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SEIMAS OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

- ADOPTED AMENDMENTS TO THE CRIMINAL CODE BANNING SUPPORT FOR TERRORISM
- SET THE AMOUNT OF TV PROGRAMMES BROADCAST IN THE EU OFFICIAL LANGUAGES
- ADOPTED AMENDMENTS ON REDUCTION OF ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION



VIKTORAS PRANCKIETIS, SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS

- US LEADERSHIP LIES IN LITHUANIA'S INTEREST
- SECURITY SITUATION IN EASTERN UKRAINE REMAINS TENSE AND UNPREDICTABLE
- WE SEEK TO ENSURE THAT THE EU KEEPS THE SANCTIONS AGAINST RUSSIA OVER THE OCCUPATION OF CRIMEA UNTIL THE PENINSULA IS DE-OCCUPIED
- THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE ASTRAVYETS NUCLEAR POWER PLANT HAS TO BE SUSPENDED

PARLIAMENTARY BUSINESS

Maroš Šefčovič, Vice-President of the European Commission: *Lithuania went through a revolution*



On 25 May 2017, Maroš Šefčovič, Vice-President of the European Commission, delivered a speech at the Seimas sitting. He spoke of the EU Energy Union, one of the 10 priorities of the current European Commission.

“In the 21st century, independence is not about being self-sufficient, but about ensuring secure flows from diverse sources, sustaining vibrant competition, and building solid solidarity among neighbours in case of disruption. That is how you reach energy independence in a globalised economy,” Šefčovič stressed. In his opinion, Lithuania has gone through no less than a revolution in this respect.

Vice-President of the European Commission was pleased that, although until the beginning of 2015 the Baltic region was an energy island entirely dependent on a single gas supplier, with the construction of the liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal in the port city of Klaipėda, Lithuania can now choose from where and from whom they want to import. “Suddenly, Lithuania is not a pure energy importer but it can actually trade gas with its neighbours, therefore boosting competition in their markets as well,” underlined the Vice-President, adding that Lithuania has recently reached similar achievements in the field of electricity.

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Seimas adopted amendments on reduction of alcohol consumption

On June 1 2017, the Seimas adopted amendments to the Law on Alcohol Control aimed at reducing the consumption and availability of alcohol. Some of the amendments will come into effect from 2018, and the rest will become effective from 2020.

Based on the amendments, from 2018 onwards, purchase of alcohol will be allowed to persons over 20 years of age. That is to say, individuals under 20 will not be allowed to possess and consume alcoholic beverages. A ban on possession of alcoholic beverages will not apply to persons over 18 in their workplace during working hours if possession of alcoholic beverages is part of their work. However, for example, undertakings, European legal persons and their branches will be prohibited from involving persons under 20 for the promotion of sale of alcoholic beverages.

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Seimas set the amount of TV programmes broadcast in the EU official languages

On 1 June 2017, the Seimas adopted amendments to the Law on Provision of Information to the Public establishing that the programmes broadcast in the European Union (EU) official languages and those created in another Member State in the unofficial languages of the EU should make at least 90 per cent of the rebroadcast and/or distributed online television programmes in each package of the television programmes offered to users. This requirement will not apply to the packages broadcast for an additional fee.

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Seimas adopted amendments to the Criminal Code banning support for terrorism

On 4 May 2017, the Seimas adopted the amendments to the Criminal Code, thus bringing the provisions of the Code in line with the Additional Protocol to the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism.

The Code establishes that a person, who directly or indirectly collects, accumulates or provides funds or other assets or provides other material support to another person, with knowledge or with intent that the assets, support or part thereof would be used not only for the commission of a terrorist crime or a terrorist-related crime (as defined in the previous Criminal Code) but also for the organisation of a terrorist crime or a terrorist-related crime, will be punished by a custodial sentence for a term of up to ten years. The same punishment applies when support is provided not only to one or more terrorists, but also to a group that has the aim to commit terrorist crimes, or persons or groups who recruit and train terrorists or otherwise participate in terrorist activities.

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3 May 2017. Stability Programme of Lithuania for 2017 was presented to the Committee on European Affairs

11 May. 2017. The direct payments system should ensure fair and equal terms of competition for all EU farmers

25 May 2017. Seimas amended the arrangements for entry of employees from third countries into Lithuania

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: EVENTS, MEETINGS, VISITS

Viktoras Pranckietis, Speaker of the Seimas, thanked Hungary for its significant contribution to NATO's Baltic Air Policing mission



On 3 May 2017, Viktoras Pranckietis, Speaker of the Seimas, met with István Hiller, Deputy Speaker of the Hungarian National Assembly. They discussed the cooperation between Lithuania and Hungary, nuclear safety, the Astravyets Nuclear Power Plant, and matters pertaining to Ukraine and Russia. The Speaker of the Seimas thanked Dr Hiller for Hungary's participation in NATO's Air Policing mission in the Baltic States, appointment of an officer to the NATO Force Integration Unit in Vilnius, deployment of rotational forces in Lithuania, and participation in exercises.

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Slovenia is an important EU and NATO partner for Lithuania



On 16 May 2017, Viktoras Pranckietis, Speaker of the Seimas, had a meeting with Milan Brglez, President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia. The meeting addressed bilateral relations between Lithuania and Slovenia, and matters pertaining to their economic cooperation and security.

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Security situation in eastern Ukraine remains tense and unpredictable



On 18 May 2017, Viktoras Pranckietis, Speaker of the Seimas, met with Col. Gen. Stepan Poltorak, Minister of Defence of Ukraine, and discussed the situation in Ukraine.

“The security situation in eastern Ukraine remains tense and unpredictable. The situation will persist until Russian military hardware and mercenaries are withdrawn from the territory of Ukraine. It is important for the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to obtain safe and secure access throughout Ukraine,” said the Speaker of the Seimas.

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US leadership lies in Lithuania’s interest



On 19 May 2017, Viktoras Pranckietis, Speaker of the Seimas, met with General Raymond A. Thomas III, Commander of United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). Participants of the meeting discussed topical matters pertaining to security and defence, strategic partnership between the American and Lithuanian special operations forces, and the US assistance for Lithuania in building and developing defence capabilities.

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On 30 May 2017, Viktoras Pranckietis, Speaker of the Seimas, met with Members of the US Congress to discuss bilateral cooperation between the US and Lithuania as well as security building in the Baltic region. While briefing the Congressmen on the current situation in the region, Mr Pranckietis focused on Lithuania’s Plan on Ukraine 2017–2020. In the words of the Speaker of the Seimas, US leadership lies in Lithuania’s interest. A special focus at the meeting was on nuclear safety in the region. The threat posed by the unsafe construction of the Astravyets Nuclear Power Plant was highlighted in particular.

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Lithuania takes a principled and clear-cut position on the Astravyets Nuclear Power Plant



On 26 May 2017, Viktoras Pranckietis, Speaker of the Seimas, attended a briefing held in Buivydžiai, a village in Vilnius District, where he met foreign ambassadors residing in Lithuania. The Speaker of the Seimas said that Lithuania took a principled and clear-cut position on the issue of the Astravyets Nuclear Power Plant (NPP).

“The construction of the Astravyets NPP has to be suspended for several reasons: it does not comply with international nuclear safety and environmental

standards; there have been numerous serious violations during the development of the project; there are constant serious incidents on the construction site of the NPP; there are obvious signs of poor safety culture in the workplace; institutions responsible for the supervision of nuclear safety and organisations engaged in the construction lack competence and experience related to developing nuclear power plants; and there are constant attempts to manipulate international documents and public opinion both in Belarus and the neighbouring countries,” Mr Pranckietis said.

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[26 May 2017. Viktoras Pranckietis, Speaker of the Seimas, expects support from Latvia on the issue of Nuclear Power Plant in Astravyets](#)

We seek to ensure that the EU keeps the sanctions against Russia over the occupation of Crimea until the peninsula is de-occupied



On 29 May 2017, Viktoras Pranckietis, Speaker of the Seimas, met with Refat Chubarov, Chairman of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People and President of the World Congress of Crimean Tatars; Volodymyr Yatsenkivskiy, Ambassador of Ukraine to Lithuania; and Prof. Adas Jakubauskas, Chair of the Union of the Communities of Lithuanian Tatars. At the meeting, the Speaker of the Seimas underlined that Lithuania would further seek to ensure that the European Union upheld the sanctions against Russia over the occupation of Crimea until the peninsula was de-occupied.

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EVENTS

Lithuanian-Polish relations hold great potential for growth



On 3 May 2017, the Seimas held a discussion as to how important for Europe was the 1791 Constitution of the Commonwealth of the Two Nations, the joint state of Lithuania and Poland. Viktoras Pranckietis, Speaker of the Seimas, took part in the discussion and expressed the view that the relations between Lithuania and Poland held great potential for growth.

The Speaker of the Seimas said that it was essential to promote unity and solidarity of the region in the face of emerging threats and challenges for the EU.

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PHOTOS



Press conference on *Mental Health Policy*. Agnė Širinskienė, Chair of the Committee on Health Affairs, and Dinesh Bhugra, President of the World Psychiatric Association.
3 May 2017



Dovilė Šakalienė, Guoda Burokienė, Virginija Vingrienė and Mindaugas Puidokas, Members of the Seimas and participants of the press conference on *Europe Day and Lithuanian Regional Folk Costumes*, organised by the Lithuanian Farmers and Greens Union Political Group.
9 May 2017



Meeting of the Legal Affairs and Security Committee of the Baltic Assembly.
12 May 2017



Meeting of members of the Seimas Group for Inter-Parliamentary Relations with the Republic of Azerbaijan with Kamran Nabizade, Head of the Azerbaijan-Lithuania Working Group on Interparliamentary Relations.
16 May 2017



Viktoras Pranckietis, Speaker of the Seimas, met with Dag Malmer Halvorsen, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway to Lithuania.
18 May 2017



Gediminas Kirkilas, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas and Chair of the Committee on European Affairs, met with Marek Kuchciński, Marshal of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland, in Warsaw.
19 May 2017



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

TEXT

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