

The Lithuanian Amateur Radio Society is an independent, non-political, cultural, public organisation, joining Lithuanian radio amateurs on a voluntary basis. The society was established in 1938 and now has around 400 members. Lithuanian radio amateurs have been transmitting information about Lithuania every day. In 2009, the Society celebrated the millennial anniversary of the first reference to the name of Lithuania; in March–April 2010, they actively marked the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Restoration of Lithuania's Independence.

In January 1991, Lithuanian radio amateurs used their cumulated experience and contributed to maintaining communication in the Supreme Council – Reconstituent Seimas and other strategically important places, as well as transmitted information about the situation in Lithuania to their colleagues abroad.



*In the photo: Radio apparatus which was used by Lithuanian radio hams on the night of 13 January 1991 to maintain communication with the world*

## EXHIBITION AT THE SEIMAS FEATURES THE HISTORY OF BILATERAL MEETINGS OF LITHUANIA AND POLAND

An exhibition entitled **“Solidarity with Lithuania. Lithuanian-Polish Meetings in 1988–1994”** was presented at the Seimas building in commemoration of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Day of the Defenders of Freedom. The exhibition was arranged on the initiative of the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Lithuania and the “Karta” Centre.

The exposition is aimed at demonstrating the beginning of opposition contacts between Poland and Lithuania, the position of the Government of the Republic of Poland on the eve of restoration of independence of Lithuania and the dynamics of bilateral contacts before the signature of the cross-boundary cooperation agreement in 1994.

Political processes started in Western Europe in late 80's, and subsequently Lithuania and Poland regained independence. Before restoration of independence, the majority of meetings were held only between emigrants. In 1976, opposition organisations started forming in both countries: the Helsinki Group in Lithuania and the Workers' Defence Committee in Poland. The exhibition exhaustively presents the activities of the Lithuanian Reform Movement Sajūdis and the Polish Solidarność, processes of restoration of independence, the first official visits of the heads of state and agreements reached at these meetings.

Exhibition visitors were offered a catalogue in Lithuanian, Polish and English, with the memoirs of the participants of those events as well as factographic data.

## WINNERS OF THE NATIONAL PUPILS' CONTEST “FLAME OF FREEDOM” ANNOUNCED

On 9 February, the final round of the national pupils' quiz “Flame of Freedom” was held in the Seimas. The team **“We the People of Lithuania”** from Vilnius Simonas Daukantas's High School became winners of the contest. The winners were awarded the grand prix – a trip to the European Parliament, established by the Office of MEP **Radvilė Morkūnaitė**.

Second (the team from Mažeikiai Gabijos High School) and third (the team from Mažeikiai District Seda Vytautas

Mačernis's High School) place winners received tokens featuring the sign “Flame of Freedom” designed by **Giedrius Reimeris**.

Tokens and prizes were also awarded to other contestants. The prizes were established by the Office of the Seimas, Vytautas Landsbergis Foundation, the Ministries of Education and Science, Foreign Affairs, and National Defence, and the company “Fima”.



*In the photo: The team of Vilnius S. Daukantas's High School "We the People of Lithuania" with teachers Mindaugas Tamošaitis and Ramunė Vosyliene*

The date of February 9 was not randomly chosen for the quiz; on 9 February 1991, a public opinion poll of Lithuanian residents, a plebiscite, was organised, during which more than 90 per cent of voters spoke for an independent and democratic Lithuania. Quiz questions and tasks covered the declaration, establishment, defence and recognition of re-established Lithuania's Independence.

When greeting the contestants and awarding the winners, **Algis Kašėta**, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas and a historian, said: "A touch of historical events is a great stimulus for the young generation, which will help become more active members of society, better understand the history of their country and implant love for the Homeland."

When greeting the participants of the quiz, President of the Club of Signatories to the Lithuanian Independence Act **Birutė Valionytė** wished them curiosity, which would always lead them to the right answer, encourage the young citizens to feel great responsibility for their country and transfer it to their children. The Signatory also sincerely urged them not to forget the fundamental things: language, traditions and customs.

Secretary General of the Seimas **Jonas Milerius** wished the young generation to retain trust in Lithuania and, despite wide opportunities of studying or living abroad, not to ever lose a wish to return to the Homeland.



*In the photo: Team winner – pupils from Vilnius Simonas Daukantas's High School, from the left: Justinas Pakalnis, Austėja Andžiulytė, team captain Agnė Kuliešiuūtė, Karolina Čivilytė*

The national quiz was organised in the Seimas building for the first time. It was dedicated to the fatal period in Lithuania's history, 1990–1991, and aimed to encourage the young generation to become interested in the development of statehood of Lithuania and commemoration of significant historical dates. In 2010, a quiz of Vilnius schools was held in commemoration of the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Constituent Assembly. Similar quizzes are expected to become a tradition



and be organised in 2012, the 90<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania (1922 and 1992), as well as other dates relevant to Lithuania's statehood.

**46 pupil teams** (in total, 184 contestants) from 23 Lithuanian districts and cities took part in the final round of the quiz "Flame of Freedom". After the first stage, nine teams made to the final stage: Marijampolė Marijonų High School, Marijampolė Sūduvos High School, Mažeikiai Gabijos High School, Mažeikiai District Seda Vytautas Mačernis's High School, Pasvalys District Petras Vileišis's High School, Skuodas District Pranciškus Žadeikis's High School, Šakiai District Griškabūdis Secondary School, Vilnius Simonas Daukantas's High School and Zarasai Ažuolo High School.

At the final stage, the captains of nine teams contested in the flash tournament. The best three captains were awarded tokens. The best team captain became **Agnė Kuliešūtė**, a pupil from Vilnius Simonas Daukantas's High School, the second best captain – **Martynas Barkauskas**, a pupil from Marijampolė Sūduvos High School, the third best captain – **Jonas Mulevičius**, a pupil from Pasvalys District Petras Vileišis's High School.

The pupils were evaluated by a jury consisting of 20 members, including Signatories to the Lithuanian Act of Independence **Bronislovas Genzelis**, **Vidmantas Povilonis**, **Romualdas Ozolas**, **Zigmas Vaišvila**, historians **Algirdas Jakubčionis** and **Antanas Tyla**, President of the Union of Defenders of Independence Col. **Jonas Gečas**, and other public figures.

## VOLUNTARY BLOOD DONATION CAMPAIGN TURNED INTO THE DAYS OF INCREDIBLE UNITY, UNDERSTANDING AND KINDNESS

A three-day long voluntary blood donation campaign turned into the days of incredible unity, understanding and kindness (see *LPM* No 4 (148), p. 9). The number of blood donors was increasing each day, and medical doctors noted that they were exceptional citizens because they decided to donate their blood in commemoration of perished freedom defenders and in remembrance of January 1991.

They were students, school pupils, members of the Seimas, the Mayor of Vilnius, and regular blood donors.

One officer, who came to the voluntary blood campaign in Vilnius, said that blood donation for him was a very meaningful act, because 20 years ago, on 13 January, he also donated blood. Two donors, who came to the campaign,

donated blood for the 25<sup>th</sup> time; however, there were people who came to donate blood for the first time, inspired by the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Day of the Defenders of Freedom.

Campaign organisers sincerely thanked everyone who voluntarily donated blood in the campaign and all others who contributed to this noble act.

*The voluntary blood donation campaign was held between 10 and 12 January to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Day of the Defenders of Freedom and commemorate those who perished for Lithuania's Freedom. It was organised at the headquarters of Brethren of the Defence of Freedom of January 13. Campaign organisers: the Office of the Seimas, the Brethren of the Defence of Freedom of January 13, the National Blood Centre.*



Blood donor – MP Algimantas Dumbrava

## SEIMAS ARCHIVE PRESENTED A VIRTUAL EXHIBITION “JANUARY 13 ALIVE IN OUR MEMORY”

January 1991 events have played an exceptional role in the history of establishing Lithuania's restored independence and demonstrated the sacrifice and determination of the Lithuanian nation to be free and independent. The courage of the nation, who was not afraid to stand armless against tanks and shotguns, was widely supported in the entire democratic world and the former USSR.

In commemoration of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the defence of freedom, the Archive Unit of the Document Department of the Office of the Seimas presented a virtual exhibition “January 13 Alive in Our Memory”. It contains official documents of the Supreme Council, letters by politicians, organisations and residents of Lithuania, the Soviet Union and foreign countries, revealing their response to January events, and paintings of children born in the independent Lithuania demonstrating their understanding of the meaning and significance of this date.

The virtual exhibition is displayed on the Seimas website, under “January 13, 1991”.



11 March 2011

## Day of Restoration of Lithuania's Independence commemorated at the Seimas

### THE 11<sup>TH</sup> OF MARCH AT A SOLEMN SITTING OF THE SEIMAS

A solemn commemoration of the Day of Restoration of Lithuania's Independence took place at the Seimas. During the event, opening speeches were delivered by Speaker of the Seimas **Irena Degutienė**, bishop **Arūnas Poniškaitis**, Signatories to the Act of Independence, MPs Saulius Pečeliūnas and Kęstutis Glaveckas, leader of the opposition, MP **Algirdas Butkevičius**, Head of the Lithuanian Liberty League, dissident **Antanas Terleckas**, member of the Seimas of the Sąjūdis Movement **Bernardas Gytis Padegimas**, and laureate of the national quiz "Flame of Freedom", pupil from Mažeikiai Gabijos High School **Gabrielė Bubokaitė**.

The solemn commemoration was attended by Prime Minister **Andrius Kubilius** and other members of the Government, President **Valdas Adamkus**, Speaker of the Supreme Council – Reconstituent Seimas, the first head of the restored Independent State, MEP **Vytautas Landsbergis**, Deputies of the Supreme Council – Reconstituent Seimas, Signatories to the Act of Independence, members of the first Government of the restored independent Republic of Lithuania, President and Justices of the Constitutional Court, Presidents of the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Administrative Court, members of the European Parliament,



leaders of Lithuania's traditional religious communities and societies, heads of foreign states' diplomatic missions to Lithuania, heads of public authorities accountable to the Seimas, rectors of universities and academies in Lithuania, members of the Council of the Sąjūdis Movement of the Sąjūdis initiative group, representatives from 13 January organisations and national societies, laureates of Lithuania's national culture and art as well as science awards, freedom fighters and their relatives, and other highly honourable guests.

Extending her congratulations on the Day of Lithuania's Independence, Speaker of the Seimas **Irena Degutienė** invited the participants of the sitting to remember everyone who had contributed to this event and who were no longer with us celebrating the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the Restoration of Independence. "Let us remember the Signatories to the Act of March 11 who passed away during that period of time, let us remember all the people who defended and created Lithuania, those who are no longer alive, yet whose names and deeds are recalled today," spoke the Head of the Seimas at the solemn commemoration.



*Arūnas Poniškaitis*

In his speech, bishop **Arūnas Poniškaitis** said that the "time of the truth" was 21 years ago when it was necessary to bravely and clearly state who we were and what we were striving for. "These were extremely intense days marked by high risks and uncertainty when all people needed to be together. However, that "time of the truth" is continuing, further checking the gravity of our resolve and our ability to be together, to lean on what unites, even when views differ considerably. The common foundation is always at least the

fact that we are human beings bound by love for our land and obliged to be responsible for it and also for those who are weary and desperate," stated the bishop.

Leader of the opposition, MP **Algirdas Butkevičius** maintained that primary importance in the state should be attached to a human being. "However, there are at least two Lithuanians in our country as yet: the one which is rich, influential and shines on the covers of fashionable magazines and the other which is grey, indifferent, poor, walking away and necessary to no-one. Those Lithuanians live side by side, yet, they are separated by a considerable distance. One of the tasks of the responsible socially oriented policy is to reduce that gap to the maximum extent. It is necessary to reduce the gap not only due to the arguments of social policy. Excluded, divided, walking away and not united, we will definitely fail to survive. We will not live on as a nation and a state," spoke the MP, reminding the participants of the sitting of the state's tasks.

**Saulius Pečeliūnas**, Signatory to the Act of Independence and Member of the Seimas, stated that he would already like to see more mature relations at the Parliament after 21 years of democracy lessons. According to him, ruling parties should not treat the opposition as an enemy who is trying to undermine reforms. "Democracy is not only the way of governance, but also the way of life. This is hard. This is a constant challenge when you yourself have to solve all problems and you yourself have to be responsible for the outcome. However, following that road makes you feel good. I am an optimist. I believe that, after another 20 years, even Russia will not call us limitrophes – peripheries that split from the empire, like it no longer dares call Finland like that. Our democratic state is becoming stronger. Its society is becoming stronger. I congratulate everybody on that," spoke Mr. Pečeliūnas at the commemoration.



*Antanas Terleckas*

Wishing everyone bravery on this solemn day, **Antanas Terleckas**, Head of the Lithuanian Liberty League, said that he was pleased that the young generation today can think

freely, travel freely around the world and study. "I lay my hopes exactly on the young generation. The 11<sup>th</sup> of March provided them with a large number of opportunities. I do care that the young generation would grow without being constantly told lies; therefore, I feel the duty here to tell you about the events which I also took part in. I hope that the new generation of Lithuanian citizens will grow with a strong backbone and courageously fight for their ideals," spoke Mr. Terleckas, stressing the significance of the young generation's role.

**Kęstutis Glaveckas**, Signatory to the Act of Independence and Member of the Seimas, maintained that each of us looking for happiness on their road of life would realise that human happiness was not material things and pleasures, but rather the state when people felt safe and sure about their future and the future of their children, when they always had a person to lean on and when they had a quiet conscience. "Our state is only 21 years old yet and everything lies ahead. I hope that the young generation who can now learn only from textbooks what system they did not have to confront will manage to create the state which all people will find good for living in, which will have more smiling people despite a lack of sunshine and to which citizens who left it sometime ago will return with pride," noted Mr. Glaveckas.



*Gabrielė Bubokaitė*

**Gabrielė Bubokaitė**, a pupil from Mažeikiai Gabijos High School, expressed her gratitude to the Signatories to the Act of Independence, the defenders of freedom and all those who led Lithuania forward. "I admire Lithuania which is becoming modern, yet does not forget the customs and traditions of our antecedents. I am learning and improving in order to contribute to the welfare of my homeland in the future," stated Gabrielė Bubokaitė.

***Speech by Mrs. Irena Degutienė, Speaker of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, made at the Seimas solemn sitting dedicated to the Day of Restoration of Lithuania's Independence on 11 March***

Signatories to the Act of Restoration of Lithuania's Independence, Members of the Reconstituent Seimas, Mr. President Valdas Adamkus, Colleagues, Members of the Seimas and Government, Guests and Fellow Countrymen,

Lithuania is commemorating the 11<sup>th</sup> of March: its festivity and the Day of Restoration of Independence. Many of us today cast our minds back to that spring evening of 1990, which was not only full of uncertainty, but also of hope and belief, and to the inimitable state of mind when we watched in excitement our National Revival Movement turn into political Independence.

Let us remember all the people who made it happen and who are no longer with us, who celebrate the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the Restoration of our Independence. Let us remember the late signatories to the Act of 11 March 1990, let us remember all the defenders and creators of Lithuania, who have already passed away but whose names and deeds come to our mind today. Let us stay with them in



our thoughts and pay tribute to their memory by a **minute of silence**. Thank you.

By the way, have we ever thought why the people whom we have lost are honoured by silence? Is it so because our daily work that is, regrettably, far from always being meaningful, all hustle and bustle and obsession with detail cast into shade the essential questions of what kind of people we are. Why do we not always follow our conscience and morality? What kind of nation and state are we? What are we and what would we like to be?

Guided by search for the answers to these questions, tired of historical and daily lies and forced hypocrisy, Lithuania launched the National Revival Movement and took the road towards Independence. On 11 March 1990 it turned into reality!

Barely a year had passed before we had to shed our blood defending our decision and aspiration of 11 March. At the same time, the following words were dedicated to our Revival Movement and our holy sacrifice, I cite: We woke up for freedom and instantly saw the tanks and machine-guns pointing at us. Unarmed, only with the word "Lithuania!" on its lips, the nation fended off the aggression and knelt down to mourn the perished. We shed a tear of eternal grief, laid a never-fading flower of love and lit an ever-burning candle of memory on their graves. We grew larger inspired by their heroism, firmness and resolve. These people did not downplay death or pose for the camera: they were free and that is why some of them were crushed by tanks or hit by machine-gun rounds. They passed away to enter the eternal Lithuania", end of quotation.

These words were written by the late poet **Justinas Marcinkevičius**, the cherisher of the national memory and the swan of the Sąjūdis. He wrote it in tribute to the victims of 13 January but at the same time he seemed to be looking forward to the forthcoming two decades of freedom. How much of the eternal Lithuania resting on ideals and values, conscience and justice, patient work and duty is here in his words? And how much of fleeting Lithuania enabling

self-enrichment on account of fellow-countrymen, showing off its material comforts and having nothing in common with the human solidarity and humanity can be noticed? Let us leave this question for the conscience of each of us to answer.

May a fair answer to this question help the spirit of 11 March to return to Lithuania? Let us remember that the word "Act" in Latin means "Action". Thus, the Act of Independence is not merely a document to be put under the glass in a museum and dusted before solemn commemorations. This is a commitment to act patiently, sparing no effort or time, believing in the significance of efforts and in a human being close by. To act in a way that the people acted fostering the Lithuanian national spirit at all times, guiding Lithuania towards 16 February and inspiring for the Sąjūdis as well as 11 March.

Twenty-one years of freedom seems to be a period long enough to get rid of the Soviet relics and erase them from thoughts and deeds and to become genuinely free. After all, this period of freedom witnessed many wonderful and delightful events starting from the withdrawal of the foreign army, our actual return to Europe and ending with the creation of charming works of art and achievement of historic victories by our sportsmen. These things are real and they support and strengthen us. It is not enough though. Lithuania needs to come together as one and become more united, self-confident, humane, and, for sure, just. As I have already said, Lithuania needs the spirit of 11 March to return.

This is a difficult task, but there is hardly any other way. In that is our resemblance to our Homeland of 1990. On 11 March 1990, Lithuania proved that we could do great deeds with faith and trust in the human being, the nation, the state and the heavenly Lord.

I thank you all who are upholding and strengthening this faith. In the light of this faith, I congratulate Lithuania and each citizen with our holiday – the Day of Restoration of Independence!"



## THE PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT – ON LITHUANIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY

Strasbourg, 10 March 2011

Marking the 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of the Act of the Re-Establishment of the State of Lithuania, the President of the European Parliament Jerzy Buzek stated:

*"I send my warmest greetings to all Lithuanians on this joyful anniversary.*

*Lithuanians can be proud of themselves on this anniversary, and other Europeans should also be proud of Lithuanians: Lithuania was the first nation to declare independence from the dissolving Soviet Union. This was a very courageous act at the time, as recognition was not a foregone conclusion.*

*The Act of the Re-Establishment of the State of Lithuania served as a role model to other states in Central and Eastern Europe.*

*The 11 March should serve us as a reminder: as on those days, Europe is called to be on the right side of history. Great transformations are taking place in our Southern neighbourhood: Europe needs to be openly supportive of those struggling for freedom, democracy, human rights and dignity, as Lithuanians were in the dissolving Soviet Union."*

## SEIMAS SPEAKER OFFERS CONDOLENCES TO THE PEOPLE OF JAPAN SUFFERING THE MASSIVE EARTHQUAKE AND ENSUING TSUNAMI

On behalf of the Seimas, the Lithuanian people and all the participants of the Seimas' solemn sitting dedicated to the Day of Restoration of Lithuania's Independence as well as on her own behalf, Mrs. Irena Degutienė, Speaker of the Seimas, conveyed her condolences to the people of Japan, who had suffered the severe earthquake hitting the country on the morning of 11 March and the resulting tsunami. Mrs. Degutienė extended her sympathy at the end of the solemn commemoration dedicated to the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the declaration of the Act of 11 March 1990.

"There are still no credible reports on the casualties but all televisions worldwide are broadcasting shocking images. We express our deep sympathy and solidarity with the people of Japan stricken by this natural disaster", the Speaker of the Seimas said.



*The tragedy in Japan cast a pall over the celebration of March 11 in Lithuania. Lithuanian people extended heartfelt sympathies to the families of the perished ones and raised funds to the victims. The Seimas Speaker signed in the book of condolences and left flowers at the Embassy of Japan*

## ▶ OTHER EVENTS DEDICATED TO MARCH 11

Speaker of the Seimas Irena Degutienė attended (11 March) the hoisting ceremony of the flags of the Baltic States in Independence Square: **“The 11<sup>th</sup> of March, first of all, affected and excited our human side: we were sincerely rejoicing, laughing and crying, and we felt happy people,”** said the Speaker of the Seimas.

### 2011 GRANT OF STATE INDEPENDENCE AWARDED AT THE SEIMAS OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

On 11 March, during the commemoration of the anniversary of Restoration of Lithuania's Independence, a solemn award ceremony of the 2011 Grant of State Independence was held in the Hall of Algirdas Mykolas Brazauskas at the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania. **Kęstutis Bartkevičius**, a research fellow at the Department of History of the Faculty of Humanities of Vytautas Magnus University, became this year's laureate of the grant.

Mr. Bartkevičius studied history at Vytautas Magnus University (1998–2004). From 2004 to 2007, he was a chief museologist at the Department of the Lithuanian History of Military Skills of the Newest Age of the Vytautas the Great War Museum. From 2005 to 2010, he studied for a doctoral degree at Vytautas Magnus University. In autumn 2010, Mr. Bartkevičius defended his doctoral dissertation entitled **“The Local Level Organisations of the Reform Movement of Lithuania in 1988–1990: Structures and Social Analysis”**.

For the competition for the 2011 Grant of State Independence, Kęstutis Bartkevičius submitted a project of the scientific monograph entitled **“The Reform Movement of Lithuania in 1988–1990: Social, Organisational and Operation Analysis”**. The project, referring to archival and published sources, scientific literature and recollections of the members of the Reform Movement of Lithuania (RML), aims to describe and analyse creation circumstances of the Sąjūdis Movement all over Lithuania and a further development of the internal organisational structure, a social composition of the RML members and their possibilities of participating in power structures of the Sąjūdis Movement, and also the RML activities in 1988–1990 which helped achieve the set goal to restore the independence of the Republic of Lithuania.

The award ceremony of the Grant of State Independence was attended by Speaker of the Seimas **Irena Degutienė**, Secretary General of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania **Jonas Milerius**, members of the Commission on the



*Kęstutis Bartkevičius*

Awarding of the Grant of State Independence, Signatories to the Act of Independence, laureate of the 2010 grant Vilma Bukaitė, and other respectable guests.

*The Grant of State Independence was introduced by the Seimas in 2008. The grant is awarded for the results achieved and the significance of the envisaged project for the strengthening of Lithuania's statehood. The funds of the grant for the winner of the competition are divided into two parts. The first part of the grant is awarded annually, on the Day of Restoration of Lithuania's Independence. The other part of the grant is awarded a year after the laureate presents the research project implemented.*

## PRESENTING THE PRIZE FOR THE MOST CREATIVE BOOK OF THE YEAR, THE SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS WISHED ALL OF US A CELEBRATION OF THE 11<sup>TH</sup> OF MARCH IN OUR HEARTS

Speaker of the Seimas **Irena Degutienė** visited (9 March) the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore where she presented the prosaist **Valdas Papievis** with the Institute's prize for the most creative book of the year. **This year, the prize was awarded to the writer's novel "Eiti" (To Go).**

The Speaker of the Seimas emphasised that she felt close to the people present there, even though she was neither a writer nor a literary researcher. "We are meeting on the eve of the 11<sup>th</sup> of March. A large number of people belonging to the older generation have probably never believed that they will be able to live in an independent Lithuania for two decades and to hopefully look to the third decade of a free country. Sometimes it seems that we are walking with small and heavy steps, yet decisively and forward," said Mrs. Degutienė, congratulating Mr. Papievis.

The Speaker of the Seimas wished the author to continue his creative activity even by living far away from Lithuania, yet by remaining a Lithuanian and a creator of the contemporary Lithuanian literature. "On the eve of the 11<sup>th</sup> of March, I would like to wish that this celebration would not be only a public holiday and a celebration of official speeches. Let it be a celebration in the hearts of all of us. It is the creators who best



*Valdas Papievis*

know what independence means. Thus, let us remember: we were born Lithuanians and we have to be Lithuanians!" stated the Speaker of the Seimas.

## TRADITIONAL CHESS MATCH IN COMMEMORATION OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE RESTORATION OF INDEPENDENCE WAS HELD AT THE SEIMAS

A traditional chess match "**Seimas Cup 2011**" in commemoration of the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the Restoration of Lithuania's Independence took place at the Seimas Exhibition Gallery on 5 March. The event was organised by the Office of the Seimas, the chess school "Vilniaus Fortas" and the Panevėžys Chess Club.



*Secretary General of the Seimas Jonas Milerius >> awards the youngest participants of the chess tournament*



*Moments from the tournament. Lobby of the Seimas Building I (Seimas Gallery)*



## EXHIBITIONS

### PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION “THE DAY OF REVIVAL: 11 MARCH 1991”

An exhibition “The Day of Revival: 11 March 1991” arranged by the Unit for History and Commemoration of Parliamentarianism of the Office of the Seimas was presented at the Seimas Exhibition Gallery (Building I) on 7 March. This exhibition features photographs of 10–11 March 1991 depicting the first anniversary of the restoration of the independent state. The name of the exhibition was determined by the motto of the commemoration of the first anniversary of independence “Happy Revival Day”. This commemoration took place 20 years ago.

The celebrations of 10–11 March 1991 established the traditions of public holidays which have been preserved up to date. In the morning on 10 March 1991, Vilnius streets leading to Independence Square were flooded by children with windmills. It seemed as if they became the symbols of the celebration of March 1991 called “Happy Revival Day”. A campaign of children’s wishes to Lithuania was organised in Independence Square.

The exhibition also displays pictures capturing moments of the solemn sitting of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania on 11 March 1991 which was attended by

the Deputies of the Supreme Council, members of the Government, guests from Armenia, Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Norway, France and the Russian Federation, and relatives and dear ones of Lithuania’s heroes who sacrificed their lives for the independence of Lithuania. The persons who perished were awarded (posthumously) the Order of the Cross of Vytyis of the First Degree for heroic bravery and endurance in defending freedom and independence of the Republic of Lithuania. Lithuania was awarded Norway’s Peace Prize for its aspiration for freedom. The prize was presented to Vytautas Landsbergis, Speaker of the Supreme Council, by **Inge Lonning**, Rector of the University of Oslo and Member of Norway’s Storting, at the solemn sitting. The festive line of Lithuanian volunteer troops in Independence Square, the oath of volunteers, awarding of military ranks and decorations, and the military parade in Independence Square also became highlights of the celebration.

The exhibition “The Day of Revival: 11 March 1991” features pictures from the stocks of the Lithuanian Central State Archive and personal archives of photographers Andrius Petrulevičius and Kęstutis Svėrys.

As of 10 March, residents and guests of the capital were also able to see the **exposition of the awards of state and public organisations** designed by the artist and the exhibition of children’s drawings “**Free Lithuania**”, to write down wishes to Lithuania and to watch historical video recordings.



## INSTALLATION “THE NATIONAL HYMN” PRESENTED AT THE SEIMAS ON THE DAY OF RESTORATION OF LITHUANIA’S INDEPENDENCE

An installation “**The National Hymn**” in commemoration of the Day of Restoration of Lithuania’s Independence was solemnly opened at the Gallery in the Building II of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania. The artistic composition was presented by the authors and Seimas Secretary General **Jonas Milerius**.

During the marking of the 16<sup>th</sup> of February, the Day of the Re-establishment of the State of Lithuania, the installation was displayed at the commemoration “Lithuanian Identity” at the European Commission in Brussels (Belgium).

**Julius Žėkas**, textile worker **Žydrė Ridulytė** and laser electronics and mechanical engineer and constructor **Algis Sakalauskas** are the authors of the installation “The National Hymn”. It is made from a band of spectrographic analysis of the sound of the national anthem of Lithuania composed by Vincas Kudirka, which is conveyed by jacquard texture. This band “cuts” the view at the present moment with the help of lasers and a mechanical and dynamic installation, i.e. a spectator is able to hear and watch quality changes in sound here and now. This work of interdisciplinary art combines three syntheses: science (physics, acoustics, phonology), art (textile, music, poetry) and technology (spectrographic analysis, jacquard texture, illumination, installation).



*Julius Žėkas*

*Žydrė Ribulytė*

*Algis Sakalauskas*

# Parliamentary business

## SEIMAS OPENS THE SIXTH (SPRING) SESSION

On 10 March, the 2008–2012 Seimas convened for the sixth ordinary (spring) session. After expressing her congratulations to the colleagues on the spring session, Mrs **Irena Degutienė**,

Speaker of the Seimas, read out the letter from Ms **Dalia Grybauskaitė**, President of the Republic of Lithuania, congratulating the Seimas with the opening of the session.



The parliamentarians observed a minute's silence in memory of the poet Justinas Marcinkevičius who would have turned 81 on 10 March.

### **Congratulatory speech by Mrs. Irena Degutienė, Speaker of the Seimas**

"Dear colleagues,

I am pleased to meet and welcome you on the opening of the sixth session of this Seimas. I am well aware that we are still excited about the recent municipal elections, particularly when we hear that a number of parliamentarians are even considering leaving the Seimas to lead the local government.

On the other hand, we will shortly be able to welcome a new colleague Mr. Albinas Mitrulevičius who has won in Marijampolė constituency.

Regrettably, previous elections have not brought an end to the political fight which, from now on, moves here, into the Seimas, where the interpellation to the Energy Minister is to be filed today.

Therefore, on this occasion I would like to wish us all that this session would remain in the memory of our electorate and parliamentary history not only as a period of the political fight, but also as a period of constructive work dedicated to the adoption or improvement of relevant legislation apart from interpellations, resignations and attempts to bring about power shifts.

Dear colleagues,

There is a lot of work ahead of us with the unfinished tasks to be continued and the new ones to be taken on. I will enlarge on this aspect later on at the introduction of the work programme.

Calling to mind a well-known Latin proverb that *Repetitio est mater studiorum*, I would also like to repeat again what I have told you more than once: among all the never-ending work we should keep in mind two strategic aspects of our

activity: quality of the laws adopted and parliamentary scrutiny.

I am happy to see that committees increasingly focus on parliamentary scrutiny and make specific plans for the future. I am satisfied that the Seimas web page allows each resident to become familiar with the activities of the committees in the area of parliamentary scrutiny. We must admit, however, that there is still room for us to progress. Many of you, like I, must have heard our electorate expressing their disappointment over the laws that are not observed.

Accordingly, I would like to remind again that our constitutional obligation is not only to adopt legislation, but also to ensure their proper functioning as well as to ensure effective performance of the duties assigned to civil servants and institutions, which are authorised by and accountable to the Seimas.

Let me note that as far back as the beginning of the autumn session I asked the Government that drafters should assume personal responsibility for the quality of the draft legal act submitted by the Government and, consequently, indicate their surnames, titles and contact details at the bottom of the draft legal act. Unfortunately, this tradition was not established properly in the last session. Therefore I want to highlight that personal responsibility for the quality of the draft legal act will be implemented in practice only if we all are uncompromising in this respect, particularly at the level of committees and commissions.

I also want to draw to your attention that all draft legal acts governing certain relations within society should be subject to an anti-corruption assessment, as defined by the Law on Prevention of Corruption.

Dear colleagues,

Surely, we all enjoy spring, longer and warmer days, thus I wish all of us more optimism and hope in our work and activities. I wish responsibility, wisdom and patience. In addition, I wish that this session would also preserve a fine tradition to cope with all the items on the session agenda on time. This also depends on our joint efforts and goodwill."

## **SEIMAS PRESENTS THE WORK PROGRAMME OF ITS SPRING SESSION**

10 March

Mrs. Irena Degutienė, Speaker of the Seimas, and Mr. **Andrius Kubilius**, Prime Minister, presented one of the

major issues on the agenda of the first sitting of the Seimas' ordinary session – the Seimas' draft resolution No. XIP-2985

**"On the Work Programme of the Sixth (Spring) Session of the Seimas".**

When discussing the draft work programme, Mrs. Degutienė drew attention to the fact that as many as about 600 draft

legal acts had been already included into the programme to that day, thus making it imperative to assess all the drafts registered from the point of their relevance and urgency. "I consider the main priorities of this session to be energy, fight against corruption, SoDra reform, strengthening of family policy, promotion of economic growth, job creation, reduction of unemployment and implementation of the rulings of the Constitutional Court", the Speaker said.

According to Mrs. Degutienė, it would be practical to sort out and decide on the priorities. "It is clear that the Seimas spring session will surely not be able to deal with all the issues put on the agenda, therefore it would be appropriate for everybody to assess whether each draft is really relevant and needs immediate deliberation or could be left pending and even possibly given up," the Speaker of the Seimas stated.

Mr. Kubilius introduced the Seimas to the draft laws submitted by the Government and its future plans. The

Prime Minister stated that economic, financial and political discipline would remain one of the central tasks during the forthcoming year and spring session. "We will really do our best for the economic recovery to translate into the wellbeing of pensioners, and there shouldn't be any doubt about that. We will honour our commitments and will do that at the fastest pace possible. But for the pensioners to start actually feeling the benefits of the recovery, instead of being merely persuaded into feeling better-off by some of our populist platitudes, we need faster agreement and decision on the long-term reform of the pension system", Mr. Kubilius spoke. According to the Prime Minister, during the spring and autumn sessions, the most important work will relate to securing energy independence and making other principal transformations.

Following the Seimas' approval of the submitted draft work programme with 57 for, 14 against and 26 abstentions, the procedure of its consideration ensues with all the Seimas committees assigned to this task.

**On 17 March, the Seimas decided to approve of the work programme of the Seimas spring session.** 63 MPs voted for the Seimas Resolution on the Work Programme of the

Sixth (Spring) Session of the Seimas, 3 MPs voted against, and 16 MPs abstained.



*Members of the Liberal Movement and the Joint Political Group*

## Adopted laws

### SEIMAS SUPPLEMENTED THE LIST OF RESIDENTS SUBJECT TO THE DECLARATION OF ASSETS

At its evening sitting, the Seimas decided (15 March) to supplement the list of residents subject to the declaration of assets. Assets shall be declared by heads of public limited liability companies, if their shareholders are the state or municipality, and their family members; heads of state and municipal enterprises and their family members; heads of public institutions, if their founders or members are the state or municipality, and their family members; heads of associations, if their founders are the state or municipality, and their family members.

86 MPs voted for the amendments to **the Law on the Declaration of Assets of Residents** (draft No. XIP-2480 (2)), none MP voted against, and 3 MPs abstained.

Pursuant to the effective provisions of the Law on the Declaration of Assets of Residents, residents who are subject to the annual declaration of assets include politicians, civil servants, judges, prosecutors, officials, heads of various state-funded commissions, councils, institutions, etc. and their family members.

### NEW VERSION OF THE LAW ON EDUCATION ADOPTED

The Seimas adopted **the Law Amending the Law on Education**, which establishes the goals of the educational system, the principles of the educational system, the framework of institutions, activities and civil relationships as well as obligations of the state in the area of education. 76

MPs voted for the amended law, 14 MPs were against, and 29 MPs abstained.

In accordance with the adopted amendments, the educational system of Lithuania is comprised of: formal





*Sitting of the Seimas Committee on Education, Science and Culture*

education (primary, basic and secondary education, vocational training as well as post-secondary and higher studies); non-formal education (pre-school, pre-primary education, complementary formal education and other non-formal education of children and adults); self-education; educational assistance (vocational guidance, informational, psychological, social-pedagogical, special-pedagogical and special assistance and healthcare in schools, consultations, in-service training and other forms of assistance).

The new version of the Law on Education more systematically and clearly regulates division of schools into groups. The current effective law establishes three types of general education schools: primary, basic and secondary. The newly adopted law adds two more types: junior high school and high school. According to the explanatory note, the type of high school has already been separated from the type of secondary school, whereas the type of junior high school will include schools conducting part I of basic curriculum or part I of basic curriculum and primary curriculum. Introduction of the types of junior high school and high school will enable gradual solution of the problem of overlapping forms 9 and 10 in urban schools and facilitate restructuring of secondary schools. The type of secondary school will be abolished as of 1 September 2015; the following types of general education schools will exist as of this date: primary, junior high, basic and high.

The amendments also provide for obligatory testing of learning achievements of basic education. According to the explanatory note, the necessity for testing learning achievements of basic education is determined by the

fact that test results may help evaluate pupils' generic and subject-specific competences and provide information: to pupils about their learning results, which is necessary for their choice of further subject course and the school; to schools, which is necessary for enrolling pupils to further curricula and ensuring equal opportunities for pupils; to schools and municipalities, which is necessary for self-assessment of study results; for education monitoring and informing society about the results of basic education. Individuals will be exempt from testing of learning achievements in cases established by the Minister of Education and Science.

Every citizen of the Republic of Lithuania and foreigner, permanently or temporarily residing in the Republic of Lithuania, are guaranteed instruction in the state language and learning of the state language.

**The adopted amendments establish as of 1 September 2011 in general education and non-formal education schools, in which instruction in the national minority language or learning of the national minority language is legitimated, that the subject of the state Lithuanian language shall be an integral part of the curriculum and its volume in hours shall be not less than the volume of hours of the mother tongue subject. In such schools, the pre-primary curriculum shall include at least 4 hours per week for Lithuanian language, while part of the pre-school curriculum may be instructed in Lithuanian upon the request of parents (guardians, carers). Primary, basic and secondary curricula will be instructed in two languages: the minority language and the Lithuanian**

**language. The Lithuanian language shall be integrated in the primary curriculum, whereas in basic and secondary curricula it shall be used in lessons covering the topics of Lithuanian history and geography, world cognition and citizenship. Upon the request of parents (guardians, carers), other subjects of primary, basic and secondary curricula will be instructed in Lithuanian.**

Seeking to foster the Lithuanian language, the amendments also establish that the state shall finance or otherwise promote the activities of Lithuanians residing abroad in the area of education, foreign nationals of Lithuanian descent and foreign nationals studying the Lithuanian language and culture. Furthermore, support will be provided for schools abroad which teach Lithuanian or instruct in Lithuanian and for persons who go to teach at educational institutions and Lithuanian language centres abroad.

The law repeals the provision that a pupil, aged 16 years or elder, may be expelled from school upon the decision of the school council if he systematically grossly violates the internal rules of procedure or rules of pupils' conduct, or performs

actions which abase teachers' and peer pupils' honour and dignity. The provision concerning the change of schools and transfer to another school remains valid in the legal act.

The law also establishes an obligation to drive pupils studying according to pre-primary and general education curricula, who reside at a distance of more than three kilometres from the school in rural areas and small towns, to school.

The Seimas disapproved of the proposal by MP **Jaroslavas Narkevičius** to make the subject of religion a compulsory part of moral education for pupils under the age of 14 years.

According to Chairman of the Seimas Committee on Education, Science and Culture **Valentinas Stundys**, the law has actually been improved and the new provisions are very relevant. "The law evaluates the role of communities, establishes the principles of the management of the network, safeguards non-formal education, legitimates the diversity of school types," said Mr. Stundys after the adoption of the amended law.

## SEIMAS ADOPTED THE RESOLUTION ON THE SAFETY OF NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS PLANNED TO BE CONSTRUCTED IN LITHUANIA AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD



SEIMAS OF THE REPUBLIC  
OF LITHUANIA

### RESOLUTION

ON THE SAFETY OF NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS PLANNED TO BE CONSTRUCTED IN LITHUANIA AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD

17 March 2011

Vilnius

The Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania,  
**acknowledging** that nuclear energy currently plays an important role in ensuring uninterrupted generation and supply of electricity to consumers in many countries worldwide;

**noting** that the recent tragic events in Japan and subsequent accidents at the country's nuclear power plants are yet another proof of the necessity to consistently and unconditionally comply with the safety requirements set forth in international documents when designing, constructing and operating nuclear facilities with prior comprehensive environmental impact assessment;

**stressing** that, in developing the project of construction of a new nuclear power plant in Visaginas, the Republic of Lithuania consistently complies with the requirements of the 1991 United Nations Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a



Transboundary Context (hereinafter referred to as the "Espoo Convention") and other international conventions and legal acts, provides and is prepared to continue to provide the required information on the project implementation to the public in Lithuania and in neighbouring states;

**being convinced** that the implementation of the new nuclear power plant project in Visaginas must be based on technologies corresponding to universally recognised nuclear safety standards which allow for ensuring safe operation;

**reminding of** the joint opinion of the Committee on European Affairs, the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Environment Protection and the Nuclear Energy Commission of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania on the Environmental Impact Assessment of Nuclear Power Plants of Neighbouring States Planned to Be Constructed in the Vicinity of Lithuanian Cities and Densely Populated Areas, adopted on 24–25 March 2010, which expresses justified concerns about the transparency and safety of nuclear projects under development in Lithuania's neighbourhood;

**notes** that the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation have not performed environmental impact assessment in respect of the nuclear power plants planned to be constructed in their countries following the universally recognised international legal norms, have not held public discussions of this project in Lithuania and bilateral consultations with the Republic of Lithuania as required by the Espoo Convention, whereto the Republic of Lithuania and all neighbouring states have acceded, also the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (the Aarhus Convention) and the Convention on Nuclear Safety of the International Atomic Energy Agency;

**points out** to the authorities of the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation that under the Espoo Convention, final decisions concerning the planned construction of nuclear power plants must be taken and actual works must commence only upon taking due account of the outcome of environmental impact assessment, including comments of the parties involved in the process and the outcome of consultations held with the parties;

**expresses deep concern** over the possibility of spreading of radiological impact zones of the nuclear power plants planned to be constructed in the neighbouring states of the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation to the territory of the Republic of Lithuania, reaching the capital Vilnius and other cities and residential areas, affecting the river Neris basin;

**demands** that the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation comply with all provisions of the Espoo Convention, the Convention on Nuclear Safety of the International Atomic Energy Agency and other international legal acts, provide exhaustive replies to all questions posed by the Republic of Lithuania with regards to the design of the nuclear power plants, organise public discussions in Lithuania and bilateral consultations;

**reminds** that political responsibility for the safety of nuclear facilities falls not only on the states developing the projects, but also third-party participants;

**promotes and supports** various international effort taken to establish and consolidate the nuclear safety standards of a new generation.

SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS

## SEIMAS APPROVED A DRAFT RESOLUTION ON THE APPROVAL OF THE STATE SPORT DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2011–2020

The Seimas approved (24 March) of a draft resolution on the Approval of the State Sport Development Strategy 2011–2020 prepared by a working group formed upon the decision of the Board of the Seimas on 13 March 2009. The strategy presents the analysis of the current situation in Lithuania, defines the strategic aim as well as key goals and objectives and gives measures for the improvement of implementation monitoring.

According to the working group which prepared the draft, although the improvement of life quality was considered to be one of the priorities in many holistic state strategies and long-term programmes, and social cohesion as well as healthy

lifestyle – one of the essential integral parts of life quality, a potentially significant role of sports in achieving these aims and goals was not perceived. Thus, sport development measures were not included into the achievement of the objective of healthy lifestyle (it was basically limited to the development of medical services) or integrated into sustainable development. **Despite rather deep traditions of the great sport and the potential of sport talents, Lithuania could be attributed to the group of lagging behind European countries by society's involvement in sports activities.** 30–50 per cent of Scandinavian and Central European population go to sports clubs, whereas in Lithuania, according to different sources, this indicator does



*Sitting of the Seimas Commission of Youth and Sports Affairs (second from the left – Chairman of the Commission Žilvinas Šilgalis)*

not reach 10 per cent. The quality of training of sportsmen in their training institutions has been falling. The provision of the Republic of Lithuania Law on Physical Education and Sport concerning mandatory physical education lessons of not less than three hours per week in the country's general education schools has not yet been implemented. More than a half of pupils have different health disorders. Allocated funds from the state budget are insufficient, in particular in the area of sport for all. Private investments are poorly attracted into sports infrastructure.

**The strategy sets ambitious goals: a material increase – up to 75 per cent – of the country's residents who permanently go in for sports by 2020, so that physical activity of residents comply with the recommendations of the World Health Organisation.** By 2020 universal gymnasiums and sport grounds should be equipped in all educational institutions. Minimum conditions for student sport should also be created.

The draft approved by the Seimas provides for the following key principles of strategy implementation: connection between international sport achievements and the necessity of the development of amateur sports; harmonious development of professional and amateur sports; transfer of state functions in the sport area to non-governmental organisations; bottom-up organisation of sport activities; promotion of private initiatives in the sport area; definition of the procedure for transparent and reasonable public financing of sport by implementing the social function of sport for all; targeted and active state policy, horizontally coordinated between institutions, which seeks to develop healthy lifestyle, amateur sport, social cohesion and create the conditions for successful high-level sport mastership; definition of the strategy goals seeking to develop not only sports, but also invoke sports for the solution of the state's social tasks; establishment of the internal and external control mechanism for the implementation of strategy objectives and measures.

All 90 MPs voted for draft resolution No. XIP-682(3).

# The Seimas began deliberation

## AMENDMENTS CONCERNING MORE EFFECTIVE APPLICATION OF MEASURES FOR THE PREVENTION OF MONEY LAUNDERING AND TERRORIST FINANCING SUBMITTED



Minister of the Interior **Raimundas Palaitis** submitted (22 March) to the Seimas **amendments to the Law on the Prevention of Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing** aimed at improving the legal framework of the prevention of money laundering and terrorist financing. The draft law has been prepared seeking to implement recommendations from the Council

of Europe Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism and to improve the legal framework of the prevention of money laundering and terrorist financing with regard to the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing.

The current version of the law establishes that financial institutions and other entities, except for notaries or persons entitled to perform notarial actions, the advocates or advocates' assistants, bailiffs or persons entitled to perform the actions of bailiffs, having established that their customer performs a suspicious monetary operation or transaction, must suspend that operation or transaction and not later than within 3 working hours report about the operation or transaction to the Financial Crime Investigation Service.

The amendments seek to repeal the exception of notaries or persons entitled to perform notarial actions, the advocates

or advocates' assistants, bailiffs or persons entitled to perform the actions of bailiffs, because currently these persons must report about the suspicious or unusual monetary operation or transaction only after the conclusion of the transaction.

The amendments also establish an obligation to financial institutions and other entities, upon receiving information about the intention of the customer to perform a suspicious or unusual monetary operation or transaction, to immediately report to the Financial Crime Investigation Service; advocates or advocates' assistants – to immediately report to the Lithuanian Bar Association.

According to the explanatory note, this will create legal preconditions for a more effective application of measures for the prevention of money laundering and terrorist financing, develop intolerance to and an unfavourable environment for the occurrence of money laundering and terrorist financing.

The deliberation procedure was commenced after the amendments were approved by consensus following their submission. The draft will be deliberated in the principal committee, i.e. the Seimas Committee on National Security and Defence. The Seimas also decided to deliberate the amendments at the urgency procedure. Preliminary deliberation in the Seimas sitting is scheduled for 12 April.

## SEIMAS WILL DELIBERATE WHETHER TO ESTABLISH THE FREEDOM AWARD OF JANUARY 13



At a morning sitting (24 March), MP **Petras Auštrevičius** presented draft Seimas resolution No. XIP-2828 (2) on the Establishment of the Freedom Award of January 13, submitted by a group of parliamentarians, which proposes to establish the Freedom Award of January 13.

The draft resolution states that the award will be an evaluation of individuals' and organisations' achievements and contribution to the defence of human rights, development of democracy, promotion of cross-boundary cooperation in the fight for the free resolve and sovereignty of Central and Eastern European nations.

Candidates to receive the award could be individuals and organisations from the Republic of Lithuania and other

Central and Eastern European countries as well as other individuals and organisations according to their merits to the freedom of Central and Eastern Europe, democracy and human rights. The selection of candidates to receive the award could be carried out by the Freedom Award of January 13 Commission, which should submit conclusions about the selected candidate to the Seimas annually by 23 December. The candidates could be nominated by natural persons and legal entities registered at the procedure prescribed by legislation of the Republic of Lithuania.

The Freedom Award of January 13 Commission should be composed of 15 members: one member delegated by the Seimas political groups each, 2 members delegated by the Commission of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania and the Lithuanian World Community, the Club of Signatories to the Lithuanian Independence Act and the Lithuanian

Youth Council each. The Speaker of the Seimas should be the chairperson of the commission.

The award would be assigned by the Seimas. It would be presented annually on the Day of the Defenders of Freedom (13 January). The award in the amount of 130 basic social benefits would be paid from the state budget appropriations to the Office of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania.

Following the submission, 86 MPs voted for the draft resolution, none MP voted against, and one MP abstained. The approved draft will be deliberated in the principal committee, i.e. the Committee on Audit, and the additional committee, i.e. the Committee on Budget and Finance. Preliminary deliberation in the Seimas sitting is scheduled for 19 April.

## Personalities



MP **Albinas Mitrulevičius** took an oath at the Seimas. President of the Constitutional Court **Kęstutis Lapinskas** administered the oath.

Mr. Mitrulevičius, who had been nominated by the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party, was elected a Member of Parliament in a single-mandate constituency of Marijampolė, instead of MP Algis Rimas who passed away last summer. Albinas Mitrulevičius joined the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party Political Group in the Parliament.

### INTERPELLATION TO THE MINISTER OF ENERGY HELD IN THE SEIMAS

MP **Valentinas Mazuronis**, representing 70 members of the Seimas, submitted an interpellation to Minister of Energy **Arvydas Sekmokas**. Pursuant to Article 61 of the Constitution and Article 219(1) of the Statute of the Seimas, when submitting an interpellation to the Minister of Energy parliamentarians asked 25 questions related to the new Visaginas nuclear power plant, electricity networks

belonging to residents or gardeners' societies, the regulation of profits of electricity suppliers, the construction of the gas storage facility, the implementation of the Gas Directive, the power exchange, the procurement of legal and consultancy services by the Ministry of Energy, the radioactive nuclear waste storage facility, and the development of renewable energy projects.

According to Mr. Mazuronis, this interpellation was not only non-confidence in the Minister of Energy personally, but also non-confidence in the energy policy pursued by the Government headed by Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius. "Concerning energy independence, Minister of Energy Mr. Sekmokas has been taking actual steps to make our dependence even greater. This dependence has been increasing not only on Russia's gas, but also on electricity suppliers," claimed one of the initiators of interpellation.

With a view to dispelling doubts of the members of the Seimas about the reforms of the energy sector initiated and prepared by the Ministry of Energy and adequacy of relevant works, Mr. Sekmokas answered the questions raised by the opposition. At the Seimas sitting, the Minister of Energy gave an overview of the major works done by the Ministry and the key challenges they faced when performing these works. The Minister discussed the issues of decommissioning of Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant and the reorganisation of the power sector, the construction of the new nuclear power plant, electricity links with Western European countries, the reorganisation of the natural gas sector, the construction of the liquefied gas terminal and the development of the new natural gas infrastructure, the reorganisation of the heating sector and the promotion of the use of renewable energy resources.

Mr. Sekmokas positively commented on the fact that by 1 January 2011 the state had successfully finished the reorganisation of power sector companies, which complies with the requirements of the EU third energy package and will ensure more effective and cheaper electricity supply to consumers. "One of the key elements of this reorganisation



*Valentinas Mazuronis*

is the connection of distribution networks into a modernly arranged and transparently owned Lithuanian power distribution network operator whose more than 80 per cent of share capital is owned by the state," the Minister of Energy answered. According to him, preparatory works for the implementation of the new Visaginas nuclear power plant have been accomplished, and the project has been coordinated with regional partners and the European Commission. The Minister of Energy also assured that the planned reorganisation of the gas sector would not be performed at consumers' expense; actually, it would bring them benefit.

After the discussion, an editorial commission was formed, which evaluated the Minister's responses and drafted a Seimas resolution.

## **INTERPELLATION DISAPPROVED, ARYVDAS SEKMOKAS REMAINS IN THE POST OF THE MINISTER OF ENERGY**

The editorial commission formed in the Seimas submitted a draft Seimas resolution "On the interpellation to Minister of Energy Arvydas Sekmokas", whereby it **proposed to approve of the reply of the Minister of Energy**. After the discussion, 66 MPs voted for the draft prepared by the editorial commission, 53 MPs voted against, and 9 MPs abstained. Arvydas Sekmokas remains in the post of the Minister of Energy.



*Arvydas Sekmokas*

## ONE MORE MEMBER JOINED THE MOST NUMEROUS GOVERNING POLITICAL GROUP

**Mantas Varaška** officially joined the Homeland Union – Lithuanian Christian Democrat (HU-LCD) Political Group. The MP, who had put himself forward as a candidate and was elected in the Suvalkija constituency, left the Seimas Christian Party Political Group and became the 46<sup>th</sup> member of the Seimas HU-LCD Political Group.

Mantas Varaška gave arguments for such a decision by stating that a great number of his electors in 2008 represented the centre-right wing; therefore, the Seimas HU-LCD Political Group was the choice that best reflected the electors' will.

According to Elder of the Seimas HU-LCD Political Group **Jurgis Razma**, the new member will strengthen not only

the group, but also the entire governing coalition, which will add stability to the work of the Government and the Seimas. The elder hopes that with the help from other members of the political group, Mantas Varaška will have the opportunity to implement important legislative ideas concerning the integration of individual effective laws on election into a common Code of Elections, the reform of the Seimas ombudsmen's system, expansion of the real estate framework, etc.

Currently the HU-LCD Political Group has 46 members. The activities of the Seimas Speaker, a member of the Homeland Union, has been suspended in the political group (see p. 146.)

15 March

## JUSTICES OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA APPOINTED

Following Article 67, Article 84(12), Article 103 of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania and having regard to the candidatures submitted by President of the Republic **Dalia Grybauskaitė**, Speaker of the Seimas **Irena Degutienė** and President of the Supreme Court of Lithuania **Gintaras Kryževičius**, the Seimas decided to approve of the appointment of **Egidijus Bieliūnas**, **Dainius Žalimas** and **Gediminas Mesonis** as justices of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Lithuania. The Seimas voted on the candidatures of justices by secret ballot.

The Constitutional Court consists of 9 justices, each appointed for a single nine-year term of office. Every three years, one-third of the Constitutional Court is reconstituted. The Seimas appoints candidates for justices of the Constitutional Court from the candidates, three each submitted by the President of the Republic, the President of the Seimas, and the President of the Supreme Court, and appoints them as justices.

Newly appointed justices of the Constitutional Court took an oath at the Seimas on 17 March.

*Pursuant to Article 104 of the Constitution, before entering office, justices of the Constitutional Court shall take an oath at the Seimas to be faithful to the Republic of Lithuania and the Constitution.*



Speaker of the Seimas greets the new justices of the Constitutional Court

## NEW CHAIRPERSON OF THE BOARD OF THE BANK OF LITHUANIA APPOINTED

Adviser to the President of the Republic **Nerijus Udrėnas** introduced (17 March) the candidature of **Vitas Vasiliauskas** at the Seimas. Mr. Vasiliauskas is proposed to be appointed as Chairperson of the Board of the Bank of Lithuania as of 16 April.

“The President of the Republic considers the candidature of Vitas Vasiliauskas suitable for the post of the Chairperson of the Board of the Bank of Lithuania, and his personal and professional qualities as well as the experience of work in both the public sector, representing the Republic of Lithuania, and the private sector provide the candidate with the opportunity to take a holistic approach to the evaluation and solution of problems, and it will be a relevant and useful experience for the efficient work of the Bank of Lithuania,” observed the adviser to the head of state when introducing the candidate to the post of the Chairperson of the Board of the Bank of Lithuania.

When introducing himself to the members of the Seimas, the candidate Mr. Vasiliauskas pointed out that “an overall balance at all levels of the system is necessary – a balance between strict supervision of credit institutions and favourable conditions for the development of credit institutions, a balance between profitability and security, compatibility between the most advanced international standards and features of the internal market”. According to Mr. Vasiliauskas, reforms are needed in the banking system in order to prevent future crises. “The Bank of Lithuania is first and foremost the bank of the state; therefore, its goals are closely related to the economic goals of the state. These are economic recovery, mitigation of economic and social consequences of the crisis, and necessarily systemic work in order to avoid repeated impact and make fragile signs of growth become more stable and sustainable,” the candidate enumerated the most important economic goals of the state and added that the participation of the Bank of Lithuania is particularly significant for the shaping and implementation of the country’s financial policy.

After the candidate responded to the questions raised by MPs, it was decided to commence the deliberation procedure in accordance with the Statute of the Seimas.

On 24 March, **the Seimas approved of the candidature of Vitas Vasiliauskas** nominated by President of the Republic Dalia Grybauskaitė **to the post of the Chairperson of the Board of the Bank of Lithuania**. Political groups positively evaluated the choice of the head of state.

**Vitas Matuzas**, a representative from the Homeland Union – Lithuanian Christian Democrat Political Group, talked about changes in the banking sector after the global crisis and was



*Vitas Vasiliauskas*

pleased to note that such a high level specialist was resolved to come back to the public sector: “We may be certain that the candidate with his experience of a manager, financier and lawyer in both public and private sectors perfectly understands the context and possesses all qualities and energy to implement necessary changes.”

**Birutė Vėsaitė**, who spoke on behalf of the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party Political Group, expressed hope that the new chairperson of the Board of the Bank of Lithuania would succeed in integrating Lithuania in the euro area: “The candidate is surely a very strong personality and financier, former Vice Minister of Finance, who is well aware of international practice. Therefore, the Social Democratic Party Political Group approves of the President’s nomination and hopes that Mr. Vasiliauskas will manage to do what Mr. Šarkinas failed to do, i.e. introduce euro.”

The Labour Party Political Group was also in favour of the candidature of Mr. Vasiliauskas. “We have evaluated his professionalism and capacity to realistically orientate in the economic situation. We consider that this feature is very important to the candidate and relevant for the head of the bank. We think that the candidate will really manage to achieve defined goals and continue to cooperate with the Parliament and the Government,” Elder **Vytautas Gapšys** presented the position of the group.

Secret ballot results: issued ballot papers – 117, found ballot papers – 117, valid ballot papers – 113, invalid ballot papers – 4. 89 MPs voted for draft Seimas resolution No. XIP-2986 on the Appointment of Vitas Vasiliauskas as Chairperson of the Board of the Bank of Lithuania, 16 MPs voted against, 8 MPs abstained.

Mr. Vasiliauskas has been appointed as Chairperson of the Board of the Bank of Lithuania as of 16 April 2011.

Vitas Vasiliauskas graduated from the Faculty of Law of Vilnius University and acquired a qualification of lawyer. In 2004, he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Social Sciences (Law). In 2000–2004, Mr. Vasiliauskas headed the working group in the negotiations of the Republic of Lithuania with the European Commission, the negotiating unit on tax; in 2001–2004, he participated in the reform of the tax system of the Republic of Lithuania and drafting of amendments to tax laws; since 2004, he has been a member of the tax working group in the “Investor’s Forum” organisation, which unites foreign investors.

*Pursuant to Article 126 of the Constitution, the Chairperson of the Board of the Bank of Lithuania shall be appointed for a five-year term by the Seimas.*

## MINISTER OF ECONOMY RIMANTAS ŽYLIUS TOOK AN OATH AT THE SEIMAS

Minister of Economy Rimantas Žylius took an oath in the morning sitting of the Seimas. The oath was administered by Speaker of the Seimas **Irena Degutienė**. Mr. Žylius was appointed to this post by the decree of President of the Republic Dalia Grybauskaitė as of 17 March, following Paragraph 9 of Article 84 of the Constitution and having regard to the nomination of the candidate by Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius. He was appointed the new Minister of Economy after **Dainius Kreivys** resigned from office. The candidature of Mr. Žylius was nominated by the Homeland Union – Lithuanian Christian Democrat Party.

Rimantas Žylius completed the study programme of psychology in the Faculty of Philosophy of Vilnius University, acquired the bachelor’s qualification degree in psychology and the master’s qualification degree in organisational psychology. In 1999–2000, he was Adviser to the Prime Minister on the issues of information society development; in 2000–2002, he worked as Chief Adviser in the Seimas Committee on Information Society Development. Mr. Žylius worked for the business consultancy and IT solutions company “Metasite” and the international IT company “Hewlett-Packard”. He is a member of the Council and founder of the Knowledge Economy Forum, the initiator and co-author of the e-governance concept. Since 2009, Rimantas Žylius has been the Vice Minister of Economy of the Republic of Lithuania.

*Pursuant to Article 93 of the Constitution, by taking office the Prime Minister and Ministers take an oath to be loyal to the Republic of Lithuania, observe the Constitution and the laws. The text of the oath shall be established by the Law on the Government.*



*Oath by Rimantas Žylius*



# At the Seimas Committees

AUDIT

## PAYMENTS FROM THE EU BUDGET ARE FURTHER SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECTED BY ERRORS



On 23 March, Member of the European Court of Auditors **Rasa Budbergytė** presented the European Court of Auditors' Annual Report on the implementation of the 2009 EU Budget during the sitting of the Seimas Committee on Audit.

In 2009, EU budget revenues accounted for EUR 117.3 billion, and payments from the EU budget amounted to EUR 118.4 billion. Ms. Budbergytė summarised the opinion of the Court of Auditors concerning the 2009 EU Budget: "The financial status and results of operations and cash flows are reflected correctly in the European Union 2009 financial statements. Although the level of overall budget errors, as evaluated by the Court of Auditors, has decreased in recent years, a material level of errors in relation to payments from the budget was found in budget areas except administration expenditure and economic and financial affairs expenditure.

**In the area of agriculture and natural resources, which is very important to Lithuania and which receives payments amounting to almost a half of the EU budget, the level of errors, as estimated by the Court of Auditors, accounted for more than 2 per cent and slightly increased, as compared to the previous year.** Supervision and control systems were evaluated as partially effective.

"Minor defects of the land parcels identification system have been established in Lithuania, where 13,700 ha of non-eligible land parcels have not been removed from the system. Furthermore, the applications database not always enabled auditors to evaluate whether sanctions had been rightly imposed on beneficiaries," stated Member of the Court of Auditors Ms. Budbergytė.

**The majority of errors identified by auditors concerned too large land parcels declared by beneficiaries.** The Court of Auditors recommends to improve the quality of information used for establishing eligibility of beneficiaries and calculating payments. Moreover, the Court of Auditors recommends to necessarily establish clearer rules of land use and supervision and that the European Commission together with Member States ensure more proper implementation thereof.

Cohesion, the second largest group of policy areas constituting almost a third of the EU budget, remains the only area where the level of errors exceeds 5 per cent, although, as compared to the previous year, the error level has significantly decreased.

About three quarters of the error level are related to serious drawbacks of national authorities when applying public procurement rules; therefore, the European Commission has been urged to closely monitor whether Member States properly adhere to the EU directives on public procurement. The member of the Court of Auditors pointed out that national public procurement rules are often very complicated, which leads to both occurrence of errors and manifestation of corruption. The remaining part of errors is basically related to the payment of non-eligible expenditure.

According to the Court of Auditors, Member States could and had to detect and correct almost a third of errors, identified having audited interim and final payments, before confirming expenditure to the European Commission. "Although in recent years the level of errors has been decreasing, the overall level remains material; therefore, legal acts need to be further simplified, management systems and repayment as well as financial correction measures need to be improved," summed up Ms. Budbergytė.

*Lina Milonaitė,  
Adviser to the Office of the Audit Committee*

## ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION

**SEIMAS COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION INVITED TO MARK THE INTERNATIONAL EARTH DAY**

The 20<sup>th</sup> of March – **International Earth Day** – has become one of the most important and enjoyable environmental holidays in Lithuania. March equinox is celebrated around this time, when the night and day have approximately equal length all over the globe. In 1992, after restoration of Independence, our nation was invited to join the world community and become the

patrons of the Earth. The Supreme Council – Reconstituent Seimas officially legitimated the Earth Day in Lithuania in 1992.

On 20 March, at 12 noon, the Earth Flag was hoisted for the nineteenth time in Independence Square at the building of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania and open hours were held at the Seimas.

## EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

**COMMITTEE ON EUROPEAN AFFAIRS EXPRESSED A POSITION ON THE EUROPEAN UNION ENERGY STRATEGY AND LITHUANIA'S INTERESTS IN ITS IMPLEMENTATION**

On 27 January, the Committee on European Affairs considered European Commission's communications on the European Energy Strategy and energy infrastructure priorities 2011–2020. The committee evaluated them as a new significant contribution to the formation of the common European Union (EU) energy policy and the development of the common EU energy market.

The Seimas Committee on European Affairs is commissioned to consider European Union affairs falling within the competence of the Seimas and make decisions on behalf of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania. When evaluating the key provisions of EC communications, the priorities most relevant to Lithuania, objectives and measures, the committee adopted the opinion of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania.

**The document adopted by the committee, the Opinion, highlights that the European Union priority that “by 2015, no Member States should be isolated from the European internal market” is particularly important to Lithuania as an “energy island”.** In order to eliminate energy isolation of Lithuania, it is necessary to implement systemic infrastructure integration projects, provided for by the Baltic Energy Market Interconnection Plan (BEMIP). It

requires further support from the European Commission for additional mechanisms and the use of additional financial instruments to speed up the implementation of the BEMIP.

The committee notes that for Lithuania not to remain “an energy (gas) island” and to increase security of gas supplies, it is necessary to ensure the functioning of at least two different supply sources, as well as to have a liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal and gas storage facilities on its own territory. The latter two projects should be implemented by 2015.

The committee herewith stresses that all the regional infrastructure projects included in the BEMIP should ensure a real supply alternative and guarantee the region's energy independence from a single external energy supplier. An LNG terminal may perform the functions of an alternative source of supply and be a competitive market factor only if it is independent from direct or indirect participation of the company controlling gas supply to Lithuania and infrastructure.

The committee adds that the LNG terminal currently designed by Lithuania will make a real supply alternative that will contribute to the creation of the common competitive gas market of the Baltic region. While organising the

implementation of this project, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania has to ensure its independence from the current natural gas supplier.

The committee notes that the projects of European interest, i.e. interconnection of Lithuania's power grid with Poland and Central Europe's power grid (*LitPolLink-1*) and the project of interconnection with the power grid of Sweden (*NordBalt*), are already under implementation. They will create necessary preconditions to separate Lithuanian and Baltic power systems from UPS/IPS system and integrate them into the Western European power system ENTSO-E. However, additional measures of the participating states and the European Commission are needed to implement these projects by 2015. *LitPolLink-2* project should be started before 2015 and completed by 2020.

It should be noted that the power transmission systems of the three Baltic States must be synchronised with the ENTSO-E system. The European Council should therefore ensure its political support while the European Commission should give its practical assistance to the Baltic States for their power grid synchronic connection to the Continental Europe's grid of the ENTSO-E. The European Commission should take a stand upon the necessity to synchronise the power system of the Baltic region with the grid of Continental Europe. The Commission should encourage ENTSO-E to take a strategic decision on the issue, to coordinate implementation of this decision on the EU level. The European Commission could also offer a possibility to Russia to synchronise the power system of Kaliningrad with ENTSO-E grid simultaneously.

The committee also observes that following the approach towards the development of secure, competitive and environment-friendly sources of electricity generation, Lithuania will ensure adequate electric power capacity through the implementation of Visaginas Nuclear Power Plant Project provided for in the BEMIP. In the course of the implementation of the NPP project, Lithuania will strictly adhere to the international conventions, recommendations of international organisations as well as to safety requirements and the principle of transparency.

**The committee underlines that Lithuania is deeply concerned about the construction of nuclear power plants in the Kaliningrad Region of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus. The plants are being constructed**

**very close to the border of Lithuania and the European Union** and close to the basins of the Rivers Nemunas and Neris in defiance of the requirements of the United Nations Espoo Convention and the IAEA Convention on Nuclear Safety and may, therefore, constitute an ecological threat to the population of Lithuania.

According to the committee, non-transparent rush to build the nuclear power plant of disproportionate capacity in the Kaliningrad Region of the Russian Federation engenders a considerable degree of uncertainty in the Baltic region and may have an adverse effect on the implementation of the EU Energy Strategy. In view of the priority of the Strategy to build a truly pan-European integrated energy market, it is essential for the Commission to give immediate consideration to this issue and to formulate a clear position of the European Union on the power plant under construction and its impact on the future common EU electricity market and the integration of electricity infrastructure of the region provided for by the BEMIP.

The Seimas Committee on European Affairs proposes to the Government to support actual and immediate formation and implementation of the EU common energy policy at the EU Council of Ministers and the European Council, especially by establishing and maintaining relations with external suppliers, to call on the European Commission to react to unequal terms and conditions applied and other actions taken by external suppliers, and to coordinate the implementation of the EU third energy package.

The Committee on European Affairs supports the provision of the Strategy that it is necessary to strengthen the external dimension of the EU energy market, giving particular attention to the solidarity principle. In its relations with external partners, especially with the major energy suppliers, the European Union should not only speak with one voice but also act in solidarity as a united entity. The committee considers that the common external energy policy of the European Union should fall within the scope of regulation. Implementation of the EU law should eliminate unequal conditions of competition imposed by the third parties so that the latter could not manipulate markets of individual EU Member States, distort competition and use energy for political purposes.

*Committee on European Affairs*

19 January

## VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION WELCOMES THE SEIMAS' DECISION TO DECLARE THE YEAR 2011 AS THE YEAR OF REMEMBRANCE FOR THE VICTIMS OF THE HOLOCAUST IN LITHUANIA

In her letter addressed to Mr. Emanuelis Zingeris, Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Ms. **Viviane Reding**, Vice-President of the European Commission, welcomed the decision of the Seimas to declare the year 2011 as the Year of Remembrance for the Victims of the Holocaust in Lithuania.

In her official letter, Commissioner Viviane Reding welcomes the Lithuanian initiative **as an important step in accepting the country's past and honouring the memory of the victims**. Education on the Holocaust must be obligatory to future generations while the remembrance of the Holocaust is especially important in the fight against anti-Semitism. In her letter, Ms. Reding claims that there is no place for anti-Semitism in the present-day Europe; meanwhile, setting a personal example by the state leaders is particularly important in effectively tackling this phenomenon.

Welcoming the Lithuanian Government's plan of measures to commemorate the Year of Remembrance for the Victims of the Holocaust in Lithuania, the Commissioner underlines that the measures of fostering the Jewish cultural heritage and preserving it for future generations are of particular importance.



*Chairmen of the Seimas Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Seimas Committee on European Affairs Emanuelis Zingeris and Česlovas Vytautas Stankevičius*

Ms. Reding is going to continue to support Lithuanian actions promoting tolerance and strengthening the fight against anti-Semitism.

*Diana Kopilevič, Adviser  
Office of the Foreign Affairs Committee*

21 January

## STATEMENT BY MR. EMANUELIS ZINGERIS, CHAIRMAN OF THE SEIMAS COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MADE AFTER THE MEETING WITH THE AMBASSADORS OF EU STATES RESIDING IN MINSK

The situation in Belarus after the presidential election, the ongoing serious violations of human rights, and possible actions of European states vis-à-vis Belarus have been discussed at the meeting with the ambassadors.

The developments on the night of the presidential election, the undemocratic election process, and the ongoing repressions against Belarus civic society and ordinary citizens demonstrate that the European policy towards Belarus should be reviewed and a new strategy for action developed.

Severe human rights violations have already reached a critical point; therefore, the states of the democratic world must make an immediate response to the actions

taking place in the neighbourhood. While seeking for real progress in the areas of democracy, strengthening of civic society and respect for human rights and freedoms, the economic vector cannot become more important than the political and humanitarian dimension in the relations with Belarus.

We support the austere resolution adopted yesterday at the European Parliament. The resolution condemns the repressions by Belarus' governmental institutions and brutal attacks against the presidential candidates, some of whom are still imprisoned. It suggests application of various economic and political sanctions with regard to Belarus' government and urges to hold new elections that would comply with international standards.



We are grateful to the European Parliament for urging the European Commission to increase financial support to the European Humanities University, located in Vilnius, to allocate more grants to Belarusian students who are being persecuted for their civic activity and who are expelled from universities, and to contribute to the planned conferences of support in Warsaw (2 February) and in Vilnius (3–4 February).

In our opinion, it is urgent to make an EU-level review of the recent relations with Belarus, find out the reasons underlying the failures of the previous policy, determine the extent of Belarus' economic dependence on the EU, identify "the weakest points" as well as, on the basis of the analysis performed, develop and carry out an effective strategy on the relations with Belarus.

It is our hope that on 31 January 2011 the EU Foreign Affairs Council that will discuss the actions vis-à-vis Belarus will

give due consideration to the resolution of the European Parliament. We think that it would be appropriate to consider the possibility of appointing a special EU coordinator for the relations with Belarus.

We call on the EU member states to cooperate aiming at ensuring the security of the members of Belarus' democratic opposition, of the staff of electoral headquarters of the presidential candidates and supporters by granting them temporary asylum and extending the validity of their visas. On the international level, it is essential to initiate the setting up of clubs of friends of the democratic Belarus and to bring together a group of people with political and moral authority among the international community and able to continuously and independently advocate the values of democracy and draw attention to the violations of human rights in Belarus.

18 February

## STATEMENT BY THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS ON UNSEALING OF SWEDISH SECRET DIPLOMATIC DOCUMENTS



The Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania welcomes the decision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Sweden to make public a large number of Sweden's diplomatic correspondence documents dealing with the Baltic States' – Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia – fight for freedom and independence that, in its turn, significantly contributed to the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The Committee is convinced that removing a seal of secrecy from 89 documents drafted by Swedish diplomats twenty years ago will open new possibilities to make a still more unbiased evaluation and give the then Swedish Government's perspective on the period that carries special

significance for the Baltic States – the period of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia's struggle for the restoration of their independence and liberation from the Soviet occupation.

As we are approaching the twentieth anniversary of the restoration of diplomatic relations between Lithuania and Sweden on 28 August 2011, the Committee also believes that unsealing of Swedish diplomatic notes will allow us to review once again and give a more precise evaluation to the overall development of bilateral relations between Lithuania and Sweden in the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

*Emanuelis Zingeris, Chairman*

## EU HIGH REPRESENTATIVE SPEAKS UP FOR A RESOLUTE RESPONSE TO THE BELARUSIAN REGIME

On 22 February, Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs **Emanuelis Zingeris** received a reply from **Catherine Ashton**, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, to the letter sent to the High Representative this January, which expressed concern over the situation in Belarus in the aftermath of the presidential election and urged to expand EU assistance for the Belarusian democratic forces.

In her letter, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy again confirmed deep European Union's and her personal concern over the situation in Belarus, deplored repressions by Minsk authorities and noted that "it was high time for the European Union to take resolute actions".

According to Ms. Ashton, it was necessary to intensify a dialogue and support for Belarusian civil society by expanding the provision of direct EU assistance to Belarus's non-governmental organisations, independent mass media and students as well as facilitating and simplifying the requirements for Belarusian citizens to travel to European Union Member States.



Seimas Committee on Foreign Affairs Meeting with the Ambassadors. 23.02.2011

*Ramūnas Misiulis,  
Head of the Office of the Committee on Foreign Affairs*



## EVENTS TO COMMEMORATE THE YEAR OF REMEMBRANCE FOR THE VICTIMS OF THE HOLOCAUST IN LITHUANIA PRESENTED AT THE SEIMAS

The events to mark 2011 as the Year of Remembrance for the Victims of the Holocaust in Lithuania and the joint Holocaust commemoration projects launched in cooperation with foreign partners were presented at the meeting initiated by Mr. **Emanuelis Zingeris**, Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, at the Constitution Hall of the Seimas on 23 March 2011. The meeting was attended by representatives of the Office of the Prime Minister, national ministries and institutions, nongovernmental organisations, the Lithuanian Jewish Community, and foreign ambassadors accredited to Lithuania.

In his opening speech, Mr Zingeris, Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Seimas, highlighted the importance of identifying every victim of the Holocaust in Lithuania and welcomed the impetus given to the process on the national scale as a result of cooperation with the Holocaust research institutions worldwide. According to Mr. Zingeris, the highest form of respect of the killed is unequivocal condemnation by the national state and political leadership of any public expressions of anti-Semitism, xenophobia, and other forms of intolerance. By way of example, Mr. Zingeris mentioned the Resolution on Alleged Patriotism adopted on 19 March 2011 by the Homeland Union – Lithuanian Christian Democrat Council in reaction to the march organised in Vilnius on 11 March 2011.



*Emanuelis Zingeris and Andrew Baker*

According to Mr. **Andrew Baker**, Director of International Jewish Affairs for the American Jewish Committee and Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Anti-Semitism, who attended the event as a guest speaker, there is an urgent need to create the conditions for renewing the activities of the International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and



Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania, compensate for the property of the Jewish community, run educational projects, and manage the mass murder sites so they appropriately reflect the tragic history of Jews of Lithuania.

Mr. **Deividas Matulionis**, Chancellor of the Prime Minister, made an overview of the action plan drafted by the Government of Lithuania for the remembrance for the victims of the Holocaust in Lithuania and briefed on the completed international projects to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust.

Ms. **Faina Kukliansky**, Vice Chair of the Lithuanian Jewish Community, welcomed the Seimas initiative to announce the year 2011 as the Year of Remembrance for the Victims of the Holocaust in Lithuania and assured of the support of the Jewish Community for the implementation of the events

in the framework. Mrs. **Asta Skaisgirytė-Liauškienė**, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, briefly covered the contribution of the Lithuanian diplomatic service to the implementation of the Holocaust Remembrance Programme. She equally called on joining efforts to implement the Litvak cultural heritage preservation projects and highlighted the need to closely cooperate on raising the level of tolerance and combating anti-Semitism and xenophobia. Ms. Anne Elisabeth Derse, US Ambassador in Lithuania, Mr. **Hans Peter Annen**, Ambassador of Germany, and Mr. **Helmut Koller**, Ambassador of Austria, shared the information on the projects launched by their respective embassies to commemorate the Holocaust victims in Lithuania.

*Diana Kopilevič, Adviser  
Office of the Committee on Foreign Affairs*

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PRESS RELEASE

18 March

**STATEMENT OF MR. EMANUELIS ZINGERIS, CHAIRMAN  
OF THE SEIMAS FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, ON THE  
SITUATION IN NORTH AFRICA AND ARABIAN PENINSULA**

The events over the past few months show that we are witnessing unprecedented changes in the governance and civil society in the states of North Africa and Arabian Peninsula. It is an historic opportunity to implement and develop universal values, such as democracy, human rights, and building of civil society. Well organised Muslim fundamentalist movements and the power that assumed control over Iran are threatening those civil and secular values. The changes in Tunisia and Egypt, and probably in other countries as well, and their consequences and tendencies are of common concern and interest to the EU Member States.

The EU and its Member States are seeking for dialogue with civil society groups and are ready to provide support for the social, economic, and state administration reforms, including financial assistance to consolidate the democratic changes and, if necessary, humanitarian relief aid. Catherine Ashton, the EU High Representative of Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, has underlined this more than once in her statements.

The Libyan regime continues the violence and repressions against its peaceful residents. In response to that, on the eve of 17 March 2011, the UN Security Council adopted a resolution approving 'no-fly zone' over Libya and authorising 'all necessary measures' while excluding a foreign occupation force of any form on any part of Libyan territory to 'protect civilians under threat of attack in the country.'

The international democratic community has to work together to ensure that Libya keeps to the commitments of the resolution and ends violence against the civilians. This year, the historic attempt in different countries of the region to end the oppression of the authoritarian regimes has to be heard and support has to be provided to the people willing to build a society which is based on democratic values and tolerance.

*Emanuelis Zingeris,  
Chairman of the Seimas Foreign Affairs Committee*



## STATEMENT ON THE SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY OF LITHUANIA'S NATO MEMBERSHIP

30 March 2011

Vilnius

The Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania,

**Marking** the seventh anniversary of Lithuania's NATO membership;

**Noting** that NATO remains a key factor in ensuring international stability and security and that the fundamental and enduring purpose of NATO is to safeguard the freedom and security of all its members by political and military means;

**Stressing** that NATO membership remains the cornerstone of Lithuania's security, as it strengthens the security and wellbeing of the citizens of the Republic of Lithuania, facilitates the development of the country, and safeguards stability;

**Notes** that the new Strategic Concept of NATO adopted in Lisbon on 19–20 November 2010 and the principles of collective defence, partnership, cooperative security, crisis management, and open door policy enshrined therein lie in the interest of Lithuania, duly correspond to the modern international security challenges, and contribute to the strengthening of the Alliance;

**Appreciates** the attention that NATO and the strategic allies of Lithuania – the USA as well as Poland, Denmark, and other members of the Alliance – pay to ensure Lithuania's security and expresses gratitude to them for their significant contribution in achieving real guarantees for security of Lithuania and other Baltic States;

**Affirms** its commitment to continue providing joint contribution to NATO activities to ensure international security;

**Calls on** the Government of the Republic of Lithuania to pay due attention to strengthening the defence capabilities of the state and to ensure the appropriate funding.

Chairman of the Committee

EMANUELIS ZINGERIS

## HUMAN RIGHTS

## COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS: A WISH TO WARN ABOUT POTENTIAL TERRORIST ACTS SHOULD NOT BECOME UNIVERSAL SURVEILLANCE

At a sitting held on 9 March, the Committee on Human Rights considered the issue regarding conformity of the Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the use of Passenger Name Record (PNR) data for the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of terrorist offences and serious crime to the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality.

The key aim of the proposal for the directive is to harmonise Member States' provisions on obligations for air carriers to transmit PNR data to law enforcement institutions for the purpose of preventing, detecting, investigating and prosecuting terrorist offences and serious crime. Moreover, one of the goals of the draft directive is to ensure legal certainty for air carriers by establishing clear legal requirements.

According to Director of the International Cooperation Department of the Ministry of the Interior **Olegas Skinderskis**, if only EU external flight control is applied, preventive measures may be insufficient; therefore, control of certain internal flights should be applied. The Police Department takes the position that with regard to real crime threats, passenger flows and flight geography, basing on market analysis, PNR data should also be collected on internal flights. However, according to Director of the State Data Protection Inspectorate Rita Vaitkevičienė, PNR data collection on internal flights, if established, would violate the key principles of personal data protection.

The committee basically approved of the measures to fight against organised crime as set out in the proposal. However, **the committee disapproved of possible**

**expansion of the scope of the directive**, including the use of PNR data on the internal EU flights. According to the members of the committee, such expansion of the scope may turn into a problem of universal surveillance where personal data of millions of innocent people would

be collected. The committee also noted that Framework Decision 2008/977/JHA of the Council on the protection of personal data processed in the framework of police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters does not apply to data processing within the country.

## COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS SUGGESTS DEFINING THE CONCEPT OF BULLYING IN THE LAW

On 16 March, the Committee on Human Rights discussed effective measures to fight against bullying at school. Relations without violence and abuse are one of the most important conditions for the development of advanced and harmonious society; therefore, the committee seeks to prevent the spreading of this negative phenomenon among children by all legal and social means.

### At the sitting, the following problems which prevent effective fight against bullying and violence at school were identified:

- The solution of the problem of bullying and violence among children greatly depends on the good will of the heads of school. A particularly negative phenomenon is inadequate attitude by some heads of school towards the problem by trying to overlook bullying in order to protect the standing of the school and for fear of losing the per-pupil voucher;
- The spread of domestic violence remains a problem, because children's behaviour in public is basically determined by the communication culture learned in the family;
- There is sometimes a lack of joint efforts of the school community (children, parents, pedagogues, staff) in creating a safe school environment;
- There is no uniformly approved concept of bullying; the law does not use this concept; there arise questions regarding proper regulation of liability of minors for violence and bullying.

Member of the committee **Mantas Varaška** noted that a common feature of presently bullying teenagers is their wish to make the act of violence public, regardless of whether violence is used against an individual or nature. Thus, according to Mr. Varaška, ways must be found to prevent the opportunity to freely spread the acts of violence and bullying in an electronic environment.

According to data from children's rights protection offices, incidence of violence and bullying in rural and urban areas does not differ much. In 2010, about 46 per cent of pupils suffered from violence and bullying in urban areas, as compared to 54 per cent of pupils in rural areas. However, it should be noted that organisation of the prevention of violence and bullying in rural areas is more complicated due to the lack of psychologists.

The committee decided to address the Ministry of Education and Science and propose to draft amendments to the Law on Education defining the concept of bullying and establishing an obligation of the school to carry out the prevention of violence and bullying. The committee also decided to arrange consultations together with the Committees on Education, Science and Culture, on Legal Affairs, on Information Society Development, and discuss the drawbacks of regulation of liability of minors and their parents (guardians) for violence and bullying as well as measures to prevent dissemination of violent acts in an electronic environment.

## SURVEY ON THE PROBLEMS OF HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY DISCUSSED AT THE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

On 23 March, a project "**Human rights policy in Lithuania: Coordination of activities of public authorities and non-governmental organisations**" was presented to the Committee on Human Rights. It is a survey on cooperation of public authorities and non-governmental organisations in order to ensure human rights. **The survey was carried out by scientists and researchers from Vytautas Magnus University:** Dr. Regina Jasiulevičienė, Linas Venclauskas, Lina Marcinkutė, Justina Razumaitė, Gintarė Žukaitė and

researcher from the Social Research Centre, Dr. Monika Frėjūtė-Rakauskienė.

The presentation of the findings of the survey highlighted that the appropriate mentality, when human rights are accepted as an indisputable value, had not yet formed in Lithuania; human rights were not a priority among the political elite; public authorities insufficiently valued non-governmental organisations as partners.

According to **Lina Marcinkutė**, NGOs are often considered to be the screaming nation, whereas state bureaucrats are called heartless leeches of tax money. Such a contraposition does not help achieve common goals and prevents from hearing each other.

The problem of financing NGOs was also touched upon. It was noted that support for NGOs is often based on the principle of “acquaintances – non-acquaintances”; programmes favourable to the governing party are funded. **Vladimiras Simonko**, a representative from the Lithuanian Gay League, had the same opinion and said that politically unfavourable groups were removed from the programmes and marginalised.

A conclusion was reached that **there is no established mechanism of cooperation between public authorities and non-governmental organisations**; therefore, this cooperation is inconsistent and insufficiently effective. The development of such a mechanism should be included in short-term discussion plans. The idea received an approval from NGOs, Adviser to the Minister of Justice Tomas Baranovas and former MEP (2004–2009) Aloyzas Sakalas.

*Eglė Gibavičiūtė,  
Adviser to the Office of the Committee on Human Rights*

## NATIONAL SECURITY

19 January

### DISCUSSION ON MISTRAL: A CHANCE TO STRENGTHEN COOPERATION BETWEEN NORDIC AND BALTIC STATES

In a joint sitting of 19 January 2011, the Committee on National Security and Defence and the Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted a decision on the potential issues and their solutions regarding the selling of Mistral class ships to Russia.

The committees take the view that **this deal should encourage holding a more in-depth discussion on the role of the EU and NATO on arms export to the third countries within the range of their control**, because the current mechanisms do not ensure sufficient transparency and solidarity of the member states, while in the future

uncontrolled deals involving strategic offensive arms may have negative effects on security.

The committees also believe that the discussion of the Nordic and Baltic states on the selling of strategic offensive arms to the third countries should be considered a good opportunity to strengthen cooperation between the states in the defence area.

*Gintaras Ūsaitis, Adviser  
Office of the National Security and Defence Committee*

### NATIONAL SECURITY ISSUES DISCUSSED

On 19 January, the Committee on National Security and Defence (CNSD) met with President of the Republic of Lithuania **Dalia Grybauskaitė**. The meeting focused on the issues of coordination of the activities of intelligence bodies, national defence, ensuring energy security and other relevant matters of national security.

Concerning coordination and control of the activities of intelligence bodies, it was noted that parliamentary scrutiny performed by the committee would be more comprehensive after the adoption of amendments to the Law on Intelligence, the Law on Operational Activities, and the Seimas Statute proposed by the CNSD, which would provide the basis for

the functioning of the CNSD Sub-committee on Security. The issues of strengthening parliamentary scrutiny are CNSD priorities; therefore, relevant decisions are expected to be adopted at the Seimas in this spring session.

The conclusions of a parliamentary investigation carried out by the committee concerning possible transfer and imprisonment of detainees by the US Central Intelligence Agency in the territory of the Republic of Lithuania have been implemented. Intelligence bodies cannot act independently on the most important matters of national security. Relevant recommendations as well as identification of the needs for international cooperation have been presented in

the conclusions of a parliamentary investigation by the committee.

CNSD Chairman **Arvydas Anušauskas** noted: “There have recently been many changes in the activities of the State Security Department (SSD); we can see the results and are waiting for other outcomes; CNSD recommendations have been implemented and cooperation with SSD has been changing. It is important to note that the committee is regularly informed about all changes and expected outcomes: the SSD strategy has been adopted, SSD structural changes, SSD intelligence products, problem investigations

carried out by the SSD have been introduced, required documents have been submitted; therefore, we keep on working. Yet, our committee, which controls the activities of intelligence bodies, also has to submit appropriate instruments – both legal instruments and resources – to the intelligence bodies of the executive institution in order to ensure their capacities. Only this way we can make the intelligence process a high quality process.”

*Vitalij Dmitrijev,  
Head of the Office of the Committee on National Security  
and Defence*

## NUCLEAR ENERGY

15 March

### TRAGEDY IN JAPAN WILL NOT UNDERMINE LITHUANIA'S RESOLUTION TO BUILD A NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

Chairman of the Seimas Commission on Nuclear Energy **Rokas Žilinskas** asserted that the tragic events in Japan would not lessen Lithuania's resolution to build a new nuclear power plant. “With all my heart I am with Japanese people who have suffered a great tragedy, and I am deeply concerned about the course of events; however, I would like to stress that these events will not undermine Lithuania's resolution to build a new nuclear power plant,” claimed the MP.

The chairman of the commission noted that modern reactors were designed and constructed with regard to the minimum probability of an accident and that the catastrophe which occurred in Japan was not possible in Lithuania due to objective reasons.

“Japanese islands are located in the so-called Pacific Ring of Fire where ten strongest earthquakes in the world have been recorded. In Japan only, there occur over a thousand



*Osvaldas Čiukšys, Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant (Ignalina NPP) Director General (on 27 April 2011 Žilvinas Jurkšus was appointed Director General of the Ignalina NPP); MPs Rokas Žilinskas and Rimantas Sinkevičius*

earthquakes a year. Whereas Lithuania is situated on the East European geological platform, which is one of the most seismically stable platforms all over the globe,” explained Mr. Žilinskas. “One of the works, which had been accomplished during the preparatory stage of the construction of the new nuclear power plant, was the seismic survey of the site. The survey showed that the ground under the potential power plant was stable and the findings were approved by the International Atomic Energy Agency – the major authority in nuclear safety.”

The chairman of the commission admitted that the accidents in Japanese nuclear power plants raised the bar of safety standards and would cause international community to revise them in order to increase nuclear security.

According to Mr. Žilinskas, recent events gave even more prominence to the doubts as to the security of nuclear projects developed in Lithuania’s neighbourhood.

“We are still taking the position that nuclear power plant projects in Belarus and the Kaliningrad Region are not transparent and implemented in a rush, regardless of neighbours’ opinions and in violation to international conventions and other legal acts. In the context of Japanese events this position has become even firmer,” said Mr. Žilinskas.

*Auksė Šiaudžionytė,  
Assistant to a Member of Parliament*

## RURAL AFFAIRS

### PROBLEMS OF COOPERATION DEVELOPMENT IN LITHUANIA DISCUSSED

A discussion on the prospects of cooperation development in Lithuania was held (18 January) on the initiative of Chairman of the Committee on Rural Affairs **Edmundas Pupinis**. The chairman of the committee noted that cooperation in our country basically established only in three sectors: **agriculture, banking (credit unions) and trade** (*Lietkoopsąjunga*, Lithuanian Cooperative Union). In dairy farming, cooperative companies occupy more than 20 per

cent of the raw milk market. In the grain sector, cooperatives take about 5–10 per cent of the market in cereals.

Chairman of the Board of the Lithuanian Cooperative Union **Robertas Miliuskas** pointed out that if agricultural cooperatives and cooperative agricultural produce processing companies are involved in the system of cooperative trade, consumers will be better supplied with



*Sitting of the Seimas Committee on Rural Affairs*

natural foodstuff of Lithuanian origin and farmers will have less problems concerning product realisation.

Chairman of the Board of the Lithuanian Central Credit Union **Sigitas Bubnys** and Head of Administration of the Association "Lithuanian Credit Unions" **Ramūnas Stonkus** informed the participants of the discussion about the activities of credit unions. 67 functioning credit unions finance about 40 per cent of agricultural entities and control about 25–60 per cent of the rural areas market, although generally they occupy as few as 2 per cent of the country's loan and deposit market. Credit unions are interested in financing small-sized businesses in the sectors of food production and services; therefore, farmers' cooperative companies could be reliable partners.

President of the Chamber of Agriculture **Bronius Markauskas** and President of the Lithuanian Farmers' Union **Jonas Talmantas** highlighted the lack of people's trust as well as initiatives and smart managers in creating cooperatives in rural areas. They also noted that bogus

cooperatives were created with a view to make use of the support provided.

President of the Lithuanian Family Farmers' Union **Vidas Juodsrukis** urged representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture to search for more opportunities to support small farmers and small cooperatives, create financial possibilities for re-establishing small-sized agricultural produce processing companies, and better assimilate the funds allocated for cooperation. The Lithuanian Family Farmers' Union seeks to rent manufacturing premises and start logistic activities on a cooperative basis.

Vice-Minister of Agriculture **Aušrys Macijauskas** observed that there was a good legal framework and adequate support forms for cooperation in the country. It was very important to support already operating cooperative companies and develop them by attracting new members.

*Gintarė Rimeisienė,  
Assistant to the Office of the Committee on Rural Affairs*

## SOCIAL INSURANCE AND PENSIONS

### JOINT DISCUSSION OF SEIMAS COMMITTEES ON THE REFORM OF THE SYSTEM OF SOCIAL INSURANCE AND PENSIONS

On 17 February, the joint sitting of the Committees on Social Affairs and Labour, Audit, Budget and Finance discussed the **draft guidelines for the reform of the system of social insurance and pensions** (hereinafter referred to as the Guidelines) drawn up by the Committee on Social Affairs and Labour.

Chairman of the Committee on Social Affairs and Labour **Rimantas Jonas Dagys** indicated that unfavourable demographic tendencies as well as current problems of the social insurance system (feeble link between contributions and benefits, weakened role of the Council of the State Social Insurance Fund, lack of incentives for the participation in the social insurance scheme) force to reform the country's system of social insurance and pensions.

Mr. Dagys stated that the reform seeks to prevent reduction of pensions in the future and make the system financially stable and transparent. Minister of Social Security and Labour Donatas Jankauskas indicated that the social insurance system has to remain the basic element in the pension system, alongside other pension system tiers.

Auditor General **Giedrė Švedienė** noted that the Guidelines took account of the main recommendation of the National Audit Office, i.e. to establish a clearer and stronger link between contributions and benefits and relate the amounts of benefits to the amounts of paid contributions and the period when contributions were made.

Chairwoman of the Committee on Audit **Loreta Graužinienė** and Chairman of the Committee on Budget and Finance **Kęstutis Glaveckas** stressed the estimation of the need of funds for the implementation of the Guidelines.

The meeting discussed changing the rules for the calculation of social insurance old-age pensions. Expert **Teodoras Medaiskis** proposed to switch to the system of units of account, according to which paid pension social insurance contributions are turned into units of account. According to Mr. Medaiskis, although this system is not fully transparent, switching to it would be simpler than to the notional defined contribution (NDC) system. He also indicated that the system of units of account would better ensure equality between generations.



*Chairwoman of the Seimas Committee on Audit Loreta Graužinienė, Chairman of the Seimas Committee on Social Affairs and Labour Rimantas Jonas Dagys, Chairman of the Seimas Committee on Budget and Finance Kęstutis Glaveckas, Minister of Social Security and Labour Donatas Jankauskas*



According to expert **Raimondas Kuodis**, switching to NDC would be more radical, yet the amounts and interest accumulated in this system would be clearer to people than points of variable value. Mr. Kuodis called the NDC system and integrated system of social credit, where individuals, upon necessity (e.g. the unemployed), could borrow funds from their accounts.

Chairman of the Committee on Social Affairs and Labour Mr. Dagys noted that reform guidelines was an important

document for the country, setting a long-range direction of the pension reform. Thus, agreement among political parties was necessary for the adoption of this document. Mr. Dagys expressed hope that the Guidelines would be approved in the Seimas spring session, which starts on 10 March.

*Diana Jonėnienė,  
Head of the Office of the Committee on Social Affairs  
and Labour*



*MP Rima Baškiene*



*MPs Algirdas Sysas and Saulius Stoma*



# International relations

## NATO PA SECRETARY GENERAL VISITED LITHUANIA

On 14–16 January, **David Hobbs**, Secretary General of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA), paid a visit to Lithuania. On 14 and 15 January, the guest attended a traditional informal meeting of European and North American experts on international and security policy, the Snow Meeting, organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Diplomats of different ranks, analysts of foreign policy, scientists from research institutes of international relations also joined the meeting. Snow Meetings have been held in Trakai since 2008.

On 15 January, Mr. Hobbs made a tour around the Seimas buildings which will host the NATO PA Spring Session in the spring of 2014. The NATO PA Secretary General also met with Deputy Speaker of the Seimas **Česlovas Vytautas Stankevičius**. **Petras Auštrevičius**, Chairman

of the Seimas delegation to the NATO PA, also attended the meeting.

Lithuania became an associate member of the NATO PA (formerly known as the North Atlantic Assembly) in 1991. The NATO PA played a very important role when Lithuania sought membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. In 2014, Lithuania, together with Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia will celebrate ten years of membership of this organisation; therefore, the NATO PA Spring Session will become a meaningful accent of this anniversary.

The NATO PA Spring Session was held in Lithuania in May 2001; all participants of the Assembly remember it as a successful and particularly significant event not only for Lithuania, but also for the entire region.

25 January

## HEAD OF THE SEIMAS DELEGATION WAS ELECTED VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

**Emanuelis Zingeris**, Head of the Seimas delegation, was elected one of the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly upon opening of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe session in Strasbourg. Pursuant to the PACE Rules of Procedure, Vice-Presidents attend the sittings of the Bureau of the Assembly, substitute the President in official meetings and preside over plenary sittings.

“The Council of Europe plays an important role in combining human rights standards in 47 European states. The governments of both EU Member States and non-EU member countries are made to pay regard to human rights

violations indicated during the monitoring performed by the Assembly,” said Mr. Zingeris.

Having been elected a Vice-President, Mr. Zingeris addressed Secretary General of the Council of Europe Mr. Jagland, who was attending the session debates, and regretfully pointed out an inadequate role played by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights concerning the horrible human rights violations committed in Belarus.

*Information by the International Relations Department of the Office of the Seimas*

## PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE DEMANDS BELARUS TO RELEASE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS

On 27 January, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) adopted by a majority vote a Resolution on the Situation in Belarus in the Aftermath of the Presidential Election.

During the debates before casting votes, representatives from all political parties, except the members of the delegation of the Russian Federation who spoke out, deplored Belarusian regime and assaults against the opposition and society.

Chairman of the Seimas delegation Mr. Zingeris, who took the floor in the debates, highlighted that **capital punishment could not be the only condition for accepting Belarus to the Council of Europe – Belarus had to comply with more standards of free society**. MP invited the members of the Council of Europe to open borders to the citizens of Belarus, draw a list of persons who took part in repressions and impose sanctions. Mr. Zingeris read out the names of still imprisoned politicians, journalists and public figures and stressed that he expected that during the next PACE meeting all these people would be released and have the opportunity to attend the meeting.

MP Vareikis claimed that **Belarus had been a stranger to Western Communities so far**. "For us, people from Central and Eastern Europe, the regime of Mr. Lukashenko may resemble the *kolkhoz* collective farming system where everybody is under control of a chairperson and democracy is never present because everything is based on fear," he said. Mr. Vareikis called to dare say that election cannot be won against a dictator when the dictator sets the rules. He also noted that we should not be afraid to say that Belarus is supported by Russia.

**The adopted Resolution states** that the Assembly is dismayed by the unprecedented wave of violence, intimidation, mass arrests and prosecution of political opponents, human rights defenders, media workers, students and citizens of Belarus that followed the announcement of the results of the presidential election that took place in Belarus on 19 December 2010. The Assembly is concerned about detainees, their family members, ongoing searches and seizures.

The document urges the Belarusian authorities to:

- release immediately all opposition candidates and their supporters, journalists and human rights defenders detained on political grounds;

- cease harassment and intimidation of opposition politicians, media and civil society representatives;
- conduct a transparent investigation into the abusive and disproportionate use of force by police and security forces against the demonstrators;
- stop expelling students from universities and dismissing people from their work place due to their participation in the protest;
- reconsider their decision to close the OSCE office in Minsk and extend its mandate in 2011 and beyond;
- complete the reform process of the electoral legislation and practice by taking into account the full set of recommendations of the OSCE/ODIHR and the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission);
- hold to account the alleged perpetrators of the disappearances of Yuri Zakharenko, Victor Gonchar, Anatoly Krasovsky and Dmitri Zavadsky.

The Assembly invited all Council of Europe member states, including those which are not members of the European Union, to join the European Union's targeted sanctions against Belarusian officials. The Resolution also states that any sanctions and restrictions in contacts and interactions with those responsible for the events, including the country's highest officials, **should not lead towards further isolation of the Belarusian people**. The Assembly calls on all Council of Europe member states to foster dialogue with Belarus's civil society, facilitate the granting of visas to the ordinary citizens of Belarus, encourage universities to open their doors to Belarusian students who have been expelled for political activities, and refrain from recognising the election result of the presidential election in Belarus.

The Assembly adopted the amendment initiated by Mr. Zingeris, Head of the Seimas delegation, and included it into the text of the Resolution. By this amendment, the Assembly calls on all the political parties of the Council of Europe to take active measures in supporting their sister parties in Belarus by strengthening the personal care of the imprisoned leaders and their family members, and inviting them to participate actively in European meetings of the parties at all levels.

*The International Relations Department  
of the Office of the Seimas*

## PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION BETWEEN LITHUANIA AND MACEDONIA STRENGTHENED

From 30 January to 1 February, the delegation of the Parliamentary Group of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia for Cooperation with the Parliaments of Baltic Countries: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, headed by Chairperson **Liljana Popovska**, paid a visit to Lithuania. The agenda of the visit focused on the issues of the development of cooperation between Lithuania and Macedonia and Lithuania's preparation for the membership

of the European Union in terms of public administration and self-government.

The delegation visited the Seimas upon an invitation from the Seimas Group for Interparliamentary Relations with Western Balkans. This visit to the Seimas was the first visit of the delegation of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia.

### STATEMENT

Having gathered at the meeting in Vilnius on 31 January 2011, the Group of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania for Interparliamentary Relations with Western Balkans and the delegation of the Parliamentary Group of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia for Cooperation with the Parliaments of the Baltic States: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania *jointly state that:*

*they welcome* the establishment of relations and exchange of opinions between the parliamentary groups of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania and the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia;  
*they will seek to contribute* to promotion of parliamentary cooperation between Lithuania and Macedonia on the issues of mutual interest.

**Egidijus Vareikis**  
Chairman

of the Group for Interparliamentary Relations  
with Western Balkans of the Seimas of the  
Republic of Lithuania

**Liljana Popovska**  
Chairperson

of the Parliamentary Group for Cooperation with the  
Parliaments of the Baltic States: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania  
of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia



*Liljana Popovska and Egidijus Vareikis*

## DELEGATION OF TURKMENISTAN PARLIAMENTARIANS VISITED LITHUANIA

Between 30 January and 5 February, a delegation of Turkmenistan Mejlis (Parliament), consisting of members of the Committees on Economic and Social Policy, Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms, International and Interparliamentary Relations, Local Authorities and Municipalities and UNDP representative in Turkmenistan, paid a visit to Lithuania.

The guests attended parliamentary training in the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, local authorities and other

institutions. During the training, they were acquainted with the structure of the Lithuanian Parliament, units of the Office, parliamentary work and legislation procedures, the electoral system, the structure of local self-government, etc.

The training programme was organised by the Office of the Seimas, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Turkmenistan.



*In the centre – Deputy Speaker of the Seimas Česlovas Juršėnas*

1 February

### STATEMENT BY THE TEMPORARY GROUP “FOR EQUALITY”: WE SUPPORT THE LEGITIMATE STRIVING OF THE PEOPLE OF EGYPT TO LIVE IN A DEMOCRATIC STATE

Members of the Temporary Group of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania “For Equality” declare that they **support the legitimate striving of the people of Egypt to live in a democratic state**, defend human rights and freedoms, freedom of assembly, freedom of speech and freedom of movement.

Members of the group are in solidarity with Egyptians who have been liberating themselves from the military, police, authoritarian and corruption regime, police violence and

fears of human persecution, and who have been dreaming of living in a state without suffering from poverty and unemployment that degrade human dignity.

Members of the group “For Equality” support Egyptians’ conviction that a political reform should be carried out in Egypt, which should ensure democratic elections of the government structures of Egypt, education, employment and health care accessible to the citizens of Egypt, opportunities to own housing and create a family.

Massive protests of civil society of Tunisia, Egypt, Sudan, Lebanon, Algeria, Jordan and Yemen against social inequality, political and economic corruption forced modern world to understand that the citizens of the states of Africa and Near East choose freedom, life without humiliation and fear and therefore they rise for the “march of millions”.

Members of the group “For Equality” support Egyptians’ conviction that fundamental political changes in Egypt would stop the manifestation of extreme desperation of protestants and killing of people, economic and social

instability, and create the opportunity for the development and administration of social justice.

Members of the group: Marija Aušrinė Pavilionienė, Birutė Vėsaitė, Vytenis Povilas Andriukaitis, Algirdas Sysas, Julius Sabatauskas, Ona Valiukevičiūtė, Vytautas Gapšys, Donalda Meiželytė-Svilienė, Eligijus Masiulis, Dalia Kuodytė, Rokas Žilinskas.

*On behalf of the group – MP Marija Aušrinė Pavilionienė*

## POLITICAL PROCESSES IN KAZAKHSTAN DISCUSSED

On 2 February, Chairman of the Seimas Group for Interparliamentary Relations with the Republic of Kazakhstan **Edmundas Pupinis** met with Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the Republic of Lithuania **Galymzhan Koishybayev**.

During the meeting, the Ambassador acquainted with the political situation after an initiative group of citizens collected around 5 million signatures for the referendum concerning the idea to extend the term of office of the current President Nursultan Nazarbayev until 2020. Although the President disapproved of this idea, he paid regard to the fact that the Kazakhstan Parliament supported the proposal to extend the term of office and addressed the Constitutional Council regarding conformity of this proposal to the Constitution. On 31 January, the Constitutional Council adopted a decision and established that the proposed amendment would contradict the Constitution.

The Ambassador informed that the President of Kazakhstan favourably evaluated the opinion of the Constitutional Council; however, taking into consideration public opinion and political discussions, he proposed to hold early presidential election.

Mr. Pupinis, Chairman of the Seimas Group for Interparliamentary Relations with the Republic of Kazakhstan, noted that the decision to refuse a referendum concerning the extension of the term of office of the current President until 2020 and the proposal of the President to hold early presidential election demonstrate that Kazakhstan is determined to follow the road of democratic development. The referendum initiated at the beginning of the year could become a bad example for the neighbouring Asian countries. Mr. Pupinis also inquired about the possibilities of opposition

parties to nominate their candidates and citizens of descent other than Kazakh to stand as candidates.

The Ambassador of Kazakhstan informed that currently at least two opposition parties declared that they would nominate their candidates; however, the date of early presidential election has not yet been announced, thus the number of candidates is not clear. Concerning the citizens of descent other than Kazakh, the Ambassador noted that the Constitution of Kazakhstan provides that only a citizen born in Kazakhstan, who has been residing in the country for at least 15 years and who knows the Kazakh language, may be the President of Kazakhstan. According to him, the biggest obstacle is knowledge of the language.

Chairman of the Seimas Group for Interparliamentary Relations with the Republic of Kazakhstan thanked the Ambassador for exhaustive information and pointed out that Lithuania believed that Kazakhstan would remain a kind of guarantee of stability in the region.

The prospects and works of further cooperation were discussed at the meeting. The participants also positively commented on further cooperation of our countries within the scope of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

The Ambassador of Kazakhstan invited the Chairman of the Seimas Group for Interparliamentary Relations with the Republic of Kazakhstan to come to observe early presidential election in spring and to meet with parliamentarians of the Republic of Kazakhstan as well as discuss further cooperation at interparliamentary level.

*Evaldas Zelenka,  
Adviser to the Office of the Committee on Rural Affairs*

4 February

**VISIT OF THE DELEGATION OF MEMBERS OF THE US CONGRESS**

The delegation of members of the US Congress – the Senate and the House of Representatives headed by US Senators **John McCain** and **Joseph Lieberman** visited the Seimas. The guests from US met with Speaker of the Seimas **Irena Degutienė** (see p. 122) and students of the European

Humanities University (EHU is a Belarusian university re-located in Vilnius. EHU was founded in Minsk in 1992 and closed by authorities in 2004. It re-launched activities in Vilnius in 2005 and was granted the status of a Lithuanian university in 2006).



*Meeting with EHU students in the Seimas 11 March Hall*



*Press conference*

## US STATE OFFICIAL MET WITH MEMBERS OF THE SEIMAS COMMITTEES ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENCE

On 9 February, a meeting-discussion with **Rose Gottemoeller**, US Assistant Secretary of State for Arms Control, Verification and Compliance (former chief negotiator of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) with the Russian Federation), organised by the Seimas Committee on National Security and Defence and the Committee on Foreign Affairs, was held in the sitting hall of the Seimas Committee on European Affairs. This treaty was the focus of the meeting-discussion. Afterwards, a press conference of the guest and members of the Seimas was held at the Lithuanian Council Hall.

### US Assistant Secretary of State assured the Chairman of the Seimas Commission on Nuclear Energy that Washington did not support the Belarusian nuclear power plant project without reservation

On her visit to Vilnius, Rose Gottemoeller, US Assistant Secretary of State and Head of the Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance, assured that the administration of her country did not support Belarus's plans to build a nuclear power plant without reservation.

When asked by members of the Seimas about the support expressed by the US administration for the Belarusian project, which is implemented in contradiction to international rules by a non-predictive regime of Alexander Lukashenko, the

official said that US President Barack Obama supported the development of peaceful nuclear energy in general, yet every specific project had to be implemented in strict compliance with universal standards of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Chairman of the Seimas Commission on Nuclear Energy **Rokas Žilinskas** reminded the guest of Lithuania's position that the Belarusian nuclear power plant project is not transparent and contradicts the UN Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context and the International Atomic Energy Agency Convention on Nuclear Safety, which obliges the states building nuclear objects to hold exhaustive consultations with neighbouring countries.

Lithuania is particularly concerned about the fact that the site for the future nuclear power plant has been chosen at a distance of hardly 50 kilometres from Vilnius, without considering other alternatives and consulting Lithuania. According to Mr. Žilinskas, this contradicts both the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the principles of good neighbourhood.

*Auksė Šiaudžionytė,  
Adviser to MP Rokas Žilinskas*



*MP Petras Auštrevičius, Ms. Gottemoeller and MP Justinas Karosas at the news conference*

## DELEGATION FROM THE AGRARIAN COMMITTEE OF THE RUSSIAN DUMA PAID THE FIRST VISIT TO LITHUANIA

Between 3 and 5 March, the delegation headed by Chairman of the Duma Committee on Agrarian Issues of the Russian Federation **Valentin Petrovich Denisov** visited Lithuania for the first time upon an invitation from Chairman of the Seimas Committee on Rural Affairs **Edmundas Pupinis**.

The meeting with members of the Seimas Committee on Rural Affairs focused on the exchange of information about the situation in the agricultural sector. Chairman of the Committee on Rural Affairs Mr. Pupinis noted that Russia was a very important Lithuania's trade partner. In recent years, Lithuania has exported about one-fourth of agricultural products and foodstuff to Russia.

Members of the Russian delegation were interested in land reform and expressed a wish to continue cooperation. During their visit to Lithuania, the guests also met with Minister of Agriculture **Kazys Starkevičius**, went to the traditional Kaziukas Fair, etc.

Chief of the State Duma Office **Aleksei Sigutkin**, a member of the Russian Duma delegation, met with Secretary General of the Seimas **Jonas Milerius**, who introduced the organisation of work of the Office of the Seimas.



*Edmundas Pupinis and Valentin Petrovich Denisov*

*Office of the Committee on Rural Affairs*



*Secretary General Jonas Milerius shows the new Seimas Sitting Hall, opened in 2007, to the guests*



*Memory photo in the President's Hall of the Seimas (Building I)*



*Guests visited the popular Kaziukas Fair in the capital. On the left – the famous palms of Vilnius*

## COMMITTEES ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENCE AND ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS MET WITH THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE HIGHEST LEVEL TRAINING COURSES OF THE ROYAL MILITARY ACADEMY OF NETHERLANDS

On 23 March, the Seimas Committees on National Security and Defence and on Foreign Affairs met with the delegation of participants of the highest level training courses of the Royal Military Academy of Netherlands, headed by Lieutenant General **Jacques Antoine Van Diepenbrugge**. These courses are aimed at colonels and civilians of the respective rank intended for the position equivalent to the general's rank.

The major topic of the discussion-meeting was the global influence of the new NATO Strategic Concept. The meeting also touched upon other topical issues: the operation carried out by the international coalition (Netherlands included) in Libya, prolongation of the Baltic Air Policing Mission of NATO, export of armaments to third countries, and relations with Russia.

## ⇒ International relations *through the lens*

On 10 February, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas **Algis Kašėta** met with President of Latvia **Valdis Zatlers** and his delegation. The meeting was attended by chairmen and deputy chairmen of the Seimas committees and heads of the Group for Interparliamentary Relations with the Republic of Latvia.



*Mr. Kašėta (on the right) meets the guest in the Great Courtyard of the Seimas*



*Meeting in the Hall of Algirdas Mykolas Brazauskas*



On 23 February, a meeting between Chairman of the Seimas Group for Interparliamentary Relations with the Republic of Korea **Vaidotas Bacevičius** (on the right) and Ambassador of the Republic of Korea **Geun-Hyeong Yim** was held in Aleksandras Stulginskis's Hall.





## ⇒ Speaker of the Seimas

1 January

### SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS PARTICIPATED IN THE CEREMONY OF HOISTING THE FLAG OF LITHUANIA ATOP THE GEDIMINAS TOWER IN VILNIUS

Speaker of the Seimas participated in the ceremony of marking the Day of the Flag of Lithuania and hoisting the flag of Lithuania atop the Gediminas Tower. Addressing the participants of the festive event, the Head of the Parliament remembered the authors of the Lithuanian tricolour and their merits to the establishing state. The Seimas Speaker also noted that our tricolour is a very important and very necessary symbol of concord and unity of the nation.

“Let’s remember and remind others that **Antanas Žmuidzinavičius, Jonas Basanavičius** and **Teodoras Daugirdas** deserved well of the State of Lithuania not only by their other works, but also by designing a tricolour – our symbol which has been accompanying us since the re-establishment of the state in 1918,” said Mrs. Degutienė.

The tricolour was hoisted for the first time atop the Gediminas Tower on 1 January 1919. Lithuanian volunteers hoisted the flag as a symbol of the free state.



### SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS IRENA DEGUTIENĖ: THE WORDS OF POPE JOHN PAUL II TO LITHUANIA IN JANUARY 1991 SOUNDED LIKE A WHIFF OF FREEDOM AND HOPE INSPIRING THE NATION TO A FURTHER FIGHT FOR ITS OWN AND OTHER NATIONS’ FREEDOM

The Speaker of the Seimas Irena Degutienė received (5 January) Archbishop **Luigi Bonazzi**, the Apostolic Nuncio to Lithuania.

The Head of the Parliament congratulated the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps of the Ambassadors of foreign countries residing in Lithuania on the New Year and asked him to convey greetings to all the Ambassadors.

A great deal of attention during the meeting was devoted to consolidation of basic Christian values in the public life of Lithuania. Significance of 13 January 1991 events for the history of our country and Europe, unity of Lithuanian people, their confidence in the emerging state and their determination to overcome all the difficulties and withstand the most brutal aggression were the topics discussed at the meeting.

Mrs Degutienė recalled the great significance of each word of support and sympathy from abroad that reached Lithuania savaged by the occupant army back in 1991.

“In terms of their geopolitical importance the January events compare to the fall of the Berlin Wall since it was after these events that the wave of freedom moved further to the East. These days we recall all the foreign countries, their prominent citizens who supported the Lithuanian nation during the moments of its ordeal,” Mrs. Degutienė stated.

The Head of the Parliament underscored that at that time the words of Pope John Paul II sounded like a new whiff of freedom and hope inspiring the nation to withstand the evil, peacefully resist the Soviet tanks and continue its fight for the freedom of its own and of other nations.

“Full of hope, Lithuanian people then listened to the words of the late Pope John Paul II in St. Peter’s Square about our country and each resident, the words written down in the telegram that was handed over through Cardinal Vincentas Sladkevičius, the intellectual of Lithuania and the Church,” Mrs. Degutienė said. “These words inspired confidence and gave the people strength to continue their struggle and resist the rage of darkness”.

In his telegram to the Lithuanian nation sent in January 1991 Pope John Paul II expressed his solidarity with the Lithuanian nation, belief in mutual respect and resolution



Luigi Bonazzi

of the problems. He gave his blessing to the self-sacrificing people of Lithuania.

The Speaker of the Parliament underlined that the Lithuanian people still needed words and actions based on wisdom and basic values that would give them confidence and trust in one another and in the entire state.

## **SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS AND THE MAYOR OF VILNIUS DISCUSSED THE ISSUES RELEVANT TO THE RESIDENTS OF THE CAPITAL**

Speaker of the Seimas Irena Degutienė received (7 January) Mayor of Vilnius **Raimundas Alekna**. At the meeting with the new Mayor of Vilnius\*, the Head of the Parliament discussed the problems and issues relevant to residents.

The Seimas Speaker urged the Mayor of Vilnius to tackle, with new energy and new strength, the numerous problems of the city, which had been slackly solved so far, and discussed possible amendments to legal acts, necessary for the better organisation of meeting the residents’ needs.

Mrs. Degutienė and Mr. Alekna talked about the lack of kindergartens and vacancies therein, the procedure of per-pupil vouchers, the problems of schools and their renovation as well as other relevant education issues. Currently burning prices for heating and public utilities and the possibilities to draft a separate law on the capital and adopt it in the Seimas were also covered in the discussion. The Mayor informed

the Speaker about the currently effective procedure for calculating and allocating personal income tax, which is not favourable to the city of Vilnius. According to the Speaker of the Seimas, this issue could be considered in the forthcoming spring and autumn sessions of the Seimas by amending the Law on Budgeting and stipulating the provisions that would meet the needs of Vilnius residents.

Mrs. Degutienė reminded the Mayor of Vilnius of the commitments made by previous heads of the municipality to find a place in the city for the monument to Taras Shevchenko, given as a present by Ukraine to Lithuania. The commitment was made during the visit of Volodymyr Lytvyn, Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, to Lithuania in the autumn of 2010. The Head of the Parliament and the Mayor of Vilnius also touched upon the possibilities to handle Lukiškių Square and install a memorial of the Fighters for Freedom.

\* On 19 April, Vilnius City Council elected the new mayor, Artūras Zuokas.



*Seimas Speaker together with the heads of Lithuanian municipal councils before the start of work of the newly elected municipal councils*

#### ELECTIONS TO MUNICIPAL COUNCILS WERE HELD ON 27 FEBRUARY 2011 IN LITHUANIA

At the municipal election, the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party received the majority (328) of mandates; the Homeland Union – Lithuanian Christian Democrats received 249 mandates; the Labour Party got 165 mandates; the Order and Justice Party – 155 mandates; the Lithuanian Peasants and People's Union – 147 mandates; the Liberal and Centre Union has 126 mandates; the Liberals Movement of Lithuania – 98 mandates; the New Union – 52 mandates.

The coalition of the Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania and the Russian Alliance received 61 mandates, the Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania alone got four mandates, the Lithuanian Centre Party – 19 mandates. The Christian Party received 15 mandates, the coalition of Artūras Zuokas and Vilnius – 12 mandates, the Lithuanian People's Party – 7 mandates.

Five parties which participated in the election, including the governing National Revival Party, received no mandates.

In total, 16,404 candidates participated in the election, of which 505 were independent candidates and all other candidates were nominated by 23 parties. The majority of independent candidates (over 400) formed coalitions.

2,637,733 residents of the country have the electoral right; 1,162,654 people, or 44.08 per cent of voters, participated in the municipal election. 1,526 members of municipal councils were elected for the term of office 2011–2015.

On 6 March, the Central Electoral Commission approved the results of the election to the Seimas held in Marijampolė. Social Democrat Albinas Mitrulevičius received a parliamentarian's mandate in the second round; he was elected to the Parliament instead of deceased Social Democrat Algis Rimas elected in Marijampolė, who passed away last summer.



*In the office of the Seimas Speaker*

The Speaker of the Seimas received (11 January) Vicar to His Holiness the Patriarch of Moscow and all Rus, Chairman of the Department of External Church Relations of the Patriarchate of Moscow, Archbishop Metropolitan **Hilarion**, President

of the Lithuanian Bishops' Conference, Kaunas Archbishop **Sigitas Tamkevičius** and Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Lithuania **Mindaugas Sabutis**.



*Press conference of Archbishop Metropolitan Hilarion*

## SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS THANKED THE LEADERS OF THE HUNGARIAN AND SWEDISH PARLIAMENTS FOR THEIR SUPPORT IN JANUARY 1991, WHICH WAS FATAL TO LITHUANIA

Speaker of the Seimas Irena Degutienė met (12 January) with Speaker of the Hungarian Parliament **Laszlo Kover** and Speaker of the Swedish Parliament **Per Westerberg**, who came to Lithuania to take part in the events dedicated to the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of January 13.

During the meetings, the Speaker of the Seimas thanked for support to Lithuania demonstrated by these states in January 1991, the time of aggression of Soviet authorities against the people and institutions of our country. "We remember that on 14 January 1991 the Parliament of Hungary adopted a statement whereby it deplored cruel campaigns of the USSR armed forces in Lithuania and demanded to stop aggression and withdraw Soviet armed forces from the territory of Lithuania," Mrs. Degutienė told Mr. Kover.

The Seimas Speaker highlighted that Hungarian people particularly well understood the threat of the then armed forces, because they had suffered from an analogical Soviet "christening" back in 1956.

At the meeting with the Head of the Swedish Parliament, the Speaker of the Seimas noted that Lithuania was particularly pleased to receive the dear friend of Lithuania for the second time in Vilnius this year, who had been recently re-elected the Head of the Parliament. "In these recent days, we have been remembering all foreign states and their prominent citizens who stayed together with the Lithuanian nation at those hard moments. On 12 January 1991, the then Prime Minister of Sweden Ingvar Karlsson announced a statement whereby he deplored the use of force in Lithuania and, two days after, with regard to the killing of innocent people, he declared that such actions could have serious consequences for the future of the entire Europe," said Mrs. Degutienė.

In 1991, Head of the Swedish Government Mr. Karlsson stated: "The events in Vilnius must be deplored. If coercion continues, this will have serious consequences for the Soviet Union and the future of Europe. The conflict between Moscow and Baltic republics must be solved through political measures and arrangements. Democratically elected Baltic Parliaments must be respected and defended."



*Laszlo Kover*



*Per Westerberg*

The Speaker of the Seimas received (19 January) Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway **Steinar Gil** who is finishing his diplomatic tenure in Lithuania.

19 January

## SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS SUGGESTS INVOLVING RESPONSIBLE COMMITTEES OF PARLIAMENTS OF OTHER STATES IN CONSULTATIONS ON MISTRAL

**Irena Degutienė**, Speaker of the Seimas, is convinced that it is necessary to involve as many foreign affairs and defence committees of the Nordic and Baltic States' parliaments as possible in the deliberations over the selling of Mistral class ships. "Lithuania is concerned about the agreement between Russia and France, which allows Russia to purchase the French Mistral class warships equipped with modern technologies," said Mrs. Degutienė.

According to the Speaker, it is obvious that the responsible institutions of our state should also involve the respective committees of the states of our region in the deliberations over this issue. "As many Nordic and Baltic States as possible should be involved in the considerations over the deal involving Mistral class ships. Consultations between foreign affairs

committees, including the committees of national security and defence, would be welcome," suggested Mrs. Degutienė.

The Seimas Speaker also suggested this to Per Westerberg, Speaker of Parliament of Sweden, who took part in the events commemorating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 13 January Events.

Sweden's Speaker of Parliament approved of this suggestion and voiced his opinion that such consultations could take place at least twice a year with the parliamentary committees of the EU member states convening in joint sittings in Brussels. Per Westerberg underlined that the consultations should also include discussions on other important security issues, such as provision of energy resources and strengthening of energy independence.

The Seimas Speaker welcomed (4 February) the delegation of members of the US Congress – the Senate and the House of Representatives, headed by US Senators **John McCain** and **Joseph Lieberman**, who visited the Seimas.



*Joseph Lieberman, Irena Degutienė, John McCain, Emanuelis Zingeris, Chairman of the Seimas Committee on Foreign Affairs and Howard Berman, Member of US Congress*

7–11 February

## SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS PAID OFFICIAL VISITS TO AZERBAIJAN AND UKRAINE

### SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS MET WITH FIRST DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF THE VERKHOVNA RADA OF UKRAINE IN KIEV

Mrs. Irena Degutienė, Speaker of the Seimas, met with Mr. **Adam Martyniuk**, First Deputy Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, in Kiev on 7 February 2011 on her way to Azerbaijan, where she was going to pay an official visit.

The meeting focused on current political developments in Ukraine and Lithuania, joint bilateral parliamentary initiatives planned, and preserving the memory of Taras Shevchenko in Vilnius, the issue raised during the Speaker's visit to Kiev last year.

**The Speaker of the Seimas noted that Lithuania was looking forward to favourable decisions taken by Ukraine in promoting business relations and speeding up customs procedures in Ukraine.** "We expect Ukraine to take favourable decisions vis-à-vis Lithuania. On its part, Lithuania has undertaken to preserve the memory of Taras Shevchenko, a poet of great significance for both nations, in Vilnius. I have discussed this with Raimundas Alekna, Mayor of Vilnius, and I hope that the upcoming local elections will not prevent us from fulfilling our commitment," Mrs. Degutienė said.

Mrs. Degutienė and the delegation under her leadership left Kiev for Azerbaijan where she was scheduled to meet with Mr. **Ilham Aliyev**, President of Azerbaijan, Mr. **Ogtay Asadov**, Speaker of Azerbaijani Parliament, and Mr. **Artur Rasizade**, Prime Minister of Azerbaijan.

### SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS AND PRESIDENT OF AZERBAIJAN FOCUSED ON ENERGY, STRENGTHENING OF BUSINESS RELATIONS, AND COOPERATION

Mrs. Irena Degutienė, Speaker of the Seimas, met with Mr. **Ilham Aliyev**, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, during her official visit to Baku.

The Speaker of the Seimas noted that Lithuania considered Azerbaijan to be a politically and economically independent and powerful country with its decisions having a strong impact on the geopolitical future of the entire region of South Caucasus. "It is thanks to Azerbaijan that Georgia can now be absolutely independent of Russian gas and I believe that it is a crucial achievement of the country under your leadership," Mrs. Degutienė observed.



*Irena Degutienė and Ogtay Asadov, Speaker of Azerbaijani Parliament*

The Speaker of the Seimas informed that Lithuania was planning the construction of an LNG terminal on the shore of the Baltic Sea and the experience of Azerbaijan in this field would be beneficial for our country.

At her meeting with Mr. Aliyev, Mrs. Degutienė discussed the possibility to reopen the so-called Sarmatian corridor, which could be used for transporting crude oil from the Caspian region to Poland and then to Klaipėda through the Ukrainian oil pipeline Odessa-Brody. A possible development of the Viking project by extending the railway route to Azerbaijan was also considered.

The meeting also focussed on two EU twinning projects whereby Lithuania provides assistance to the Parliament and Prosecution Service of Azerbaijan. In the opinion of the Speaker of the Seimas, Lithuania is able to provide assistance to Azerbaijan in other areas as well where call for tenders for EU twinning projects will be announced later this year.



*At the Parliament (Mili Mejlis)*

The Speaker of the Seimas extended her gratitude to the President of Azerbaijan for a possibility to hold a bilateral business forum in Baku where around 40 Lithuanian business companies would be presented. According to Mrs. Degutienė, Lithuanian businesses working not only in the areas of food and dairy products but also in information technologies, etc. could be of interest to Azerbaijan.

**SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS: SUCCESSFUL LITHUANIAN BUSINESS INVESTMENTS ENSURE EMPLOYMENT TO A GREAT NUMBER OF LITHUANIAN PEOPLE**

“Successful appearance of Lithuanian business in Azerbaijan and opportunities to export Lithuanian products guarantee

employment to a great number of Lithuanian people.” This position was expressed (9 February) by Speaker of the Seimas Irena Degutienė, who paid an official visit to Azerbaijan and met with entrepreneurs participating in the Azerbaijan-Lithuania Business Forum. About 40 Lithuanian and over 100 Azerbaijani enterprises took part in the forum held in Baku. At the forum, organised on the occasion of a visit by the Speaker of the Seimas, **cooperation agreements** were signed between Lithuanian and Azerbaijani business associations, research institutions and individual enterprises.



9 February

*SPEECH BY MRS. IRENA DEGUTIENĖ,  
SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS, AT THE OPENING  
OF THE AZERBAIJAN-LITHUANIA BUSINESS FORUM*

"Mr. Chairman of the Milli Mejlis of Azerbaijan,  
Participants of the business forum, ladies and gentlemen,

I am very happy about our meeting and would like to sincerely thank all who made it possible. I am grateful to Azerbaijan's political leadership for their support to the very idea of such a business forum and all the organisers for their practical contribution. It is my great hope that the business forum will help to create and improve the environment for the Lithuanian business in Azerbaijan.

The work, actually, does not start from the scratch. As far back as in 2008, Azerbaijan became the most important trade partner of Lithuania in the South Caucasus, and in 2009 the Lithuanian Chamber of Commerce successfully started its activities in Baku. It is our satisfaction to cooperate with the state the economy of which is experiencing one of the most rapid growths in today's world. Equally, we are pleased not only with the boom in your economy but also with our mutual cooperation. In two recent years, the scope of our bilateral trade has more than trebled, which is a remarkable achievement, but, to my mind, this is not the limit yet. For sure, we have many other opportunities and means at our

disposal. Thus, our today's forum presents an excellent chance to look for ways of making use of our potential and intensifying our bilateral business ties.

Those among you, who still do not have any direct economic ties with Lithuania, may probably ask why our business enterprises could interest Azerbaijan. I will try to give a brief answer and mention several examples.

First of all, I would like to put Lithuania's information technology (IT) sector in the spotlight because Lithuania has set an ambitious goal in this area: to become the service and innovation centre of the Nordic and Baltic region. The know-how and solutions developed by our companies – from Lithuania's Real Property Register and Cadastre system to electronic banking and ultrasound testing of transit cargoes at the customs – already show high quality and enjoy European and international recognition. It is this experience that we offer to Azerbaijan.

We hope that Azerbaijan may be interested in Lithuania's experience in exploiting renewable energy sources, improving energy efficiency and implementing environmental projects. Our enterprises are much experienced in transposing the provisions of the European Union directives into the national law. Moreover, Lithuanian experts could provide consultations to their Azerbaijani colleagues on the projects





*Speaker of the Seimas Irena Degutienė met with Minister of Taxes of Azerbaijan Fazil Mammadov*

tackling climate change. Therefore, it would really be mutually beneficial if Lithuanian enterprises working in all these areas would establish relations with the corresponding Azerbaijani companies.

Food industry and in particular production and selling of meat, milk, tomato sauce, and mayonnaise and processing of animal sub-products are business areas where Lithuanian enterprises have really achieved much. I am glad to hear that Azerbaijani shops offer an increasing variety of Lithuanian food products. It is this production that serves as Lithuania's visit card on foreign markets and never loses its importance. So Lithuanian enterprises operating in the aforementioned sectors are especially interested in search for new partners, partnership development and joint business with Azerbaijani enterprises.

At this business forum, Lithuania is represented by telecommunication and electronics companies, medical companies, construction related, ceramics, textile and woodwork enterprises. All of them try to find and enlarge their circle of partners in Azerbaijan.

I think it is symbolic that Lithuania's delegation includes the representatives of one of the best higher schools of Lithuania. It is our goal and wish to have as many as possible Azerbaijani students studying in Lithuania's higher schools as well as to carry out joint academic projects and intensify scientific cooperation. By the way, we already have some things to take pride in here: nine higher education establishments of Lithuania welcomed Azerbaijani students for the beginning of their studies in the autumn of 2010, and all the students are exempt from tuition fees.

I believe that after completing their studies and finding their niche activity, these young people will facilitate and accelerate the communication and cooperation between our states.

If this meeting ends with the establishment of business relations, finding of new partners and conclusion of new contracts, I will not hesitate to say that our forum at least partly achieved its aim.

Many thanks for each of you who thinks and works in the same direction. I appreciate your warm welcome and wish you all the luck and success!"

### **SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS: WITH THE HELP FROM AZERBAIJAN, LITHUANIA EXPECTS TO STRENGTHEN ITS ENERGY INDEPENDENCE**

On 9 February, Speaker of the Seimas Irena Degutienė met with Azerbaijani Minister of Foreign Affairs **Elmar Mamadyarov**. The meeting focused on energy projects, strengthening of transport relations, possibilities of facilitating visa regime and other bilateral issues.

The Seimas Speaker pointed out that with the help from Azerbaijan, Lithuania expects to ensure greater energy independence, and encouraged Azerbaijani institutions to take more active interest in the energy projects implemented by Lithuania. "We know perfectly well that it is thanks to you that Georgia has ensured energy independence from our common neighbour. Regrettably, Lithuania is still too much dependent on the single source of energy – both gas and oil. Still, we expect that with your help we will manage to create alternatives to our current suppliers and achieve greater energy independence," said Mrs. Degutienė.

The Azerbaijani Minister of Foreign Affairs noted that every independence demands its price. He stressed that such a situation forces to search for alternative sources and assured that Azerbaijan was really interested in energy projects in Lithuania.

Mrs. Degutienė pointed out that Lithuania was planning to build a liquefied gas terminal on the Baltic coast and confirmed that our country not only searched for alternative gas suppliers, but was also waiting for investors in this and other energy projects.

The Azerbaijani Minister of Foreign Affairs confirmed that his country was interested in the Sarmatia Corridor project for transporting crude oil via the Ukrainian Odessa-Brody pipeline from the states of the Caspian Sea Region to Poland and subsequently to Klaipėda. He was also interested in the possibilities to extend the route of the Viking project to the ports of Azerbaijan and highlighted that such an extension of the railway route would not only enliven trade between these two states, but also open up new opportunities for business.

The Seimas Speaker also urged to more actively search for ways to strengthen connection of Azerbaijan and Lithuania by air transport. "Direct flights between Vilnius and Baku will enable more active cooperation between our entrepreneurs and open new tourism opportunities as well as strengthen cultural and human relations," added Mrs. Degutienė.

Mr. Mamadyarov confirmed that such a direct transport corridor would be very beneficial and noted that the

Azerbaijani airline company had already submitted applications for the acquisition of new aircraft and would seriously consider the opportunity of using them for direct flights between Vilnius and Baku.

The meeting also touched upon the possibilities to seek facilitated visa regime for Azerbaijani citizens, who had so far confronted with many obstacles when travelling to Lithuania for business or tourism purposes.

### **MEETING OF THE SEIMAS SPEAKER AND THE AZERBAIJANI MINISTER OF INDUSTRY AND ENERGY: CONSIDERING THE POSSIBILITY TO ESTABLISH A REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE OFFICE OF THE AZERBAIJANI STATE OIL AND GAS COMPANY "SOCOR" IN VILNIUS**

Speaker of the Seimas Irena Degutienė met (10 February) with Azerbaijani Minister of Industry and Energy **Natig Aliyev**.

The meeting focused on oil and gas supply projects significant to both states and the development of cooperation in the area of energy as well as the development of transport corridors. The Seimas Speaker proposed the Azerbaijani Minister of Energy to undertake concrete actions and establish a regional representative office of the Azerbaijani state oil and gas company "Socor" in Vilnius.

Mr. Aliyev favourably accepted this proposal by the Seimas Speaker and highlighted that it would be considered and that he did not see any obstacles to the establishment of this representative office in the capital of Lithuania.



*Natig Aliyev*

The company "Socor" currently owns one-fourth of the shares of the oil supply corridor Sarmatia. The project seeks to create the conditions for European countries, including Lithuania, to get oil from alternative suppliers in the Caspian Region. This corridor is currently used for oil supply to Odessa (Ukraine), from where it is transmitted. Further implementation of the Sarmatia project will expand the opportunities for oil supply and reach the Baltic coast.

The Azerbaijani Minister of Energy pointed out that the project was commercially cost efficient and very attractive, and invited to seek that other project participants more actively implement their project share and lay oil pipelines on their territories.

The meeting also touched upon the implementation of the gas pipeline Nabucco, which will supply gas to European

countries not from Russia. Mrs. Degutienė was interested in the course of implementation and obstacles that prevent from speeding up the project.

The Minister of Energy stressed that the Nabucco pipeline is very necessary for Europe not only in terms of creation of alternative ways for gas supply, but also to ensure that gas is bought not from a single source. He observed that this year would be very important to the project, regardless of Russia's approval or disapproval, and expressed a conviction that European countries have to take firmer positions and contribute to the laying of this gas pipeline.

They also discussed possible development of transport communications between Lithuania and Azerbaijan. They agreed that direct flights would be very useful not only for business, but also for the development of tourism.



10 February

**SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS THANKED ALTHINGI, ICELANDIC PARLIAMENT, FOR ITS DECISION TO RECOGNISE THE INDEPENDENCE OF LITHUANIA TWENTY YEARS AGO**

Speaker of the Seimas Irena Degutienė, who paid an official visit to Azerbaijan, sent a letter of gratitude to Speaker of Althingi, **Ásta Jóhannesdóttir**, and all Members of the Icelandic Parliament. In her letter, the Seimas Speaker thanked the people of Iceland for the decision to recognise the independence of Lithuania twenty years ago.

LIETUVOS RESPUBLIKOS SEIMO PIRMININKAS  
SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

H. E. Ms. Ásta R. Jóhannesdóttir  
Speaker of Althingi  
Republic of Iceland

Vilnius, 4 February 2011

Members of Althingi,  
Dear Madam Speaker,  
Ladies and gentlemen, friends of Lithuania,

Twenty years have passed since a particularly meaningful and honourable event, the day of de facto recognition of the independence of the Lithuanian state on 11 February 1991 by Althingi, which was followed by the Icelandic Parliament's active effort to ensure it is our de jure freedom.

For Lithuania it was not just the beginning of its international recognition and foreign policy. The people of Lithuania, who had lived through the 13 January 1991 military aggression of the most powerful empire against the armless citizens of their state, took it as a momentous sign of their survival. Your announcement to the world told us that we had a friend, a moral supporter of our aspirations. Your recognition was welcomed in Lithuania with great joy and sincere gratitude. It was the source of strength and courage, as well as stamina for us.

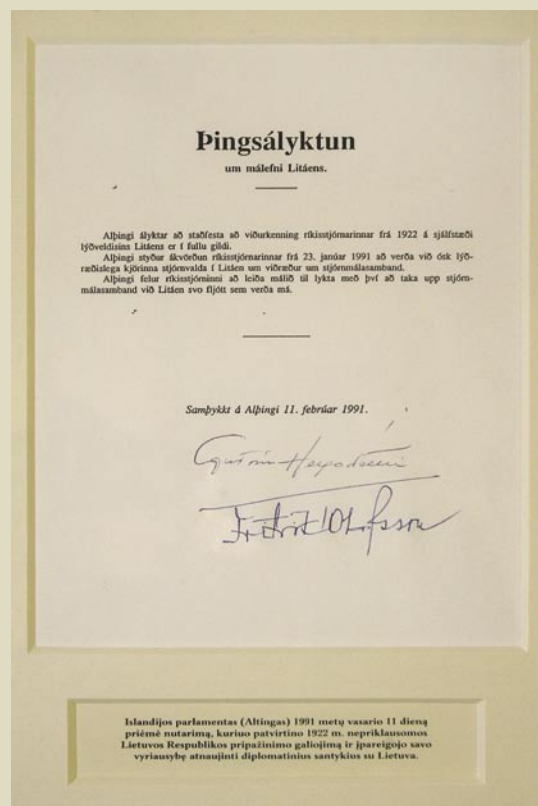
We are cordially grateful to the Members of Althingi, who voted for the decision, to the Members of Government of Iceland, particularly to J. B. Hannibalsson and to all the people of Iceland, who stood for Lithuania, for truth and freedom, twenty years ago and supported the independence that our millennium-old country enjoys today.

Whatever the future of our states, whatever the whim of their history, Lithuanian people will always have a very special feeling towards Iceland and the wave of gratitude and respect will never stop coming to your country from Lithuania.

I am writing to express my personal respect. Lithuania was lucky to have such a friend in 1991; Lithuania is honoured to continue this friendship today.

Please accept my very best wishes for success to your state, your nation and its people,

IRENA DEGUTIENĖ



The Seimas Hall of Algirdas Mykolas Brazauskas, where official delegations of foreign guests are received, contains documents attesting that Iceland is the first state to have recognised the Independent State of Lithuania

11 February

**THE PRESIDIUM OF THE TRILATERAL PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF LITHUANIA, POLAND AND UKRAINE WISHES TO HOLD ITS EXTRAORDINARY SITTING AT THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**

Mrs. Irena Degutienė, Speaker of the Seimas, met with Mr. **Volodymyr Lytvyn**, Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, on the way back to Lithuania from her official visit to Azerbaijan.

At the meeting, Mrs. Degutienė and Mr. Lytvyn signed a joint letter to Mr. Jerzy Buzek, President of the European Parliament, with a **proposal to hold an extraordinary meeting of the Presidium of the trilateral Parliamentary Assembly of Lithuania, Poland, and Ukraine in Strasbourg on 10–12 May 2011**. Not only the Speakers of the three parliaments but also the President and Members of the European Parliament would attend the meeting. The letter had been earlier signed by Mr. Bogdan Borusewicz, Marshal of the Polish Senate. **The meeting is expected to bring Ukraine even closer to the European Union and allow its more active involvement in EU affairs.**

*Volodymyr Lytvyn*

## SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS CLAIMS THAT THE FIGHT OF AFTER-WAR LITHUANIAN PARTISANS WAS UNIQUE WORLDWIDE

**On the eve of the Day of the Re-establishment of the State of Lithuania**, Speaker of the Seimas Irena Degutienė paid tribute to the Signatories to the Declaration of 16 February 1949 in Mėnaičiai and met with **Julija Mikniūtė Petrėnienė**, the witness of 1949 events who sheltered partisans at her homestead.

Greeting the participants of the event and servicemen, the Speaker of the Seimas reminded that NATO generals, who came to Lithuania a couple of years after re-establishment of the state, were very interested in the fight of after-war partisans.

“High American officers, who had seen and investigated many different partisan resistance movements in the mountains or jungles, wondered at how Lithuanians managed to oppose the most powerful empire in the world for eight years, hiding in the plains, simple woods and living in underground bunkers. It was a unique fight, according to the experienced NATO commanders,” said Mrs. Degutienė.

The Head of the Parliament stressed that it was a great honour for her to be in a place, which witnessed the most important moment of this unique fight on 16 February 1949.



**On 16 February** each year, Lithuania celebrates its national holiday – Day of Re-establishment of the State of Lithuania, marking the date of 16 February 1918 when Lithuania’s independence was declared. Solemn events are traditionally held in the Presidential Palace to commemorate this historical date.



"The place where the most honourable and bravest Lithuanian men, the top management of partisans, from Southern, Eastern and Western Lithuania addressed the democratic world and asked for help for the most important goal of the fight "to restore free, independent and democratic Lithuania". Dear all, greeting you on the eve of February 16, I would like to wish us all the spiritual strength and love for the Homeland that the Fighters for Freedom had," said the Seimas Speaker.

Mrs. Degutienė quoted the thoughts from the diary of a partisan from the Dainava District, former student Lionginas Baliukevičius, under the pseudonym of Dzūkas, written in the bunkers of Dzūkija in 1948:

"I often wonder what are you, my Homeland? Where from does this great strength of partisan resistance come? I feel that the love for my country has been increasingly growing. If anybody offers me freedom in America, I wouldn't go there. I would rather die here in an honourable fight than sit quietly and wait for something to appear from somewhere. Our blood will be shed not in vain. We will have the right to look boldly into the eyes, because we have not left our homeland. What will defeat us, if we are not afraid to die, if we have already defeated death?"

"Dear all, let's cover those heroes who perished for the Homeland and freedom in eternal glory! Congratulations on February 16, congratulations on the Freedom!" greeted the Seimas Speaker.

## THE SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS BID FINAL FAREWELL TO A PROMINENT POET OF THE NATION, JUSTINAS MARCINKEVIČIUS, WHO PASSED AWAY AFTER A SERIOUS ILLNESS



Head of the Parliament of the Republic of Latvia presented her condolences for the loss of Justinas Marcinkevičius

Speaker of the Latvian Saeima **Solvita Āboltiņa** presented condolences on behalf of the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia to Speaker of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania Irena Degutienė for the loss of Justinas Marcinkevičius.

Riga, 18 February 2011

Dear Colleague,

On behalf of the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia, I would like to extend my sincere condolences to the people of Lithuania and you personally for the loss of Justinas Marcinkevičius.

Justinas Marcinkevičius was a bright personality in Lithuania's cultural and political life, rightly given an honourable name of the poet of the nation. His considerable literary heritage will always remain a descriptive reflection of the Lithuanian people, identity and nature. Mr. Marcinkevičius was also one of the founders of the freedom movement "Sąjūdis". He will always remain in our memories as a great Lithuanian poet and patriot.

I extend my deepest sympathy for the family of Justinas Marcinkevičius.

I feel sorrow together with you, Your Excellency, and pay my deepest respects to you.

Yours faithfully,

Solvita Āboltiņa  
Speaker of the Saeima  
Republic of Latvia

The Speaker of the Seimas received (17 February) the new Ambassador of the Kingdom of Denmark **Jørgen Molde**.



### **SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS RECEIVED HEAD OF THE LITHUANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH, ARCHBISHOP INOKENTY**

Speaker of the Seimas Irena Degutienė received (25 February) Head of the Lithuanian Orthodox Church, Archbishop **Inokenty**, who recently started his tenure in Vilnius.

During the courtesy visit to the Head of the Parliament, they discussed the opportunities for closer cooperation in strengthening civil society, considering values, in particular related to family and life policies.

The Seimas Speaker remembered her first meeting with the new Archbishop Inokenty on 16 January 2011. "Your participation in the event dedicated to the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of January 13 and a common prayer at the Seimas together with the leaders of other religious confessions was an important sign of ecumenism and cooperation," said Mrs. Degutienė.

Metropolitan Inokenty noted that Orthodoxes who reside in our country are the citizens of Lithuania and one of his duties is to contribute to both their spiritual and civic development. "My duty is to help the congregation in spiritual matters and provide assistance in facilitating their mundane decisions, help them be really good citizens of the state who respect the law and actively contribute to the creation of common civic welfare," said the Archbishop of the Lithuanian Orthodox Church.

The Speaker of the Seimas wished success to Archbishop Inokenty in his responsible position and expressed hope that in the future the Orthodox religious community would more actively get involved in common activity, in particular considering issues related to the most important values.



## SEIMAS SPEAKER HOPES THAT NEGOTIATIONS ON NORWAY'S SUPPORT FOR LITHUANIA WILL BE SUCCESSFUL

Speaker of the Seimas Irena Degutienė, who received (27 February) the new Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway **Leif Arne Ulland**, hopes that bilateral negotiations on Norway's support for Lithuania by 2014 will be successful.

"We are grateful to the Norwegian Government and your people for the assistance, provided in the first years of independence until present, which has been very necessary for Lithuania. The funds you have allocated have been successfully used in the areas of health care, cultural heritage and child care," said Mrs. Degutienė. "We also hope that currently negotiations on Norway's support for various sectors in Lithuania are taking place."

In the period from 2004 until 2009, Lithuania received about LTL 200 million from Norway. Agreement has already been reached that EUR 84 million (around LTL 280 million) will be allocated to Lithuania by 2014. Presently, negotiations on the allocation of funds across different sectors have been taking place, and they are expected to be closed by this April.

The Speaker of the Seimas also noted that Lithuania and Nordic countries are connected by increasingly closer political and parliamentary relations, the Group for Interparliamentary Relations with North European Countries has been functioning at the Seimas, and Speakers of Parliaments of Nordic and Baltic States have been organising meetings focused on common problems.

The Norwegian Ambassador promised to be an active representative of his state in Lithuania and said that he would pay considerable attention to both the strengthening of bilateral political relations and economic and cultural cooperation.

"According to foreign direct investment in Lithuania, Norway is ranked tenth. I am pleased to hear from Norwegian entrepreneurs that they are satisfied with investment conditions in Lithuania and stable investment environment. This shows that we may seek better results of economic cooperation," said Mr. Ulland. "I also see many opportunities to strengthen cultural exchange and organise concerts of Norwegian musicians in Lithuania."

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The Speaker of the Seimas received (2 March) the new Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway **Leif Arne Ulland** and Ambassador of the Kingdom of Spain **José Luis Solano Gadea**, who is finishing his diplomatic tenure in Lithuania.

## SEIMAS SPEAKER IRENA DEGUTIENĖ HOPES THAT NEGOTIATIONS ON NORWAY'S SUPPORT FOR LITHUANIA WILL BE SUCCESSFUL

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The meeting also touched upon opportunities to organise an exhibition at the Seimas dedicated to the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Lithuania and Norway.

## **SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS IRENA DEGUTIENĖ HOPES THAT INTERPARLIAMENTARY RELATIONS BETWEEN LITHUANIA AND LUXEMBOURG WILL EVEN MORE STRENGTHEN**

The meeting (3 March) of Seimas Speaker Irena Degutienė and Prime Minister of Luxembourg **Jean Claude Juncker**, who was on his visit to Vilnius, focused on the importance of parliamentary relations, cooperation in the energy sector and relevant issues of the euro area.

The Speaker of the Seimas noted that after the first visit of Laurent Mosar, President of the Chamber of Deputies of Luxembourg, in the history of Lithuania, which took place last autumn, bilateral parliamentary relations became very active, and she hoped that a Group for Interparliamentary Relations with Luxembourg would be set up at the Seimas.

“Although geographically we are distant countries and our historical experience is very different, small European Union Member States must better coordinate common actions,” commented Mrs. Degutienė.

The Prime Minister agreed with the Speaker and observed that parliamentary relations cover more and are more full-scale than cooperation between governments.

“Bilateral relations are good, I could say, even perfect. We admire Lithuania and your achievements,” said Mr. Juncker. “Regrettably, so far the relations between the countries have been grounded more on cooperation between governments. However, cooperation between governments covers only specific sectors and areas, whereas parliamentary relations



*Jean Claude Juncker*

may be wider and deeper. It is parliaments that are the real representations of our nations.”

The Luxembourgian Prime Minister pointed out that recently Lithuania and Luxembourg signed an agreement

on cooperation in the areas of culture, education and science, which had been talked about since his visit to Vilnius back in 2001. Mr. Juncker expressed hope that the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Area of Renewable Energy Sources signed by Lithuanian and Luxembourgian Ministers of Energy on 28 February 2011 would also develop into a bilateral agreement on cooperation in the area of energy.

The meeting also focused on the relevant issues of the euro area and the prospects of introducing euro in Lithuania\*.

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*\*Speaker of the Seimas visited Luxembourg on 3–5 May 2011.*



*First from the left – Deputy Speaker of the Seimas Česlovas Juršėnas*

## **SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS ATTENDED THE SESSION OF THE TRILATERAL PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF LITHUANIA, POLAND AND UKRAINE IN KIEV**

Speaker of the Seimas Irena Degutienė visited Ukraine, where she attended (22 March) the session of the Trilateral Parliamentary Assembly of Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine in Kiev. Parliamentarians from the three states convened at the joint session for the fourth time.

The event hosted by the capital of Ukraine focused on the European identity of Ukraine, European integration factors and values, and the significance of history for European identity and culture.

Speaker of the Seimas **Irena Degutienė** and Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine **Volodymyr Lytvyn** had agreed to pay more attention to the issues of values, rather than political and economic issues only, during their meeting in Kiev in mid-February. These topics for discussion were approved by the leaders and representatives of the Polish Parliament.

Eight members of the Seimas from the Lithuanian delegation to the Assembly of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, the Sejm and Senate of the Republic of Poland and the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine accompanied the Seimas Speaker during her visit to Ukraine.

*Welcome Address by Mrs. Irena Degutienė,  
Speaker of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania  
at the Trilateral Parliamentary Assembly of Lithuania,  
Poland, and Ukraine*

Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine,  
Marshal of the Senate of the Republic of Poland,  
Members of Assembly Delegations,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I will start my speech from an unexpected reference. I had been pondering on things to say during my address to the participants and guests of the fourth session of the Trilateral Parliamentary Assembly in Kiev for some time, until I suddenly heard a Lithuanian song with the following lyrics, "Greet each other, as doing this is so easy. Greet each other on having a sunny day, spring, anything – surprise them all..." Indeed, it is easy to shake hands openly, the European way, showing there is nothing up our sleeves and we do not bear any grudge. I encourage us to look at each other openly and speak to each other clearly, as instead of spreading division this is what helps us find the issues that unite us.



*Irena Degutienė, Volodymyr Lytvyn and Marshal of the Polish Senate Bogdan Borusewicz*



The Trilateral Assembly will always address the puzzle of hastening Ukraine's integration into the European Union, the family of European nations to which this country has always belonged and wherefrom it was separated for long decades owing to merciless historical blows.

European integration has been an ongoing process for six decades now. More often than not, the process is depicted as an aim in itself. What the perpetrators of this image – politicians, experts, and political analysts – seem to suggest is that there was no European integration before mid-1950s, as if there had been no country uniting Lithuania, Poland, and Ukraine, no union where the first democratic Constitution in Europe was masterminded. We are compelled to forget our history and our Christian origins and adopt an overtly narrow and technocratic approach to future instead. We are encouraged to reduce the broad concept of European unity to the confines of the customs union, free trade, European production standards, and the monetary union. Is it not high time to question the foundations of our common European future?

Unfortunately, discourse on value-based European integration is usually limited to abstract references to common European identity, often associated with democracy and human rights bodies and symbols of European values. However, the content of these terms as well as the very

European identity itself evades clear description and is often a matter of political interpretation. It is common knowledge that the opponents of the EU enlargement policy are particularly prone to use the European identity notion as a political tool to define the cultural limits of the European Union. In the meantime, the understanding of the European identity as a concept in Lithuania differs from the one held by opponents of EU enlargement. This is why Lithuania firmly believes that unless Ukraine becomes a full-fledged EU member state, the construction of a common European security will definitely be far from being accomplished.

Therefore, the objective of our Assembly today is to raise awareness in as many EU member states as possible about the fact that the decision to refuse at least distant EU membership prospect to Ukraine cannot be final. Ukraine is not a neighbour of Europe; it is a European EU neighbour.

I wish the last sentence to be heard and understood particularly well. It is up to the EU to determine where Europe begins and where it ends, and this should be done in unequivocal terms. The EU should equally display an unequivocal stance on the values that make up the core of the European identity. Economic, financial, and other protectionist interests cannot be promoted under the guise of the European identity if the EU truly wants to be a union of values.

This time, the Assembly encounters a serious challenge, as there are many ways to cover the subjects of identity, history, and historical heritage. One may search for things that unite us, or openly analyse the reasons behind the factors that divide us. Beyond doubt, we all have our own understanding of the European identity as well as the relations between various nations in our region, Central and Eastern Europe.

Let me raise several issues as food for thought so that we can search for the answers together. Where does Europe start and where does it end? What is the core of the modern European identity? Which historical periods, prominent personalities,

and events bring Lithuanian, Polish, and Ukrainian identities closer together, and which ones have the power to divide us? What would Lithuania, Poland, and Ukraine want to change in the historical memory of the neighbouring states, in their identity maps and attitudes? What measures and projects should be implemented to ensure the uniting and not the dividing factors are the ones that dominate in our relations? Clearly, these and similar questions are a mere introduction to ensuing cohesive discussion and long-term work. Nevertheless, this is exactly the way I understand the objective and the prospects of our Assembly and our discussion. Thank you.

28 March

### **SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS ASSURES THE PRESIDENT OF CROATIA THAT RATIFICATION OF CROATIA'S EU ACCESSION DOCUMENTS AT THE SEIMAS SHOULD BE SMOOTH**

Mrs. Irena Degutienė, Speaker of the Seimas, met with Mr. **Ivo Josipović**, President of the Republic of Croatia, during his working visit to Vilnius. The meeting focussed on Croatia's progress in its EU accession negotiations, strengthening of bilateral economic relations between Croatia and Lithuania, and fight against corruption.

The President of Croatia underlined that the country under his leadership had reached the final stage of EU accession negotiations and expressed hopes that the negotiations would be completed this year. "I can assure you that Croatia will be a committed EU member state and I expect Lithuania's support for the completion of preparations for Croatia's accession to the European Union," Mr. Josipović noted.

Mrs. Degutienė indicated that Lithuania had always consistently supported Croatia's integration into the EU and extended her wishes for a successful completion of Croatia's homework. "Lithuania is Croatia's friend that has always supported and will continue to support your aspirations to join the family of the European Union. I am convinced that after the completion of your accession negotiations and after we receive respective documents, the process of ratification at the Seimas will be smooth," Mrs. Degutienė said.

The Speaker of the Seimas also urged Croatia to pay more attention to awareness-raising among Lithuanian businessmen about the possibilities to invest in Croatia and voiced her hopes that Croatia's accession to the EU would contribute to the intensification of the bilateral economic ties.



*Ivo Josipović*

The President of Croatia observed that his country had already drafted a list of investment projects and stressed his belief that negative past experience of Lithuania's businessmen when investing in Croatia would not hinder successful cooperation in future. Mr. Josipović argued that currently, Croatia is putting every effort to fight corruption that was largely a major obstacle for foreign investors in the past.

*Drafted referring to the information of the Secretariat of the Seimas Speaker*

## Initiatives

### STATEMENT BY THE LITHUANIAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY POLITICAL GROUP: SOCIAL DEMOCRATS PROPOSE TO INTRODUCE PROGRESSIVE TAXES



On 24 March, the Seimas Lithuanian Social Democratic Party (LSDP) Political Group registered amendments to the Law on Personal Income Tax which introduce progressive taxes on personal income in Lithuania.

The draft was prompted by the progressive personal tax system effective in many developed countries, which reduces the social gap and increases revenue into the state and municipal budgets.

**Income will be taxed at the following rates: the 15 per cent rate will apply to the share of annual income not exceeding LTL 48,000; the 33 per cent rate will apply to the share of annual income within the range of LTL 48,000–120,000; and the 40 per cent rate – to the share of annual income exceeding LTL 120,000.**

“The key purpose of the law is to reduce the social gap and increase the middle class. Residents who receive larger income will have to pay bigger taxes which will help the deprived through payments from the budget and social assistance,” said Elder of the LSDP Political Group Algirdas Butkevičius.

The leader of Social Democrats noted that, for instance, if the resident’s income is LTL 4,200, the rate of 33 per cent



will apply to LTL 200, and the amount up to LTL 4,000 will be subject to the 15 per cent rate. It will make up additional LTL 66.

Only 10 per cent of Lithuanian residents receive monthly income exceeding LTL 4,000, whereas 24 per cent of residents earn up to LTL 1,000 per month.

The amendments to the law propose to include into this system not only wages, but also dividends, and to tax income earned by the richest segment of the country’s population from securities.

“This tax system will not apply to pensions, grants or social benefits,” added Mr. Butkevičius.

*Information of the Seimas LSDP Political Group*



## Events

8 March

### WOMEN'S PROBLEMS IN LITHUANIA DISCUSSED ON 8 MARCH

8 March 2011 marks one hundred years of celebrating the International Women's Day. To mark the occasion, MP **Marija Aušrinė Pavilionienė** (third from the right) organised a press conference, attended by US Ambassador to Lithuania **Anne Elizabeth Derse** (second from the right). The conference focused on women's problems and the fight for their rights.

"This day is symbolic in our history because, when celebrating it, we always recollect what has already been achieved in the area of gender equality, equal opportunities and restoration of gender balance in society. [...] Why is social equality between women and men implemented so slowly? One of the causes is masculine solidarity by forcing their way into power and safeguarding it. The concept of "glass ceiling", the saying about conscious limitation of

women's career advancement may be replaced by a simpler explanation: there is no glass ceiling, there are too many men "at the top". One of the essential reasons which prevents the acceleration of gender equality is the lack of mature personalities in mass consumption society and the lack of original thinking. Therefore, the European Union should put more emphasis on the philosophy of personalism, i.e. the necessity to develop unique, free and bold personalities: both women and men," observed Mrs. Pavilionienė at the press conference.

The US Ambassador to Lithuania, who also participated in the conference, reminded that women still faced the problem of domestic violence and impunity of the abuser not only in Lithuania, but also in the United States. Ms. Derse shared the experience of her country.



*At the press conference*

“From 1994, when the Law on the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence was adopted in the US, until 2008 the number of violence cases was cut by half. The attitude must be changed – a victim should not be accused, domestic violence does not have to be solely the problem of the family or an abused woman. We may reach better results if all institutions, including local authorities, the church and schools, cooperate,” said the US Ambassador.

**Vilana Pilinkaitė**, Project Coordinator of the Centre for Equality Advancement, talked about cases of violence in Lithuanian families. The figures she gave are shocking. Every year, 20 women are killed during the acts of domestic violence in Lithuania.

“According to police data, approximately 40,000 reports of domestic violence are recorded annually. However, only a small share of abusers are punished. We do not have a law on the protection from domestic violence so far. Legal mechanisms that effectively protect women find it hard to make it to the Parliament,” claimed Ms. Pilinkaitė.

Head of the VU Gender Studies Centre **Dalia Linartė** and Project Manager of the Centre for Equality Advancement **Margarita Jankauskaitė** also attended the press conference and discussed the current situation in Lithuania and the history of the International Women’s Day.

*Spokesperson Evelina Butkutė*

## STATEMENT BY MP MANTAS ADOMĖNAS: COLLECTION OF YOUNG PEOPLE’S THOUGHTS TO THE PRIME MINISTER CONTAINS PROPOSALS TO TURN BACK TO THE COMMUNITY AND REFER MORE TO VALUES



On 16 March, Prime Minister **Andrius Kubilius** met with MP Dr. Mantas Adomėnas and his organised young intellectuals who presented to the Prime Minister their collection of thoughts **“Ideas, Values and Personalities for Lithuania’s Future”**. The Prime Minister could not hide his appreciation of the project idea: “Lithuanian politics lacks a balance between science and our everyday

pathways, whereas such texts help see the essential paradigms”.

MP Mantas Adomėnas organised students in the spring of 2010, developing Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius’s initiative to rally Lithuanian intellectuals, experts and scientists in different fields to draft a strategic document – **the Lithuanian development vision “Lithuania 2030”**.

In their book “Ideas, Values and Personalities for Lithuania’s Future”, young people consider what is important for the present youth who will create Lithuania in 2030. According to them, the fundamental values which should serve as the foundation of further life of Lithuania, rather than technical decision models, are relevant. One of the co-authors **Simas**

**Čelutka** observed: “In this text I speak about the relevance of sociality for everyone of us. We have been placing more and more emphasis on attitudes such as competition and personal freedom; however, we have forgotten that fruitful growth of the personality is possible only in the community, through a dialogue with others. I have tried to show that a human being is not self-sufficient and that social formations (e.g. family, neighbourhood, civil community) have not only an instrumental, but also a moral meaning to an individual.” The book also asks what the teacher’s role in contemporary society is, considers the two-sided aspect of democracy and the free market, searches for Lithuania’s place in the geopolitical map of Lithuania, attempts at returning Antanas Maceina to the philosophical life of Lithuania, discusses the ideas of José Ortega y Gasset, glory and love, cinema and education.

MP **Mantas Adomėnas** noted: “This book is kind of a manifesto of the young generation of intellectuals who are entering the public life of Lithuania. They do not create recipes or future scenarios, instead they propose, reflect on and discuss ideas and values which should be used as a basis for any creation of the future reality of the nation and the state.”

*MP Mantas Adomėnas*

## CONFERENCE ABOUT THE PROSPECTS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF CREDIT UNIONS



A conference entitled “**Credit Unions – Alternative Banking**” was held in the Seimas. MPs and representatives from credit unions all over Lithuania participated in the conference. MP **Gintaras Songaila** chaired in the conference. Presentations were delivered by Head of the Legal Department of the European Association of Cooperative Banks (Brussels, Belgium) **Volker**

**Heegemann**, Director of the Stabilisation Fund of Développement International Desjardins (Quebec, Canada) **Pierre Labelle**, Chairman of the Board of the Lithuanian Central Credit Union **Sigitas Bubnys** and Chairman of the Board of the Association of Lithuanian Credit Unions **Ramūnas Stonkus**.

Conference participants discussed the best international practice of cooperative banking, in particular with regard to the European Union and Canada, and the prospects of

the development of this segment of the financial system in Lithuania. Many speakers pointed out that credit unions may significantly contribute to the country's financial stability, even regional development, the development of the nation's solidarity and cooperation as well as build up of national capital. The conference approved of the new initiatives concerning the improvement of the legal framework on credit unions and preconditioned further cooperation and discussions seeking the best result for Lithuania. Actually, in pre-war Lithuania almost 40 per cent of the market belonged to cooperative banking. A similar proportion is presently observed in Quebec, Canada, where the financial crisis had considerably less negative consequences than in the United States of America which is dominated by conventional commercial banking.

A resolution was adopted at the conference, which will be publicised and presented to officials from the Seimas, the Government and the Bank of Lithuania.

*MP Gintaras Songaila*

## » THE BOARD OF THE SEIMAS

The principal task of the Seimas Board shall be to settle organisational issues of the work of the Seimas. The Board of the Seimas shall consist of the Speaker of the Seimas, First Deputy Speaker and Deputy Speakers of the Seimas.

## » BOARD OF THE SEIMAS PRESENTLY CONSISTS OF THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS:

Irena DEGUTIENĖ, Speaker of the Seimas  
Virginija BALTRAITIENĖ, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas  
Algis ČAPLIKAS, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas  
Česlovas JURŠĖNAS, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas  
Algis KAŠĖTA, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas  
Česlovas Vytautas STANKEVIČIUS, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas  
Vytautas GAPŠYS, Leader of the Opposition

## » THE COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS OF THE SEIMAS

The Seimas shall form committees from among its members for the deliberation of draft laws and other issues assigned to its competence by the Constitution. The committees of the Seimas shall be formed during the first session of the newly elected Seimas and shall be made up of no less than 7 and no more than 17 Members of the Seimas (with the exception of the Committee on European Affairs) according to the principle of proportional representation of the parliamentary groups.

**There are 15 standing Committees of the Seimas:**

### **Committee on Audit**

Loreta GRAUŽINIENĖ – *Chairwoman*

### **Committee on Budget and Finance**

Kęstutis GLAVECKAS – *Chairman*

### **Committee on the Development of the Information Society**

Arūnas VALINSKAS – *Chairman*

### **Committee on the Economy**

Dainius BUDRYS – *Chairman*

### **Committee on Education, Science and Culture**

Valentinas STUNDYS – *Chairman*

### **Committee on Environmental Protection**

Jonas ŠIMĖNAS – *Chairman*

### **Committee on European Affairs**

Česlovas Vytautas STANKEVIČIUS – *Chairman*

### **Committee on Foreign Affairs**

Emanuelis ZINGERIS – *Chairman*

### **Committee on Health Affairs**

Antanas MATULAS – *Chairman*

### **Committee on Human Rights**

Arminas LYDEKA – *Chairman*

### **Committee on Legal Affairs**

Stasys ŠEDBARAS – *Chairman*

### **Committee on National Security and Defence**

Arvydas ANUŠAUSKAS – *Chairman*

### **Committee on Rural Affairs**

Edmundas PUPINIS – *Chairman*

### **Committee on Social Affairs and Labour**

Rimantas Jonas DAGYS – *Chairman*

### **Committee on State Administration and Local Authorities**

Vytautas KURPUVESAS – *Chairman*



*Meeting of the Seimas Committee on the Economy*

» For carrying out short-term or limited assignments, the Seimas may form standing commissions (there are 10 standing commissions at the moment) to examine special problems or form ad hoc investigatory, control, revision, and preparatory, editorial and other commissions to examine and prepare or fulfil other missions of the Seimas.

### **Anticorruption Commission**

Kęstas KOMSKIS – *Chairman*

### **Commission for Ethics and Procedures**

Algimantas SALAMAKINAS – *Chairman*

### **Commission for Youth and Sport Affairs**

Žilvinas ŠILGALIS – *Chairman*

### **Commission for Maritime and Fishery Affairs**

Audrius ENDZINAS – *Chairman*

### **Nuclear Energy Commission**

Rokas ŽILINSKAS – *Chairman*

### **Commission for Parliamentary Scrutiny of Intelligence Operations**

Dalia KUODYTĖ – *Deputy Chairwoman*



#### **Petitions Commission**

Danutė BEKINTIENĖ – *Chairwoman*

#### **Commission for Prevention of Drug and Alcohol Addiction**

Vincė Vaidevutė MARGEVIČIENĖ – *Chairwoman*

#### **Commission for the Rights and Affairs of Participants of Resistance to Occupation Regimes and Victims of Occupation**

Arimantas DUMČIUS – *Chairman*

#### **Commission of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania and the Lithuanian World Community**

Vytas MACIŪNAS and Paulius SAUDARGAS – *Chairmen*

## » INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

According to the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, the Seimas is not directly engaged in the formation and enforcement of foreign policy; however, it ratifies and denounces international treaties. The Seimas also considers and supervises the implementation of foreign policy while exercising parliamentary control over governmental institutions.

The Chairman of the Seimas represents the Seimas at international meetings and international forums. Seimas Delegations participate in the activities of International Parliamentary Assemblies of international organisations. The Seimas Committees cooperate with respective committees of other parliaments. Seimas Groups for Parliamentary Relations, formed on the initiative of Members of the Seimas, maintain relations and develop cooperation with parliaments of other countries.



*Speaker of the Seimas Irena Degutienė attended the extraordinary sitting of the Presidium of the Trilateral Parliamentary Assembly of Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine held at the European Parliament in Strasbourg (France) on 10 May 2011*

## » PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS OF THE SEIMAS

**Delegation of the Seimas to the Assembly of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania and the Sejm and Senate of the Republic of Poland** / Algis KAŠĖTA (Head) /

**Delegation of the Seimas to the Assembly of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, Sejm and Senate of the Republic of Poland and the Supreme Rada of Ukraine** / Irena DEGUTIENĖ (Head) /

**Delegation of the Seimas to the Assembly of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania and the Supreme Rada of Ukraine** / Ligitas KERNAGIS (Head) /

**Delegation of the Seimas to the Assembly of the Western European Union** / Arminas LYDEKA (Head) /

**Delegation of the Seimas to the Baltic Assembly** / Paulius SAUDARGAS (Head) /

**Delegation of the Seimas to the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly** / Saulius STOMA (Head) /

**Delegation of the Seimas to the Inter-Parliamentary Union** / Dalia TEIŠERSKYTĖ (Head) /

**Delegation of the Seimas to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly** / Petras AUŠTREVICHIUS (Head) /

**Delegation of the Seimas to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe** / Vilija ALEKNAITĖ-ABRAMIKIENĖ (Head) /

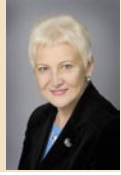
































































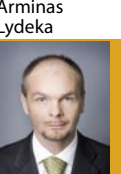

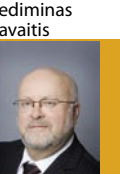
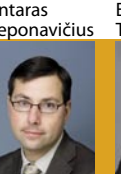
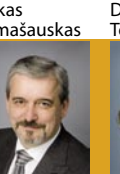









**Delegation of the Seimas to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe** / Emanuelis ZINGERIS (Head) /

**Delegation of the Seimas to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Francophonie Countries** / Vidmantas ŽIEMELIS (Head) /

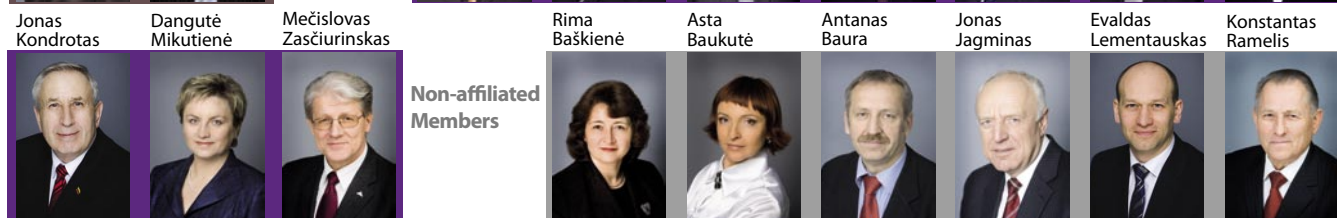
# The Seimas 2008-2012 of the Republic of Lithuania

According to the information from the  
Document Department of the Office  
of the Seimas as of 20.05.2011

## POLITICAL GROUPS OF THE SEIMAS OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

 <p>Irena Degutienė <i>Speaker of the Seimas</i></p>		<p><b>Homeland Union - Lithuanian Christian Democrat Political Group</b></p>		 <p>Mantas Adomėnas</p>	 <p>Vilija Aleknaitytė-Abramikienė</p>	 <p>Arvydas Anušauskas</p>	 <p>Audronius Ažubalis</p>	 <p>Vaidotas Bacevičius</p>	 <p>Danutė Bekintienė</p>	 <p>Agnė Bilotaitė</p>	
 <p>Vida Marija Čigriejienė</p>	 <p>Rimantas Jonas Dagys</p>	 <p>Julius Dautartas</p>	 <p>Arimantas Dumčius</p>	 <p>Donatas Jankauskas</p>	 <p>Rasa Juknevičienė</p>	 <p>Evaldas Jurkevičius</p>	 <p>Algis Kazulėnas</p>	 <p>Andrius Kubilius</p>	 <p>Rytas Kupčinskas</p>		
 <p>Kazimieras Kuzminskas</p>	 <p>Petras Luomanas</p>	 <p>Vincė Vaidevutė Margevičienė</p>	 <p>Kęstutis Masiulis</p>	 <p>Antanas Matulas</p>	 <p>Vitas Matuzas</p>	 <p>Saulius Pečeliūnas</p>	 <p>Edmundas Pupinis</p>	 <p>Auksutė Ramanauskaitė-Skokauskienė</p>	 <p>Jurgis Razma</p>		
 <p>Rūta Rutkelytė</p>	 <p>Liudvikas Sabutis</p>	 <p>Paulius Saudargas</p>	 <p>Gintaras Songaila</p>	 <p>Aurelija Stancikienė</p>	 <p>Česlovas Vytautas Stankevičius</p>	 <p>Kazys Starkevičius</p>	 <p>Saulius Stoma</p>	 <p>Valentinas Stundys</p>	 <p>Stasys Šedbaris</p>		
 <p>Jonas Šimėnas</p>	 <p>Kazimieras Uoka</p>	 <p>Justinas Urbanavičius</p>	 <p>Mantas Varaška</p>	 <p>Egidijus Vareikis</p>	 <p>Arvydas Vidžiūnas</p>	 <p>Emanuelis Zingeris</p>	 <p>Pranas Žeimys</p>				
			 <p>Vincas Babilius</p>	 <p>Vytautas Bogušis</p>	 <p>Dainius Budrys</p>	 <p>Andrius Burba</p>	 <p>Algis Čaplikas</p>	 <p>Jonas Liesys</p>	 <p>Artūras Melianas</p>	 <p>Antanas Nedzinskas</p>	
<p><b>United Political Group of the Liberal and Centre Union and National Revival Party</b></p>			 <p>Arūnė Stirblytė</p>	 <p>Raimondas Šukys</p>	 <p>Arūnas Valinskas</p>	 <p>Ingrida Valinskienė</p>	 <p>Valdemaras Valkiūnas</p>	 <p>Petras Auštrevičius</p>	 <p>Laimontas Dinius</p>	 <p>Audrius Endzinas</p>	 <p>Kęstutis Glaveckas</p>
 <p>Algis Kašėta</p>	 <p>Dalia Kuodytė</p>	 <p>Arminas Lydeka</p>	 <p>Eligijus Masiulis</p>	 <p>Gediminas Navaitis</p>	 <p>Gintaras Steponavičius</p>	 <p>Erikas Tamašauskas</p>	 <p>Dalia Teišerskytė</p>	<p><b>Liberals Movement Political Group</b></p>			
 <p>Algis Kašėta</p>	 <p>Dalia Kuodytė</p>	 <p>Arminas Lydeka</p>	 <p>Eligijus Masiulis</p>	 <p>Gediminas Navaitis</p>	 <p>Gintaras Steponavičius</p>	 <p>Erikas Tamašauskas</p>	 <p>Dalia Teišerskytė</p>				

**Lithuanian Social Democratic Party Political Group**



**Order and Justice Political Group**

**Christian Party Political Group**

**Labour Party Political Group**

**Non-affiliated Members**

**POLITICAL GROUPS OF THE SEIMAS OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA**

**Seimas majority political groups**

**HOMELAND UNION - LITHUANIAN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT POLITICAL GROUP**

/ 46 members\* / Jurgis Razma, Elder

\***Speaker of the Seimas** / The activities of Speaker of the Seimas Irena Degutienė in the political group have been suspended under Article 24 of the Statute of the Seimas

**United Political Group of the Liberal and Centre Union and National Revival Party**

/ 13 members / Arūnė Stirblytė, Elder

**LIBERALS MOVEMENT POLITICAL GROUP** / 12 members / Erikas Tamašauskas, Elder

**Seimas minority political groups/Opposition political groups**

**LITHUANIAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY POLITICAL GROUP**

/ 24 members / Algirdas Butkevičius, Elder

**ORDER AND JUSTICE POLITICAL GROUP** / 17 members / Valentinas Mazuronis, Elder

**CHRISTIAN PARTY POLITICAL GROUP** / 8 members / Vidmantas Žiemelis, Elder

**LABOUR PARTY POLITICAL GROUP** / 10 members / Vytautas Gapšys, Elder

**NON-AFFILIATED MEMBERS** / 10 members / Konstantas Ramelis, Elder



On 3 March, the national holiday of Bulgaria, a photography exhibition "Discovered Bulgaria" was presented at the Seimas. The exhibition was organised by the Embassy of the Republic of Bulgaria in Lithuania. The exhibition was presented by Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Bulgaria to Lithuania **Ivan Pentchev Dantchev** and Member of the Seimas Group for Interparliamentary

Relations with the Republic of Bulgaria **Vytautas Galvonas**. The photography exhibition features impressions of this remarkable and contrasting country. Curator of the exhibition **Cvetana Malinova** selected the best photos from five thousand photos taken in different places of Bulgaria by **Vladimir Caralunga-Morar**, which laconically complement camera-captured UNESCO national heritage.

