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SEIMAS

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SEIMAS OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

- HEARD THE SEVENTH STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC
- PAID TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF THE VICTIMS OF THE FIRST MASS DEPORTATIONS AND KILLINGS
- MARKED THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RENEWED IPU MEMBERSHIP
- ADOPTED A NEW LABOUR CODE
- INTRODUCED PERMANENT CONSCRIPTION

PARLIAMENTARY BUSINESS

Seimas heard the seventh State of the Nation Address by the President of the Republic



On 9 June 2016, Dalia Grybauskaitė, President of the Republic of Lithuania, made the seventh State of the Nation Address on the current situation and domestic and foreign policy of the Republic of Lithuania.

The Head of State began her address by expressing her gratitude to her fellow-nationals and volunteers. “As we look from a bird’s eye view at Lithuania today, we see that the situation is definitely good. This is the accomplishment of all hard-working and honest people. Thank you all for that.

The first military volunteers who enlisted to serve the Republic of Lithuania with full allegiance and dedication are a clear manifestation of strong commitment to the state. I affirm that there are many people in Lithuania who stand ready to defend their homeland and its achievements,” Ms Grybauskaitė said.

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Seimas adopted a new Labour Code

On 21 June 2016, the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania adopted a new Labour Code*. The Code, which is due to enter into force on 1 January 2017, was adopted by 65 votes in favour with 15 votes against and 14 abstentions. The new Labour Code together with accompanying amendments to secondary legislation is one of the seven packages needed for building the new social model aimed at improving the regulation of labour relations.

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** On 4 July 2016, Dalia Grybauskaitė, President of the Republic of Lithuania, referred the provisions of the Labour Code, which have caused public controversy, back to the Seimas for reconsideration. The Seimas should resume the deliberation of this issue at its earliest sitting.*

Seimas approved more favourable legal regulation with respect to those who lost their jobs

On 21 June 2016, the Seimas adopted amendments to the Law on Employment Social Insurance that provide for more favourable legal treatment of those who lost their jobs. This Law represents one of the seven packages building a new social model related to sustainability of social insurance.

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Seimas extended the time limit for collection of signatures for calling a referendum

On 14 June 2016, the Seimas adopted amendments to Article 11 of the Law on Referendum aimed at facilitating the exercise of citizens' constitutional rights and enhancing the participation of citizens in the government of the state. The amendments extend the time limit from three to six months for the collection of the signatures needed to exercise the right of the citizens' initiative to call a referendum. The time limit is calculated from the day of issuing the citizen signature sheets and providing access to the electronic form of the citizen signature sheet by the Central Electoral Commission.

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Seimas introduced permanent conscription

On 16 June 2016, the Seimas adopted amendments to the Law on Military Conscription aimed at establishing conscription to initial mandatory military service on an annual basis. The adopted amendments also abolished the three-month-long basic military training, which had been established as an alternative to initial mandatory military service.

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Seimas extended the list of holders of the right to possess weapons

On 16 June 2016, the Seimas adopted amendments to the Law on Control of Weapons and Ammunition thereby extending the list of holders of the right of ownership of weapons. The amendments were adopted by 60 votes in favour, with 7 votes against and 28 abstentions. The legislative amendments open up a possibility for members of the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union and volunteer serviceman to acquire and possess category B and C weapons and their ammunition.

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Seimas banned free distribution of lightweight plastic carrier bags from 2019

On 16 June 2016, the Seimas adopted amendments to the Law on the Management of Packaging and Packaging Waste, prohibiting the free distribution lightweight plastic carrier bags to customers at the point of sale by sellers and distributors of packaging, as from 31 December 2018. The amendments are aimed to transpose the EU requirement to reduce the use of lightweight plastic carrier bags with a wall thickness ranging from 15 to 50 microns.

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Seimas adopted amendments to the Law on Electronic Communications

On 21 2016, the Seimas adopted the amendments to Article 77 of the Law on Electronic Communications, which oblige providers of electronic communication networks and (or) services to supply information about the electronic communication problems to intelligence institutions.

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Seimas adopted amendments to the Law on Citizenship

On 23 June 2016, the Seimas adopted amendments to the Law on Citizenship, re-establishing the practice that existed between 2011 and 2015, when citizenship could be restored without any bureaucratic obstacles at the presentation of necessary documents by persons and descendants of persons who held citizenship before 15 June 1940 and emigrated from Lithuania before 11 March 1990. The amendments were adopted by 96 votes in favour, with no votes against and four abstentions.

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Seimas adopted amendments to deadlines for provision of and payment for healthcare services

On 29 June 2016, the Seimas adopted amendments to the Law on Healthcare Institutions aimed at regulating deadlines for obtaining healthcare services. The adopted amendments establish that an institution providing personal healthcare services to a patient covered by the compulsory health insurance must provide the healthcare service funded from the Compulsory Health Insurance Fund within the set deadlines, which start to run from the moment when the ensured person applies to the personal healthcare institution to the time set for obtaining the service.

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Seimas limited gambling possibilities for people with gambling addiction

On 30 June 2016, the Seimas amended the Gambling Law by adopting additional provisions that establish measures to prevent and fight gambling addiction. The measures are aimed at reducing the harm of gambling to people's health that may lead to addiction, which may, in turn, have damaging or even pathological effects on mental health and cause social damage.

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Seimas adopted the amended Law on Payments in relation to regulating bank fees for payment services

On 30 June 2016, the Seimas adopted the new version of the Law on Payments thereby transposing into national law the Payment Account Directive, the Regulation on interchange fees for card-based payment transactions, and the Regulation establishing technical and business requirements for credit transfers and direct debits in euro. The Law is aimed at reducing fees for basic payment services, increasing accessibility of payment services to residents, boosting competition among payment service providers, and promoting the use of electronic payment instruments.

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Seimas criminalised manipulation of sport results

On 30 June 2016, the Seimas adopted a law amending the Law on Physical Education and Sport. The amendments to the existing legislation are expected to effectively address manipulation of sports competitions. The law amending the Law on Physical Education and Sport establishes regulation against manipulation of sports competitions: defines the concept of manipulation of sports competitions, prohibits engagement in manipulation of sports competitions, defines the principles of such prohibition, and provides for sport sanctions for engagement in manipulation of sports competitions.

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Seimas closed its spring session

On 30 June 2016, the Seimas closed its 8th regular (spring) session, which started on 10 March 2016. During the session, parliamentarians convened 57 plenary sittings where they adopted nearly 350 legal acts.

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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Seimas marked the 25th anniversary of the renewed IPU membership



At its sitting of 7 June 2016, the Seimas marked the 25th anniversary of Lithuania's renewed membership of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). In her introductory address, Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, remarked that the Seimas joined the IPU in 1923. "This was an important step that helped the new Republic to establish itself on the international arena. After the restoration of Lithuania's independence, the Seimas resumed its IPU membership in 1991. Thus, we celebrate the 25th anniversary of IPU membership this year," the Speaker of the Seimas said.

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Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, met with the IPU President



On 7 June 2016, at the meeting between Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, and Saber Chowdhury, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), it was noted that the IPU was an important global parliamentary forum which had become the centrepiece of inter-parliamentary dialogue and parliamentary diplomacy. The meeting participants discussed the challenges to international peace and stability, the threat of terrorism, the refugee crisis, breaches of international law, and the emerging hybrid and cyber threats.

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Speaker of the Seimas met with Commissioner Elżbieta Bieńkowska



On 16 June 2016, Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, at her meeting with Elżbieta Bieńkowska, Commissioner for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, focused on the EU's single market, consumer rights, e-commerce, taxation policy and labour law. In addition, the Commissioner made a more detailed presentation of the new agenda for the collaborative economy.

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Speaker of the Seimas: “Both men and women have to engage with gender equality matters”



The main focus at the meeting of 16 June 2016 between Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, and Lydia Mutsch, Minister on Health and Gender Equality of Luxembourg, was given to equal gender opportunities, improving the position of women, and reducing discrimination. It was emphasised that both countries shared similar views on gender equality.

The Speaker of the Seimas noted that Lithuania achieved a significant breakthrough on these matters. Lithuanian citizens elected a woman as President of the Republic for the second time. Women are actively engaged in the work of the Seimas, the Government, public authorities and businesses.

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Speaker of the Seimas bid farewell to the Estonian Ambassador to Lithuania



On 21 June 2016, Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, received Toomas Kukk, the outgoing Estonian Ambassador to Lithuania, in her office. The Speaker of the Seimas thanked the diplomat for his sincere work and active engagement in Lithuania over the past four years. According to the Speaker of the Seimas, Lithuania and Estonia have always been closely connected as the Baltic States; moreover, this year marks the 25th anniversary of the resumption of their bilateral diplomatic relations.

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EVENTS

Seimas paid tribute to the memory of the victims of the first mass deportations and killings

On 14 June 2016, the Seimas held a solemn commemoration to mark the Days of Mourning and Hope, Occupation and Genocide. A minute of silence was observed to pay tribute to the victims of the Soviet occupation and genocide.

14 June – Day of Mourning and Hope. On 14 June 1941, the first mass deportation of Lithuanian people started (approximately 18,000 people were deported).

15 June – Day of Occupation and Genocide. On 15 June 1940, the USSR occupied Lithuania.



Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, noted that during the occupations of the Lithuanian state, Lithuanian citizens and residents of our country were continually subject to brutal repressions, mass deportations, killings, sufferings, deaths and unmeasurable pain. “When living in a free Lithuania today, we have no right to forget the horrifying scale of the tragedy. We recall and preserve the historical memory so that what happened then would never be repeated again,” said the Speaker.

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Speech by Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, at the commemoration dedicated to the Days of Mourning and Hope, and Occupation and Genocide

Speech by Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, at Flag Hoisting Ceremony in Independence Square

PHOTOS



Meeting with NATO troops deployed in Lithuania.
3 June 2016



Saber Chowdhury, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, viewed the exhibition dedicated to Lithuania's membership of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. 7 June 2016



Murray Stuart McCully, Minister of Foreign Affairs of New Zealand, met with Gediminas Kirkilas, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas and Chair of the Committee on European Affairs, and Benediktas Juodka, Chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, at the Seimas. 17 June 2016



Visit of the delegation of the Association of Former Members of the German Bundestag and the European Parliament and Prof Dr Wolfgang Hermann von Stetten, Lithuania's Honorary Consul in Germany, at the Seimas. 20 June 2016



Vydas Gedvilas, First Deputy Speaker of the Seimas, and Artūras Paulauskas, Chair of the Committee on National Security and Defence, met with Domenico Scilipoti Isgro, Senator of the Italian Republic. 30 June 2016

For more photos of the June 2016 events and meetings, see [here](#).

TEXT

Press Office of the Information and Communication Department

Jolanta Anskaitienė, Adviser, tel: +370 5 239 6508, e-mail: jolanta.anskaitiene@lrs.lt

LAYOUT

Neringa Motiejūnaitė-Lilienė, tel: +370 5 239 6204, e-mail: neringa.motiejunaite@lrs.lt

PHOTOGRAPH

Džoja Gunda Barysaitė, tel: +370 5 239 6215, e-mail: dzoja.barysaite@lrs.lt

Olga Posaškova, tel: +370 5 239 6205, e-mail: olga.posaskova@lrs.lt

Information and Communication Department

Loreta Raulinaitytė, Director, tel: +370 5 239 6762, e-mail: loreta.raulinityte@lrs.lt

Public Relations Unit of the Information and Communication Department

Artūras Zeleniakas, Head, tel: +370 5 239 6201; e-mail: arturas.zeleniakas@lrs.lt

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