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NEWSLETTER

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- MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY WAS HELD IN VILNIUS
- ON 1 MARCH 2018, VIKTORAS PRANCKIETIS, SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS, DELIVERED A SPEECH ON LITHUANIAN-POLISH RELATIONS IN THE SEJM OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND
- SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS GAVE A WARM WELCOME TO STANISŁAW KARCEWSKI, MARSHAL OF THE POLISH SENATE ON HIS VISIT TO LITHUANIA
- HEADS OF THE LITHUANIAN, LATVIAN AND POLISH PARLIAMENTS ADDRESSED EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTS ON THE ISSUE OF NORD STREAM 2
- DAY OF RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF INDEPENDENCE SOLEMNLY COMMEMORATED AT THE SEIMAS

PARLIAMENTARY BUSINESS

Persons studying in Higher Education Institutions outside Lithuania will be eligible for support

On 22 March 2018, the Seimas adopted amendments to the Law on Higher Education and Research, thus providing for support opportunities for persons studying in higher education institutions outside the Republic of Lithuania. The new provisions, due to enter into force on 15 April, were adopted by 107 votes in favour, no votes against, and 2 abstentions.

Under the new provisions adopted by the Seimas and in accordance with the procedure laid down by the Government or its authorised body, Lithuanian citizens enrolled or studying in higher education institutions outside the Republic of Lithuania will be eligible for support. Eligibility for support is also open for citizens of Member States of the European Union (EU) and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) working in and/or holding a residence permit of the Republic of Lithuania, as well as members of their families. Foreign nationals and stateless persons who have the right of permanent residence in the Republic of Lithuania are also eligible for support.

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MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

Rasa Juknevičienė, Head of the Seimas Delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, designated to become the President of the NATO PA



On 24 March 2018, the Standing Committee of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly gathered for a meeting on the premises of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania.

The morning agenda of the meeting included deliberations on appointment of a new President of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. The incumbent President Paolo Alli was not re-elected to the Italian Parliament and lost his parliamentary mandate on 23 March 2018. According to the NATO PA rules, Mr Alli will continue to serve as President of

the Assembly until the Italian Parliament designates a new delegation to the NATO PA or, in the absence of such designation, for up to six months after the expiration of his parliamentary mandate, i.e. until 23 September. The NATO PA Standing Committee decided that, at the point when Mr Alli can no longer exercise his functions as President, the office of President of the NATO PA will be assumed by Rasa Juknevičienė, Head of the Seimas Delegation to the NATO PA and current Vice-President of the NATO PA.

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Standing Committee of the NATO PA adopted a statement on the attack of March 4th in the UK

Following the briefing by the United Kingdom delegation about the use of a chemical weapon against the double agent Sergei Skripal and his daughter in Salisbury on 4 March 2018, the Standing Committee of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly adopted a statement expressing its solidarity with the United Kingdom and condemning the brutal attack, the first offensive use of a nerve agent



on Alliance territory and a clear violation of international agreements and laws.

The document expresses support for the actions taken by the Government of the United Kingdom, including for its cooperation with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Russia was called upon to cooperate with this organisation.

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NATO PA Standing Committee stresses the importance of unity



The agenda of the Standing Committee of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA) included discussions on the NATO PA Draft Declaration which is expected to be adopted at the Warsaw Spring Session in May 2018. The document aims to highlight NATO's unity, achievements and challenges in the run-up to the NATO Summit of Heads of State and Government due to be held in Brussels on 11–12 July 2018.

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Speaker of the Seimas: Lithuania and Poland are „in the same boat“



On 1 March 2018, in the Sejm of the Republic of Poland, Viktoras Pranckietis, Speaker of the Seimas, delivered a historical speech on Lithuanian-Polish relations, common past and sustainable future.

In his speech in Warsaw, Mr Pranckietis touched upon the key issues of strategic cooperation in business, infrastructure, energy and security, as well as the situation of ethnic minorities and education, which are sensitive topics for both sides. Please find the full version of the speech on [the website of the Seimas](#).

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Heads of the Lithuanian, Latvian and Polish parliaments addressed European parliaments on the issue of Nord Stream 2



On 11 March 2018, the heads of the Latvian and Polish parliaments, who had gathered to a solemn commemoration of the Day of the Re-establishment of Lithuania's Independence in the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, and Viktoras Pranckietis, Speaker of the Seimas, signed an Open Letter to Presidents of Parliaments of European States thereby drawing the attention of European countries to the fundamental principles of the Energy Union for Europe and the political context of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline.

"Although it is presented as a commercial project, it is undoubtedly a political instrument, which will increase the dependence of the European Union on Russia as a single energy supplier. We are convinced that Nord Stream 2 is also a geopolitical project based on Russia's political decision to cut gas transit through Ukraine and divert the flows through the Nord Stream 2 pipeline," the Speaker of the Seimas said.

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Speaker of the Seimas gave a warm welcome to the Marshal of the Polish Senate on his visit to Lithuania



On 16 March 2018, Viktoras Pranckietis, Speaker of the Seimas, met with Stanisław Karczewski, Marshal of the Senate of the Republic of Poland, on his visit to Lithuania.

At the meeting, the Speaker and the Marshal underlined the importance of the bilateral strategic partnership and discussed the development of bilaterally significant joint infrastructural projects, such as Rail Baltica, Via Baltica, and GIPL and the synchronisation of the Baltic electricity grids with the European continental network.

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Committee on Foreign Affairs: Serbia needs full alignment with EU's common foreign policy

At its meeting on 7 March 2018, the Committee on Foreign Affairs, with the participation of Darius Skusevičius, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, unanimously regretted that Serbia was increasingly failing to align its foreign and security policy with the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy.

In the Opinion on the Communication from the Commission "A Credible Enlargement Perspective for and Enhanced EU Engagement with the Western Balkans," the Committee made it clear that membership of the EU was not possible without sharing the Union's principles, values and goals as well as without full alignment of actions with the common foreign and security policy. For this reason, the Committee called on Serbia to immediately achieve full alignment of its foreign policy with the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (Serbia's alignment with EU positions and Council Decisions for 2017 stood at as few as 48 %, down from 63 % in 2016 and 64 % in 2015).

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Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted a statement condemning the ongoing occupation and annexation of Crimea

In its closed meeting of 21 March 2018, held with the participation of Linas Linkevičius, Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Seimas discussed the situation in Crimea four years after its occupation and annexation by the Russian Federation.

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EVENTS

Day of Re-establishment of Independence solemnly commemorated at the Seimas



A solemn commemoration of the Day of Re-establishment of Lithuania's Independence was held at the Seimas on 11 March 2018. The commemoration was also dedicated to the 100th Birth Anniversary of Adolfas Ramanauskas-Vanagas, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Union of Lithuanian Freedom Fighters. The participants of the solemn meeting congratulated Norbertas Černiauskas, winner of the National Independence Grant, and former

Lithuanian partisan Bronislovas Juospaitis, honoured for his whole life service to Lithuania.

In his congratulatory speech Viktoras Pranckietis, Speaker of the Seimas, stressed that we had paid a significant price for the re-establishment of Independence of the Lithuanian State on 11 March 1990. “We can only imagine how much courage was required of the freedom fighters who led us towards independence. Adolfas Ramanauskas-Vanagas, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Union of Lithuanian Freedom Fighters Freedom, led his fellow countrymen to freedom despite cold, darkness and death. He was a genuine leader, a centenary man,” said the Speaker of the Seimas.

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PHOTOS



Meeting between Viktoras Pranckietis, Speaker of the Seimas, and leaders of Crimean Tatars.
5 March 2018



Meeting between Viktoras Pranckietis, Speaker of the Seimas, and Shen Zhifei, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Lithuania.
6 March 2018



Meeting between Gediminas Kirkilas, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas and Chair of the Committee on European Affairs, and Vassiliki Dicooulou, Ambassador of the Hellenic Republic to Lithuania.
8 March 2018



Meeting between members of the Seimas Committee on National Security and Defence and Brendan Smith, Chair of the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Trade, and Defence of the Houses of the Oireachtas.
12 March 2018



Meeting between members of the Seimas Committee on National Security and Defence and Brendan Smith, Chair of the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Trade, and Defence of the Houses of the Oireachtas.
12 March 2018



Meeting between Viktoras Prancietis, Speaker of the Seimas, and Stanislav Shevchuk, Chairman of the Constitutional Court of Ukraine.
15 March 2018



European Commissioner Vytenis Povilas Andriukaitis introduced the European Commission analysis of economic challenges for Lithuania in 2018.
23 March 2018



Meeting between members of the Seimas Committee on Culture and a delegation of members of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine.
27 March 2018



For more photos of the March 2018 events and meetings, see [here](#) or please visit the Seimas [Flickr](#) and [Instagram](#) accounts.

TEXT

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