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NEWSLETTER

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- ON 10 MARCH 2017, SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS AND PRIME MINISTER PRESENTED THE WORK PROGRAMME OF THE SECOND (SPRING) SESSION TO THE PARLIAMENT
- ON 11 MARCH 2017, SEIMAS SOLEMNLY MARKED INDEPENDENCE RESTORATION DAY
- ON 12 MARCH 2017, SEIMAS HOSTED THE INTERNATIONAL PARLIAMENTARY MEETING *EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES: REAFFIRMING TRANSATLANTIC SOLIDARITY*
- ON 16 MARCH 2017, SEIMAS ADOPTED *THE RESOLUTION ON THE CONDEMNATION OF THE ONGOING OCCUPATION AND ANNEXATION OF CRIMEA*
- ON 17 MARCH 2017, SEIMAS MARKED THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TREATY OF ROME
- ON 28 MARCH 2017, IN ITS FINAL DOCUMENT, THE ASSEMBLY OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENTS OF LITHUANIA, POLAND AND UKRAINE EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE AND VOICED CONCERN OVER THE THREAT POSED BY THE ASTRAVYETS NPP AND THE DEVELOPMENTS IN BELARUS

PARLIAMENTARY BUSINESS

Presentation of the work programme of the spring session



On 10 March 2017, Viktoras Pranckietis, Speaker of the Seimas, and Saulius Skvernelis, Prime Minister, presented the work programme of the second (spring) session to the Parliament.

Introducing the key tasks, the Speaker of the Seimas welcomed the fact that the priorities of the Seimas' spring session of the President and of the Government were identical. "We have all set ambitious plans. The spring session, therefore, will be strained and require focus and responsibility to implement reforms in the country. Declarations alone are not sufficient. There is a need for substantive personal contribution of each and every one. I therefore invite you to concentrate on work and meet the expectations of Lithuania's people," stressed Viktoras Pranckietis.

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The work programme of the second (spring) session of the Seimas was approved on 16 March 2017.

Child forensic interviews will be held with the mandatory participation of a psychologist

On 14 March 2017, the Seimas adopted amendments to the Code of Criminal Procedure thereby providing that forensic interviews with a young child victim or a young child witness in all cases, as well as with minors in cases determined by law, must be held only with the participation of a professional psychologist and only in dedicated premises. The new amendments were adopted unanimously by a total of 116 Members, with no abstentions or votes against.

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Seimas granted state recognition to the New Apostolic Church of Lithuania

On 30 March 2017, in accordance with the Law on Religious Communities and Associations, the Seimas decided to grant state recognition to the New Apostolic Church of Lithuania.

As Valerijus Simulik, Chair of the Committee on Human Rights, noted, the Ministry of Justice acknowledged that the Church had met all requirements. The conclusion by the Ministry indicates that the Church professes the Catholic biblical canon and fosters a respectful relation with regard to representatives of other confessions.

There are 45 New Apostolic Churches in total in Lithuania, with more than 3,000 believers assigning themselves to this Church.

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Seimas adopted legislative amendments to ensure greater safety of children and their faster adoption

The Seimas adopted amendments to the Civil Code and accompanying legal acts aimed at ensuring safety of children in families and speeding up child custody and adoption processes.

The amendments oblige the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service to respond expeditiously to the situations posing a threat to children. Upon receiving information on possible violations of children's rights, the State Child Rights Protection authority will be obliged to assess the validity of the information and take immediate action to protect children's rights and transfer the child to safe environment. The new provisions bind all the institutions directly working with children, to inform the Service about observed violations of children's rights, the threat posed to children or inappropriate behaviour towards them.

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Seimas approved parliamentary diplomacy action plan for 2017

On 9 March 2017, the Board of the Seimas approved the Parliamentary Diplomacy Action Plan for 2017 and decided to establish a working group for overseeing the implementation of this plan.

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Speaker of the Seimas: *the issue of the Astravyets nuclear power plant should concern the whole EU*



On 3 March 2017, Viktoras Pranckietis, Speaker of the Seimas, met with Valdis Dombrovskis, Vice-President of the European Commission for the Euro and Social Dialogue, also in charge of Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union. It was stressed during the meeting that security of the Astravyets nuclear power plant was an issue of concern to the whole European Union rather than the matter of bilateral relations between Lithuania and Belarus.

“It is important that the EU Member States view the importance of this matter in the same way since the threats linked to the insecurity of this plant endanger not only Lithuania, at whose border the power plant is being constructed, but other EU Member States as well,” said the Speaker of the Seimas.

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PARLIAMENTARY FORUM
FOR DEMOCRACY

Speaker of the Seimas: *Lithuania is united in its self-resolve and believes in the future of the transatlantic relations*



On 12 March 2017, the Seimas hosted the international parliamentary meeting *Europe and the United States: Reaffirming Transatlantic Solidarity*. The objective of the meeting, which was co-organised by the Parliamentary Forum for Democracy, was to discuss the worrying global trends towards a decline of democracy, and new challenges and prospects for transatlantic cooperation.

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More about the event:

Chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs: [the success of Eastern Partnership countries may stimulate democratic change in Russia](#)

[Vilnius Delegation](#). 12 03 2017



EU's future and security discussed in the Seimas while marking the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome



On 17 March 2017, the Seimas marked the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome. The conference commemorating the occasion focused on a wide range of discussions and the approach towards the current challenges of the EU and strategic ways to address them. Participants of the conference shared their insights into ways of boosting public support for the EU, countering adverse ideas, and increasing the attractiveness and clout of the EU.

Gediminas Kirkilas, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas and Chair of the Committee on European Affairs, underlined that instead of rushing into drastic reforms, we should jointly search for new ways to enhance Europe's resilience.

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Speakers of NB8 Parliaments discussed the situation in Georgia



On 20 March 2017, Speakers of Parliaments of NB8* visited Shida Kartli, a region in Georgia, to discuss the situation of the administrative border. The Speakers met with the representatives of the EU Monitoring Mission in its Office in Gori. They also visited Khurvaleti, a village cut in two by a barbed wire fence, with the Russian military base in South Ossetia stationed behind the administrative border.

**The NB8 (Nordic Baltic Eight) consists of eight Nordic and Baltic countries: Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Iceland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. The NB8 countries have been engaged in regular cooperation in various fields and political levels since 1992.*

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Speaker of the Seimas: Lithuania believes in Georgia's European future



The 8th Session of 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 was held in Warsaw

On 27 March 2017, a two-day session of 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 commenced in Warsaw. It was

attended by Viktoras Pranckietis, Speaker of the Seimas and Head of the Seimas delegation in the Assembly, as well as Vida Ačienė, Andrius Kubilius, Žygimantas Pavilionis, Juozas Olekas, Jonas Jarutis, Jonas Liesys, Tomas Tomilinas, and Virgilijus Poderys, members of the delegation.

In the course of eight years following its establishment, the Assembly strove to accomplish the goals set by the Declaration adopted in Kiev at the first Session of the Assembly in 2008: to develop good neighbourhood relations among Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine based on common historical past, cultural identity and European values. By now, they developed into strategic partnership and contribute to faster development of democracy and stability in the region.

In its final document, the Assembly of Members of Parliaments of Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine expressed support for Ukraine and voiced concern over the threat posed by the Astravyets NPP and the developments in Belarus



On 28 March 2017, convening in its 8th session, the Assembly of Members of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, the Sejm and Senate of the Republic of Poland, and the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine signed the Final Document, which expressed concerns over the ongoing occupation of Crimea lasting for over three years now and the intentions of the Russian Federation to further escalate the armed conflict it had brought about in eastern Ukraine. The Final Document also expressed serious concern about the violent response of the Belarusian authorities to public protests in the country.

[MORE](#)

28 March 2017. [Speaker of the Seimas: we welcome the statement of the Polish Government that Poland will not buy electricity from the Astravyets Nuclear Power Plant](#)

28 March 2017. [Viktoras Pranckietis, Speaker of the Seimas: we condemn the current events in Belarus](#)

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1 March 2017. [Speaker of the Seimas: US investors intend to increase jobs in Lithuania](#)

1 March 2017. [A dedicated programme to be envisaged for Jewish heritage management](#)

14 March 2017. [Committee on National Security and Defence met with the Defence Committee of the German Bundestag](#)

17 March 2017. [Speaker of the Seimas at the Conference of Speakers of EU Parliaments: Security has no borders](#)

27 March 2017. [Chairs of the Committee on European Affairs and the Committee on Rural Affairs met with New Zealand's delegation](#)

Independence Restoration Day solemnly marked at the Seimas



On 11 March 2017, the Seimas held a solemn commemoration of the Day of Restoration of Independence of Lithuania.

Viktoras Pranckietis, Speaker of the Seimas, stressed in his address the need to appreciate, remember and preserve the past experience and achievements. "All those who sought independence are watching us closely," he said. In his opinion, preservation of freedom and independence should be a daily concern.

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[Address by Viktoras Pranckietis, Speaker of the Seimas, at the solemn commemoration of Independence Restoration Day in the Seimas](#)

[Flags of the three Baltic States hoisted in the Independence Square on the Day of Restoration of Lithuania's Independence](#)

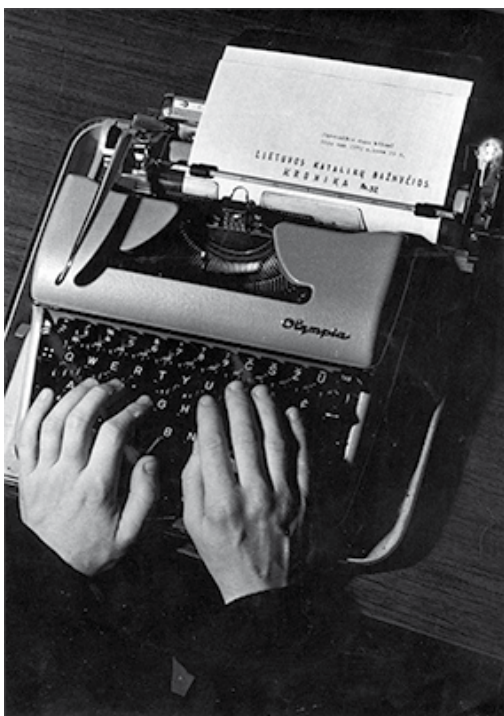


Photo exhibition to mark the 45th Anniversary of the Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania arranged at the Seimas

On 16 March 2017, a photo exhibition to mark the 45th Anniversary of the launch of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* was arranged at the Gallery of the Defenders of Freedom of Lithuania. *The Chronicle*, which originated as a result of secret meetings of active Lithuanian priests, was the longest-running and most-widely distributed underground magazine. It gradually became a symbol of the Catholic Church: persecuted yet not broken. The first issue of the publication was released in a small town of Simnas on 19 March 1972.

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PHOTOS



*Meeting between Gediminas Kirkilas, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas, Chair of the Committee on European Affairs, and Christer Michelson, Ambassador of Finland to Lithuania.
1 March 2017*



*Meeting between members of the Group for Inter-Parliamentary Relations with North European Countries and Ambassadors of the Kingdom of Denmark, the Kingdom of Norway, the Republic of Finland, and the Kingdom of Sweden.
2 March 2017*



*International Conference Strengthening Social Resilience Against Hybrid Threats in the Baltic Region. On the left: Edward Lucas, Senior Vice President at the Center for European Policy Analysis, Senior Editor of The Economist, British weekly.
3 March 2017*



*Meeting between Viktoras Pranckietis, Speaker of the Seimas, and Emilio Fernández-Castaño y Díaz Caneja, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Spain to Lithuania.
7 March 2017*



*Meeting between Viktoras Pranckietis, Speaker of the Seimas, and Carl Gershman, President of the National Endowment for Democracy.
12 March 2017*



*Meeting between the delegation of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly and Members of the Seimas.
13 March 2017*



*Meeting between Viktoras Pranckietis, Speaker of the Seimas, and the Committee on National Security and Defence, and the delegation of the Defence Committee of the German Bundestag.
14 March 2017.*



*Meeting of the Committee on Social Affairs and Labour and the Committee on Health Affairs with the delegation of the Committee on Health and Social Policy of the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic.
15 March 2017*



*Meeting between Gediminas Kirkilas, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas, Chair of the Committee on European Affairs, Juozas Bernatonis, Chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Michael Oren, Member of the Knesset of Israel, Deputy Minister in charge of public diplomacy, and H.Netanel, his Advisor.
16 March 2017*



*Viktoras Pranckietis, Speaker of the Seimas, and Antonio Tajani, President of the European Parliament.
17 March 2017*



*Meeting between Gediminas Kirkilas, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas, Chair of the Committee on European Affairs, and Ms Vassiliki Dicoopoulou, Ambassador of Greece to Lithuania.
24 March 2017*



*Meeting between Gediminas Kirkilas, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas, Chair of the Committee on European Affairs, and Tigran Mkrtchyan, Ambassador of Armenia to Lithuania.
27 March 2017*



*Meeting between Gediminas Kirkilas, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas, Chair of the Committee on European Affairs, Bohumil Mazánek, Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Lithuania, and Radek Pech, Junior Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and former Ambassador to Lithuania.
28 March 2017*



*Meeting between Viktoras Pranckietis, Speaker of the Seimas, and Petros Kestoras, Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus to Lithuania.
29 March 2017*



*Meeting between Viktoras Pranckietis, Speaker of the Seimas, and Giorgi Margelashvili, President of Georgia.
30 March 2017*

For more photos of the March 2017 events and meetings, see [here](#) or please visit the Seimas Flickr account.

TEXT

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