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 Please visit the English version of the updated Seimas website [here](#).

- THE SEIMAS MARKED THE DAY OF RESTORATION OF LITHUANIA'S INDEPENDENCE
- THE SEIMAS APPROVED THE WORK PROGRAMME OF THE EIGHTH (SPRING) SESSION
- LORETA GRAUŽINIENĖ, SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS, MET ANGEL GURRÍA, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT
- SEIMAS ADOPTED A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF UKRAINIAN PILOT NADIYA SAVCHENKO

## ANNIVERSARY

### The Seimas marked the Day of Restoration of Lithuania's Independence



On 11 March 2016, the Seimas held a solemn sitting to commemorate the Day of Restoration of Lithuania's Independence. The commemoration featured speeches by Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas; Stasys Kropas, Signatory to the Act of Independence and President of the Association of Lithuanian Banks; Arūnas Poniškaitis, Bishop Auxiliary and General Vicar of Vilnius Archdiocese; Vytenis Povilas Andriukaitis, Signatory to the Act of Independence and Member of the European Commission; Emanuelis Zingeris, Signatory to the Act of Independence, Member of the Seimas and first Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Supreme Council of Lithuania; and Rokas Štreimikis, representative of the Lithuanian Pupil's Parliament and a pupil of St Benedict's High School in Alytus.

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[Speech by Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, at the solemn sitting to commemorate the Day of Restoration of Lithuania's Independence](#)

[Speech by Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, at the Solemn Flag-Hoisting Ceremony on the Independence Square](#)

### Presentation of the work programme of the spring session



On 10 March 2016, Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, and Algirdas Butkevičius, Prime Minister, presented the agenda of the eighth (spring) session to the Parliament\*.

Speaking about the key tasks, Loreta Graužinienė noted that this was a special session due to very important laws, whose adoption would play a significant role in our economy and social life.

“We have much hard and serious work ahead: 50 sittings are to be held in almost four months, which means 25 days of plenary sittings. Meanwhile, the work programme lists over 1 000 draft laws,” said the Speaker of the Seimas.

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*\*The agenda of the eighth (spring) session was approved on 15 March 2016.*

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**Press release, 9 March 2016:** *Speaker of the Seimas invited the parliamentarians to focus on the main tasks during the spring session*

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### Seimas adopted a resolution in support of Ukrainian pilot Nadiya Savchenko

On 15 March 2016, with 68 votes in favour, none against and 3 abstentions, the Seimas adopted the Resolution Regarding Ukrainian Air Force Pilot Nadiya Savchenko.

By its resolution, the Seimas, recalling that in July 2014 Ukrainian air force pilot Nadiya Savchenko was illegally detained in Ukraine and transferred to the Russian Federation where she is unjustly imprisoned, and that her health condition is deteriorating due to her being on hunger strike for a long period; noting that Nadiya Savchenko was elected to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine in the early election of 26 October 2014 but has not had an opportunity to represent her voters so far; regretting that the international community's attempts to release Nadiya Savchenko have so far not proven successful; states that the illegal imprisonment of Ukrainian air force pilot Nadiya Savchenko in the Russian Federation is a serious violation of international law and that the refusal of the Russian Federation to hand her over to Ukraine is blatant breach of the Minsk Agreements.

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### The Seimas supported the appointment of Rimantas Šadžius to the European Court of Auditors

On 17 March 2016, by 55 votes in favour, five against and 43 abstentions, the Seimas adopted a protocol decision on the approval of the nomination of Rimantas Šadžius to serve as Member of the European Court of Auditors.

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## The law adopted by the Seimas will provide researchers with new opportunities for integration into the European Research Area

On 17 March 2016, in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania and having regard to the Decree of 8 October 2015 issued by President Dalia Grybauskaitė, the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania ratified the Agreement establishing the European Molecular Biology Conference, signed in Geneva on 13 February 1969. The Research Council of Lithuania was charged with representing the Republic of Lithuania.

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## Committee on Foreign Affairs discussed implementation of the European Agenda on Migration

At its meeting of 4 March 2016, the Committee on Foreign Affairs heard the information provided by Elvinas Jankevičius, Vice-Minister of the Interior, and Raimundas Karoblis, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, about the implementation, within the European Union and Lithuania, of priority actions set out in the European Agenda on Migration, which was adopted on May 2015.

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## Committee on Foreign Affairs covered the situation in the Crimea under Russian occupation

On 23 March 2016, the Seimas Committee on Foreign Affairs met in a closed sitting with Linas Linkevičius, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and representatives of the State Security Department to discuss the current situation on the occupied Crimean peninsula following two years since the beginning of the occupation and annexation of the territory by the Russian Federation. The Committee reiterated that Lithuania continued to adhere to an unwavering position that the occupation of Crimea is illegal and can never be recognised. The efforts to exert pressure on Russia should be continued with the view to resuming Russia's dialogue with Ukraine regarding the occupied territory.

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## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: MEETINGS&VISITS

### Speaker of the Seimas: Membership of the OECD is a priority objective for Lithuania



On 15 March 2016, Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, met Angel Gurría, Secretary General of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), to discuss the progress achieved in Lithuania's accession to the Organization.

The Speaker of the Seimas noted that accession to the OECD was among the priorities of Lithuania's political development; and that although much was left to be done in the accession process; our objective was to ensure the implementation of the reforms recommended by the OECD and to become a fully-fledged member of the Organization as soon as possible.

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## Members of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and the Seimas Energy Commission discussed energy issues

As part of the visit to the Seimas, the delegation of parliamentarians from the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine met with Ričardas Sargūnas, Chair of the Energy Commission, on 8 March 2016. The guests showed interest in Lithuanian energy issues, completed projects and future challenges. Among the most pressing questions raised during the meeting were gas and electricity tariffs for households and industries as well as possibilities of gas supply from the Liquefied natural gas (LNG) Terminal of *SC Klaipėdos Nafta*.

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## Committee on Rural Affairs met with European Commissioners



The Committee on Rural Affairs met with Phil Hogan, European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, and Vytenis Povilas Andriukaitis, European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, on 31 March 2016 in the framework of the international exhibition *Agrobalt 2016*.

Bronius Pauža, Deputy Chair of the Committee and chair of the meeting, noted the complicated situation that Lithuanian farmers were facing in the dairy sector and pointed out that a low level of cooperation, low farm gate milk prices and direct payments, which are below the EU average, take the last hope away from Lithuanian dairy farmers.

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## EVENTS

### European Week at the Seimas



The Seimas has launched *the European Week* at the Seimas, a series of parliamentary events that had become a tradition and that are open to the public and celebrate Europe Day and Lithuania's accession to the European Union (EU). The European Week at the Seimas 2016 is organised by the Seimas committees and commissions in cooperation with the European Information Office of the Information and Communication Department of the Office of the Seimas. The events take place at the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania in March, April, May and June.

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### Seimas hosted a Francophonic discussion on career guidance in France and Lithuania



March is known as a Month of Francophonie. The Days of Francophonie dedicated to the French language, culture, art and politics are thus arranged all over the world. The events to mark the Days of Francophonie at the Seimas have become a long-lived tradition. This year, on 23 March, the Seimas hosted a discussion on Vocational guidance in France and Lithuania organised by the parliamentary Committee on Education, Science and Culture together with the French Embassy in Lithuania.

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## PHOTOS



*Meeting between the Seimas Committee on European Affairs and the Seimas Committee on Foreign Affairs and the delegation of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. 8 March 2016*



*Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, welcomed the participants of the donor conference of the European Humanities University. 10 March 2016*



*Meeting between Gediminas Kirkilas, Deputy Speaker of the Seimas and Chair of the Committee on European Affairs, and Lubomir Zaoralek, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic. 10 March 2016*



*Meeting between Benediktas Juodka, Chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and Lubomir Zaoralek, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic. 10 March 2016*



*Loreta Graužinienė, Speaker of the Seimas, met with the representatives of the International Monetary Fund. 15 March 2016*



*Press conference by Phil Wynn Owen and Rasa Budbergytė, Members of the European Court of Auditors, and Erki Must, Task Leader for the 'Security of Energy Supply' audit, European Court of Auditors. 16 March 2016*



*Daiva Raudonienė, Secretary General of the Seimas, and heads of the units of the Office of the Seimas met with the delegation headed by György Such, Secretary General of the Hungarian National Assembly, during the delegation's visit to Vilnius.  
30 March 2016*



*First Deputy Speaker of the Seimas Vydas Gedvilas met with Ambassador of the Kingdom of Thailand Vimon Kidchob.  
31 March 2016*

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

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## **TEXT**

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