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- SEIMAS CLOSED ITS SPRING SESSION
- SEIMAS OUTLAWED DISCRIMINATION ON GROUNDS OF NATIONALITY
- VIKTORAS PRANCKIETIS, SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS, MET WITH:
 - MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
 - FRANS TIMMERMANS, FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION
 - NORBERT LAMMERT, SPEAKER OF THE GERMAN BUNDESTAG, AND HANS-PETER BARTELS, PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSIONER FOR THE ARMED FORCES

PARLIAMENTARY BUSINESS

Seimas closed its spring session



On 11 July 2017, the Seimas closed the prolonged 2nd regular (spring) session. Convening for the first sitting on 10 March 2017*, the Seimas held 62 plenary sittings and adopted over 420 legal acts.

In the spring session, the Seimas mainly focused on greater efficiency and transparency of the public sector as well as on social security and health, education, culture and science, national security and defence. It also deliberated a number of draft laws on law enforcement, finance, energy, economy and other relevant matters. This session saw the delivery of the annual State of the Nation Address by Dalia Grybauskaitė, President of the Republic of Lithuania, and the annual activity report of the Government.

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*Article 64 of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania provides that: "Every year, the Seimas shall convene for two regular sessions—in spring and autumn. The spring session shall commence on the 10th of March and shall end on the 30th of June. The autumn session shall commence on the 10th of September and shall end on the 23rd of December. The Seimas may decide to prolong a session".

Seimas established the framework structure of the army to be implemented in 2018



On 11 July 2017, the Seimas approved the planned framework structure of the army to be implemented in 2018 alongside with the threshold number of soldiers and statutory public servants for 2018 and 2023.

In accordance with the adopted law, in 2018 the national defence system will hold from 18,890 up to 21,950 soldiers. The threshold number of soldiers in professional service will range from 9,700 to 10,700 and the number of volunteers and other active reserve soldiers will range from 4,800 to 6,300. The number of cadets will stand between 200 and 320, and the number of soldiers in the mandatory initial military service will range from 4,190 to 4,630.

In 2023, the overall threshold of soldiers in the national defence system will range from 24,390 to 26,250, with soldiers in professional service ranging from 14,500 to 15,000 men, volunteers and other active reserve soldiers from 5,500 to 6,300, cadets from 200 to 320, and soldiers in the mandatory initial military service from 4,190 to 4,630.

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Seimas endorsed the reform of forest enterprises



On 11 July 2017, the Seimas adopted the amendments to the Law on Forestry, thereby abandoning the requirement to establish a specific number of forest enterprises. The Law stipulates that integrated forestry activities in state forests are carried out by forest enterprises. The previous law provided for 42 state forest enterprises.

The explanatory note to the Law underlines that the aim is to allow the Government or its authorised institution to fully exercise the rights and obligations of the owner of state enterprises and to adopt the decisions laid down in the Law on State and Municipal Enterprises.

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Seimas outlawed discrimination on grounds of nationality

On 11 July 2017, the Seimas adopted amendments to the Law on Equal Opportunities, thereby enshrining the prohibition of discrimination on grounds of nationality. A total of 63 MPs voted in favour of the amendments, with 4 against and 11 abstentions.

The objective of the amendments is to implement a European directive which aims to ensure that European Union citizens exercising their rights of free movement of workers and their family members are not discriminated against on grounds of nationality. This directive also applies to nationals of the Member States of the European Economic Area and members of their families. In compliance with the directive, the citizens of the Member States of the European Union and the European Economic Area and their family members should have the same conditions with regard to access to social and tax advantages as the nationals of Lithuania.

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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: EVENTS, MEETINGS, VISITS

Viktoras Pranckietis, Speaker of the Seimas: *close cooperation with the US is essential to tackling the common challenges of energy security in the Baltic region*



On 1 August 2017, Viktoras Pranckietis, Speaker of the Seimas, met with Members of the United States Congress. The US Congress delegation, composed of Members of the House Committee on Natural Resources under the leadership of Rob Bishop, Chairman of the Committee, as well as Mike Turner, Member of the House Committee of the Armed Services, came to Lithuania to familiarise themselves with the situation in the energy market of the Baltic region and to discuss regional security issues.

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Viktoras Pranckietis, Speaker of the Seimas: *we hope for the Commission's strong support for the infrastructure projects carried out by Lithuania*



On 3 July 2017, Viktoras Pranckietis, Speaker of the Seimas, met with Frans Timmermans, First Vice-President of the European Commission, who paid an official working visit to Lithuania. The meeting focused on European security, the Eastern Partnership, and the EU's Energy Union.

The Speaker of the Seimas highlighted the threats posed by the *Astravyets Nuclear Power Plant* that is being constructed in Lithuania's neighbourhood, the issue of funding further decommissioning of the

Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant, and the importance of synchronisation of power systems with the European continental networks. The need for the Commission's strong support on these issues was brought into focus during the meeting.

"Synchronisation with the continental Europe is currently among Lithuania's top priorities in enhancing energy security. A resolute political decision has to be taken on the issue. We are equally looking forward to the Commission's support in addressing the matter of funding of the decommissioning of the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant. Thus, the Commission's strong backing for the infrastructure projects carried out by Lithuania is of vital importance," Mr Pranckietis said.

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Viktoras Pranckietis, Speaker of the Seimas: *Germany is Lithuania's strategic partner*



On 5 July 2017, Viktoras Pranckietis, Speaker of the Seimas, met with Norbert Lammert, Speaker of the German Bundestag, and Hans-Peter Bartels, Parliamentary Commissioner for the Armed Forces.

Viktoras Pranckietis and the German delegation led by Norbert Lammert discussed the security situation in the Baltic region, Germany's role in ensuring regional security, its leadership in deploying NATO-led multinational forces in Lithuania, the importance of developing the EU's Energy Union in ensuring energy

security of Member States, and the potential for developing the bilateral cooperation between Lithuania and Germany as well as enhancing it in different fields.

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PHOTOS



Viktoras Pranckietis, Speaker of the Seimas, and the participants of the annual meeting of ambassadors of the Republic of Lithuania.

4 July 2017



Solemn ceremony of hoisting the national flag and the historic flag of Lithuania on the occasion of the State Day of Lithuania (Coronation of King Mindaugas).

6 July 2017



Meeting of Viktoras Pranckietis, Speaker of the Seimas, with Jürg Stahl, Speaker of the National Council of Switzerland.

11 July 2017



Launch of the expedition of *Mission Siberia 2017*.

17 July 2017



Meeting of Viktoras Pranckietis, Speaker of the Seimas, with representatives of the Lithuanian Tatar community.
19 July 2017



First rank awards ceremony for graduates of the General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania.
28 July 2017



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

TEXT

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