



Photo: Džoja Gunda Barysaitė.

Grybauskaitė Address to the Nation: Citizen - State - Future

Vilnius, June 8 (ELTA) - At the Seimas Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė delivered her Annual State of the Nation Address.

As required by the Constitution, the president reviewed the country's political, economic, social, and cultural affairs and presented proposals on how to solve certain problems.

The head of the state was not as-

sessing the state of each sector of the state economy, but analysing the moral state of the country and its citizens, the reasons of the crisis in the underlying values, discussing human values and the importance of each and every citizen in supporting the state and creating the future of Lithuania.

According to the president it is not the lack of money that makes people indignant, but the lack of justice and solidarity.

"If we truly seek for real changes in the country, we have to turn to its highest values - the people. This guide is applied generally - from the highest officials to the servants of the lowest units, and at the same time - to each and every citizen," said the head of state.

The president called corruption one of the vices that demean human dignity and called to strengthen penalties for corruption-related crimes and to adopt the drafted laws aimed at fighting against corruption as soon as possible.

In her annual report the President also named specific ways to reform the judicial system and to return public confidence in justice.

The person, the state, the future - are the key words that according to the president should serve as guidelines in legislation in the fight against the non-transparent activi-

ties of interest groups, the dominance of departmental goals over the interests of the state.

According to Grybauskaitė the interests of Lithuanian people are the priority not only of domestic, but also of foreign policy.

"The strategic direction is one and unquestionable. It is the representation of the interests of the people of Lithuania and their goals, the assertion of national dignity in the international arena. This has to be achieved through the protection of state interests in the European Union, guaranteeing national security by maximizing Euro-Atlantic cooperation, by developing mutually respectful and beneficial relations with neighbouring countries," said the president.

Summarizing the situation of the state the president highlighted the alienation of society, the painful expression of this alienation - emigration - and called upon citizens for the responsible creation of the future of Lithuania.

"I invite all of us to relate to the state as 'our own', to perceive its problems as 'our own', and to address them resolutely and creatively as 'our own'. I invite each and every citizen of Lithuania to vote with great responsibility, to put forward just and fair demands, and to show a good personal example," said the president.

Ūsas drowned - autopsy

Vilnius, June 15 (ELTA) - An autopsy has showed that Andrius Ūsas drowned; no external violence marks were found on his body.

According to preliminary data, it is likely that Ūsas had health problems. Such information was presented by chief prosecutor Zenonas Burokas of the Division of Pre-trial Investigation Control of the Prosecutor General's Office at a news conference on Tuesday.

"It is likely that he drove into the water and climbed down, then perhaps stumbled. It is likely that he might have had health problems", the prosecutor said.

It is not clear yet whether Ūsas

was drunk, had taken medicines or other substances.

As reported, Ūsas, the only defendant in the so-called Kaunas pedophile, was found face down in water in a ditch in Eigirdonys village at about 4 p.m. on Sunday. One of the locals found Ūsas' body, next to him there was Ūsas' four-wheeled motorcycle with the engine still running.

At the end of May, Panevėžys city local court was supposed to start hearing the case on the sexual abuse of Drąsius Kedys' daughter, which involved only one suspect - Ūsas, however, the hearing was postponed until June 16 as Ūsas' lawyer did not arrive to the court.

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New Visaginas Nuclear Power Plant - important project for the region: IAEA head

Visaginas, June 15 (ELTA) - The construction of new Visaginas Nuclear Power Plant is an important project for the entire region, says International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Yukiya Amano, who visited Ignalina on Tuesday.

During his visit, Yukiya Amano inspected the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant that was closed in 2009, he was presented with the plant's decommissioning process and the process of the new power plant implementation project.

Energy Minister Arvydas Sekmokas, who spoke at the presentation, noted that the two projects were coordinated by strong teams. According to the minister, Lithuania's energy sector is currently experiencing an exceptional period when one power plant is closed and the construction of another plant is being planned.

All these processes mean that the Lithuanian energy sector is switching to a market economy. The construction of a new power plant will ensure our energy independence and integration into the international energy community.

Welcoming the attendees, IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano said that it was of a great interest for him to inspect the ongoing Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant decommissioning project.

According to him, the ongoing processes show that the company is undergoing the necessary changes, because decommissioning is a long and complex task. The experience gained by the IAE professionals and managers will be of a great importance for other countries engaged in similar projects.

The IAEA head is convinced that the construction of the new nuclear power plant is an important energy project for the entire region.

New Visaginas Nuclear Power Plant Director General Šarūnas Vasiliauskas welcomed the fact that Lithuania had the infrastructure necessary to develop nuclear energy that would contribute to the development of the European nuclear energy.



• Photo: Valdas Kopūstas (ELTA).

Genocide day commemorated in Baltics

(alfa.lt) Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian leaders commemorated the remembrance of the victims of Soviet oppression on Monday.

President Dalia Grybauskaitė said in a commemoration event that all of the bereavements have to be evaluated for the good of the future, the Baltic News Service reported.

"All of those losses – not forgetting a single man – have to be named and evaluated for the good of the future. So that it would never repeat again, and those losses would remain the most painful period in the history of this nation," the Lithuanian president said.

The day of the mourning and hope is commemorated in Lithuania, remembering the June 14 of 1941, when the exile began after the Soviet Union had occupied Lithuania in 1940.

Seimas speaker Irena Degutienė em-

phasized that June 14 is not only mourning, but also a hopeful day for Lithuania.

"Commemorating the defenders of the freedom today, let's not forget, that today it's also a day for hope, a hope that withstands the threats of alien militaries and nurtures generations for freedom, a hope, that transforms a small nation into a proud fighter and helps to win the fight for truth," said Degutienė.

Latvian president Valdis Zatlers, speaking to thousands of Latvians gathered around the monument of Freedom, said that what happened, cannot be forgotten. "It cannot be forgotten, it was genocide of Latvian people."

The Estonian president stated that the historical truth has to be protected, because hard work has been done to ascertain it, BNS reported.



Lithuanian and EU Development Vision discussed in Vilnius



A round table discussion "Europe 2030: Do We Have a New Approach?" was held on 4 June in Vilnius. It was organized by the Office of Lithuania's Prime Minister, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the European Law Department under the Ministry of Justice.

The participants discussed the European Union's and Lithuania's development vision with respect to the recent EU strategic documents: the report "Project Europe 2030. Challenges and Opportunities" by the EU Reflection Group and the report of former EU Commissioner for Internal Market Mario Monti, "A New Strategy for the Internal Market: Serving the Economy and the

Public".

In her introductory remarks, Lithuania's Foreign Vice-Minister Asta Skaisgirytė Liauškienė stressed that, considering the lessons learnt during the crisis, the EU and Lithuania currently face important choices, when short-term measures for the economy's recovery are not sufficient and essential difficult decisions need to be taken.

The participants of the discussion in Vilnius agreed that further deepening and strengthening of the EU internal market was an important guideline to strengthen the EU's competitiveness, but some aspects, such as fiscal coordination, remained ambiguous.

Lithuania seeks EU support to build new nuclear power plant

Vilnius, May 27 (Bloomberg-ELTA) - Lithuania is seeking the European Commission's support to it help build a new nuclear power plant.

"We are in talks with the European Commission to provide us with some financial instruments," Energy Minister Arvydas Sekmokas said at a briefing in Vilnius on Thursday. "Lithuania has fulfilled its commitments by closing its nuclear power plant and we expect European solidarity and a joint-effort to develop the Visaginas nuclear plant."

The Baltic nation wants to build a new nuclear source of energy to replace the Soviet-era Ignalina plant, which stopped production in December to comply with pre-accession commitments to the EU.

The government is looking for a strategic investor for the plant, which may cost as much as 5 billion euros. Lithuania is in talks with Iberdrola SA, Spain's largest power producer, and four other undisclosed candidates to build the plant.

The government will invite the five shortlisted investors to place binding bids by September 1, Sekmokas said on Thursday.

Statute amendment to accelerate legislation

Vilnius, June 7 (ELTA) - An amendment to the Statute of the Seimas, under which the Government would be obliged to present conclusions on the bills on time, was submitted to the Seimas.

Under the amendment to the Statute, registered by Members of the Seimas Vidmantas Žiemelis and Mantas Varaška, if the Government does not provide conclusions on the bills on time (within 4 weeks), it will be considered that the Government approves of the bill. The parliamentarians expect the amendment to accelerate the consideration and adoption of legislation in the Seimas.

"Very often, this term is not met and as a result, the further consideration of the bill is postponed for an indefinite period of time. The introduction of the proposed amendment to the Statute of the Seimas would provide for the timely hearing and adoption of legislation. Moreover, the amendment would oblige the Government to provide necessary conclusions on time," said MPs Žiemelis and Varaška.

Rail Baltica to continue

Zaragoza, June 9 (ELTA) - The representatives of the transport ministries of Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Finland have expressed their political will to continue the project Rail Baltica by signing a memorandum.

The memorandum was signed in Zaragoza, Spain, currently holding the EU presidency.

This memorandum obliges Lithuania to carry out all the works that were laid down in the Government's approved plan of urgent actions that are to be taken to implement the Rail Baltica project.

The project provides for the reconstruction of the broad gauge (1,520 mm) railway line from the Polish-Lithuanian border to Marijampolė-Kazlų Rūda-Kaunas by linking this to a standard rail gauge (1,435 mm) or building an additional European rail gauge along the existing railway line. All the works will be carried out by January 2014. In addition the Kaunas logistics centre will be set up by the beginning of 2015.

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Whip it Riedok

Director: Drew Barrymore

Starring: Ellen Page, Marcia Gay Harden, Kristen Wiig, Drew Barrymore, Juliette Lewis, Jimmy Fallon, Alia Shawkat

TDrama USA 2009 Subtitles: Lithuanian

The directorial debut of Drew Barrymore. Bliss Cavendar has grown unhappy with small-town Texas life. She allows her mother to push her into entering beauty pageant after beauty pageant, despite having no interest herself. Bliss loves her mother and wants to please her and that becomes the strongest dilemma for her: how to establish a sense of self while still fulfilling her obligations to other people. All that Bliss wants is to get out of her old life. And she gets an opportunity to find her way when she picks up a flyer for a Roller Derby event and finds the courage to try it. Bliss sees she needs to take charge in other aspects of her life, such as her first love for a lanky young guitarist and singer named Oliver and her relationship with her parents, a loving but controlling mother and an amiable but clueless father who seldom opposes his wife's parental decisions.



Small crime Micro eglima

DIRECTOR Christos Georgiou

CAST: Antonis Katsaris, Aris Servetalis, Viki Papadopoulou, Rania Oikonomidou

Comedy, Greek, Subtitles: Lithuanian

Leonidas is assigned to a remote island in the Aegean Sea. He dreams of solving important crimes, but there are few to be found in the sleepy beach community. Each day at the town café, Leonidas and the other locals watch the beautiful Angeliki, the small island's most famous daughter, as she hosts a popular talk show on national TV. These daily rituals are shattered when the island experiences what appears to be an actual crime - the island drunk, Zacharias, is found dead at the base of a cliff. Leonidas soon finds clues that tie the victim to Angeliki, who returns to the island and joins the investigation.

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Prosecutors should invite independent experts - Degutiene

Vilnius, June 16 (ELTA) - Speaker of the Seimas Irena Degutiene says that the prosecutors investigating the death of businessman Andrius Usas and other deaths in the famous Kaudas pedophilia case should invite independent forensic experts.

According to the head of the Seimas, the society is so overheated, that it is hard to believe in what is published in the media. According to Irena Degutiene, in order to avoid speculation it is necessary to invite independent forensic experts.

"From what I hear, everything is very strange - Drasius Kedys choked, Usas drowned. Everything is like in a detective story. Indeed, it is necessary to ensure more clarity and transparency, and this is what is needed most of all today, because the case is very responsible and scandalous, in order to ensure that the question of whether a pedophile network is really operating in Lithuania, the prosecutor's office has to find out everything and provide society with answers to all questions," Irena Degutiene told on Ziniu Radijas on Wednesday.

Irena Degutiene pointed out that there were a number of unclear things in the deaths of Drasius Kedys, Andrius Usas and Jonas Furmanavicius, and those deaths needed to be investigated very thoroughly. That would be a real test for new Prosecutor General Darius Valys.

Amendment proposes to deprive Paksas of presidential title

Vilnius, June 4 (ELTA) - It is proposed to deprive the persons who were removed from office following impeachment proceedings, of the title of President of the Republic of Lithuania.

Conservative Saulius Pečeliūnas registered such amendment at the Secretariat of the Seimas Sitings.

The draft project proposes to leave the title of the president only to those persons who carried out their duties by fair means and were not removed from presidency via impeachment.

"Retaining the title of president of the republic of Lithuania for life is a privilege granted by legislature to a person who was elected to this position, who had the nation's confidence and carried out his duties with dignity. Therefore, a person who lost the nation's confidence and was removed from office through impeachment proceedings for violating the Constitution, law, who put personal or group interests above public interests, and discredited the state by his actions cannot be granted such privilege. The state cannot grant such privilege to a person who discredited it," said Pečeliūnas.

Should Parliament approve of the changes to the law, Leader of the Order and Justice political party, MEP Rolandas Paksas would no longer hold the title of President of the Republic of Lithuania.

On Thursday, the Seimas adopted amendments to the Diplomatic Service Act, allowing Rolandas Paksas to retain his diplomatic passport.

Government proposes to extend retirement age and retain current saving measures

Vilnius, June 15 (ELTA) - The Government proposes to freeze the salaries of politicians and state officials, to retain the 2 percent contributions to private pension funds, and to gradually increase retirement age starting from 2012.

These proposals were agreed upon at a Government sitting on Tuesday; appropriate law amendments will soon reach the Seimas.

The retirement age would be gradually raises up to 65 years, by annually adding 4 months for women, and 2 months for men.

So far, the Government has not de-

Politicians' salaries to remain reduced next year as well - Kubilius

Vilnius, June 14 (ELTA) - The salaries of politicians and civil servants will remain reduced next year. Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius intends to propose to extend the validity of reduced salaries for the following year as well.

"We decided that politicians' salaries, as well as the other reductions, should remain reduced next year as well.

"First of all, I have in mind the reduction of politicians', civil servants' and other officials' salaries," Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius said after the meeting of the ruling coalition partners with Speaker of the Seimas Irena Degutiene on Monday.

According to him, the Constitutional Court has determined that while the emergency financial situation contin-

ued, the politicians - the Seimas and the Government - were entitled to take measures to address the problems of the emergency finance situation.

"The emergency financial situation, we believe, will continue until we return back to the main macroeconomic parameters of 2008. And this is not certainly going to happen next year," said Kubilius.

According to him, it is also planned to implement the SoDra reform, decide upon the retirement age, the transformation of maternity benefits, and other issues, such as state pensions.

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There should be less MPs - poll

Vilnius, May 11 (ELTA) - The number of parliamentarians at the Seimas should be smaller than 141, as it is now. Such opinion is shared by 91.7 percent of Lithuanian residents, however, people do not have a unanimous opinion on what the optimum number of parliamentarians should be.

According to the poll conducted by the public opinion and market research company Spinter Tyrimai, 3.2 percent of the respondents thought that the number of MPs should be reduced from 141 to 120, 25 percent - to 100, and 85 percent of the respondent thought that the number of MPs should stand at 85.

Another 40.4 percent of the polled said there should be less than 85 parliamentarians at the Seimas.

Moreover, 69.3 percent of Lithuanian voters would like to elect repre-

sentatives to the parliament in one-mandate constituencies, where it is directly voted for the candidates, not for the list drawn up by the party.

Only 5.8 percent of the respondents would like to elect members of the Seimas from the list drawn up by the parties, whereas 7.6 percent of those polled did not have opinion or did not answer the question.

Another 17.3 percent of people said that the Seimas election system could remain as it is - mixed. Under the mixed electoral system, half of the Seimas members are elected in one-mandate constituencies, and half - in one multi-mandate constituency, where the parliamentarians are elected from the lists drawn up by the parties and the voters can slightly change the sequence of the candidates in the list.



Photo: Džoja Gunda Barysaitė.

No matter how far from home, you protect the interests of Lithuania

Vilnius, June 14 (ELTA) - June 11, Friday, President Dalia Grybauskaitė, accompanied by the Chief of Defence of Lithuania, Major General Arvydas Pocius, visited Lithuanian troops in Afghanistan's Ghor and Kandahar provinces, and in Kabul, the presidential press service reports.

The president and her delegation flew to Afghanistan by a small jet plane offered by the United States European Command.

President Grybauskaitė went to Afghanistan to get on real information about the activities of Lithuanian troops serving within the International Security Assistance Force and to discuss with members of the Lithuanian-led Provincial Reconstruction Team in Ghor the province's development agenda.

According to the president, it is important that specialists from the US, Japan, Denmark, Ukraine, and Georgia stationed with the Lithuanian-led PRT are engaged not only in security opera-

tions, but are also actively involved in civil work and joint projects.

The president also visited the Lithuanian Special Operations Forces deployed in Afghanistan's southern Kandahar Province to get acquainted with its tasks and preparedness. The president gave high assessment to the fact that NATO partners describe the special operation unit of Lithuania as one of the most professional in Afghanistan.

US Ambassador to Lithuania, Anne Derse, travelled to Afghanistan together with Dalia Grybauskaitė.

"No matter how far from your homeland you serve, your work and dedication protect the interests of Lithuania and make it stronger. The experience you have gained is and will be needed. You are the pillar of further modernization of the Lithuanian Armed Forces. I wish you to serve safely and successfully here and - when you come back home - in Lithuania," the president said.

Seimas allows more people to have dual citizenship

Vilnius, June 4 (ELTA) - The Seimas decided to allow more people to have dual citizenship.

Under the amendment to the Law on Citizenship, those people who departed from Lithuania after March 11, 1990 - the restoration of Lithuanian independence - will be able to have a dual citizenship, if they are of Lithuanian origin and if they have a citizenship of a European Union or North Atlantic Treaty Organizations country and live in a country that is separated

from the Republic of Lithuania by a state border.

On Friday, such a proposal was approved of at the Seimas. 74 MPs voted in favour, 3 MPs against, and 14 MPs abstained from voting.

Under the current Law on Citizenship, persons of Lithuanian origin who had Lithuanian citizenship and were evicted or departed from Lithuania over the period of 15 June 1940 and March 11, 1990 can have dual citizenship.

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Dambrava honoured on 90th birthday

Vytautas Antanas Dambrava, considered by many to be the father of Lithuanian diplomacy, was honoured by friends and colleagues at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs recently.

Born in 1920, Dambrava left Lithuania in 1944 making his way to the US where he worked as a journalist for the Voice of

America as well as the Lithuanian newspaper *Draugas*.

He joined the US diplomatic corps in 1969 and became head of Media Relations in the US Embassy in South America.

When Lithuania restored its independence Dambrava was appointed Lithuanian Ambassador to Venezuela, Columbia, Argenti-

na, Brazil and Uruguay, and from 1999 - 2004 was Lithuania's Ambassador to Spain, Morocco and Andora.

Many friends and former ministers spoke about the influence Dambrava had upon their careers and praised him for his total commitment to his duties, as well as his endearing character.



• Empire of the Sun

Be2Gether Beckons on the last weekend of June

Music and arts festival Be2Gether will take place on June 25 – 27 in Norviliškės. Around 50 different artists from all around the world will perform at Lithuania's biggest festival.

This year organizers are happy to present an interesting program for all music fans. The line-up includes such artists as Empire of the Sun, rockers Skunk Anansie, hip – hop stars Roots Manuva and Killa Kella with DJ First Rate, shocking Ruble and many others.

The Big Stage program at Be2gether has such additions as acrobatic show actors Instrumenti, Belorussian rock legend Liavon Volski and Open Space band. The festival organizers are also happy to present the modern jazz project BrassBastardz who have been captivating audiences with melodic sounds of soul, jungle, hip-hop, house, big beat and drum&bass. BrassBastardz call their mix “new groove acid jazz”.

Festival club ZIP FM is presenting Be2gether Fresh program. It is featuring talented music projects by young artists, such as guests from Moscow, indie rockers Everything is made in China, stylish Gerai gerai & Miss Sheep, theatric and cool Liūdni Slibinai (Sad Dragons), the winners of Blogiukai (Bad Guys) music competition – Vilnius band The Dominoes, progressive Avaspo and other unique artists.

Dance music virtuosi will show the best turntable skills in the

Club Tent. The Old School night program features all-night old school hip-hop with Svaras ir DJ Mamania projects Gatvės lyga soundsystem, Justas Fresh, Quazar, Manfredas, MC Messiah, Shidlas, Lietuva, Dee & Kamy, Repo seniai, the world's most famous beatboxer Killa Kella and Dj First Rate. Silence family program will present Leon Somov & Jazzu, Vidis, Few Nolder, Monika Liu, Adomas, Mario Basanov.

On Sunday the festival climax with the notes of Roko maršai (Rock Marches). Until late at night the big stages will host Bix, Antis, Žas, Poliarizuoti stiklai, Svastikos Sukitės Greitai, Freaks On Floor. You will also be able to watch the Paskutiniai Brėmeno muzikantai (The Last Bremen Musicians) presented by the Keistuolių teatras (Cranky Theatre).

This year Be2Gether will also offer a movie night, football competition, anti-stress activities, on-site steam bath and exotic massages, a separate stage for art performances, the first Lithuanian space volleyball Bosaball tournament and a mass wedding.

Even more information about Be2gether Festival can be found at www.b2g.lt

A three-day festival pass costs LTL130, one-day pass LTL70. Ticket prices will rise after 25 May.

Remembering Crimes Against Humanity



On 10 June in Washington, DC, Lithuania's Ambassador to the USA, Audrius Brūzga laid a wreath at the Monument to the Victims of Communism.

The Ambassador attended a commemorative event that was organized by the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation.

Foreign ambassadors of the countries that had suffered from Communism, representatives from non-governmental organizations and members of the US Congress took part in the ceremony.

The goal of this commemoration is to remember the consequences of crimes against humanity, which have not yet been fully evaluated historically, and to honour the victims of this regime.



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Lithuania determined to continue supporting EHU

Lithuania intends to continue its support to the Vilnius-based European Humanities University (EHU) until this education institution is able to be settled again in Minsk, the country's Minister of Foreign Affairs Audronius Ažubalis said on 2 June in Vilnius, addressing the participants of the third EHU Trust Fund Donor Assembly, informs Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

According to the minister, Lithuania's decision to open the EHU in Vilnius was based on respect to democracy values, freedom and human rights, but the mission of the EHU is impossible without the support from partners.

Minister Ažubalis thanked the European Commission and the Nordic Council of Ministers, the biggest donors of the university, and expressed hope that the support of these institutions would not decrease in the future.

"The EHU is one of the most prominent international projects of democracy promotion, and it became a reality because of your support", the Minister told the participants of the donor conference.

Minister Ažubalis also noted that the EHU is an important promoter of Belarusian culture and identity. Therefore, in the opinion of the head of Lithuania's diplomacy, it would make sense to teach more subjects in the Belarusian language, in addition to the existing studies of Belarus.

In 2008, Trust Fund was established at the initiative of the European Commission. The fund aims to guarantee continuous funding to the EHU, it is administrated by the Nordic Council of Ministers, which makes payments for the activities of the university only according to the strategic plan and

budget, that are adopted by the Governing Board of the EHU.

Currently, the Trust Fund has become the main source of the EHU's financial stability. The fund is supported by the European Commission, Nordic Council of Ministers, the USA, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Ireland, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Spain, and Sweden.

Advisory Committee of the fund was established aiming to effectively attract funding from governments and private sources. Members of the committee are representatives of Estonia, Lithuania, Norway, and the USA.

The first Donor Assembly was held on 23 October 2008 in Brussels, the second was organized on 2 June 2009 in Vilnius. The third assembly was attended by representatives of the European Commission, Nordic Council of Ministers, McArthur Foundation, United States Agency for International Development, the EHU, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden, and the U.S.A.

The European Humanities University was originally based in Minsk, but in 2004 it was closed down for political reasons. At the invitation of the Government of Lithuania, the university moved to Vilnius in 2005. In 2006, it was granted the status of a Lithuanian university. Currently, it has more than one and a half thousand Belarusian students.

By inviting this Belarusian university to renew its activities in Vilnius, Lithuania undertook a commitment to support it.

Global Internet Governance Forum to be held in Vilnius

The Global Internet Governance Forum 2010, which will be held in Vilnius on 14-17 September 2010, will provide new opportunities for Lithuania in the generation of a knowledge society and participation in the formatting of new information and communication technology policies, as well as facilitating the development of new business contacts.

"The Global Internet Governance Forum to be held in Vilnius provides a particular opportunity for the presentation of Lithuania as a modern country and increasing the influence on the management of social processes, as well as enhancing international business relations in the field of information and communication technologies, attracting the attention of potential investors", said Vice-Minister Rimvydas Vaštakas.

According to the Vice-Minister, increasing attention of politicians is necessary for the improvement of internet management, solution of contents development issues, safety and reliability problems.

The Global Forum will provide an opportunity to instigate discussions regarding the above-mentioned problems and enable to make solutions meet future requirements and facilitate the tackling of problems in the future.

Lithuanian business representatives will be able to participate in Forum discussions and present their aspect towards the global topicalities of the internet. Main topics – management of critical information resources, openness and privacy, access and diversity, internet management development, internet management and the future. During the event, discussions will be also held regarding such advanced technologies as cloud computing of data, software in the internet.

The Global Internet Governance Forum in Vilnius is arranged by the United Nations Secretariat General and by Lithuanian partners – the Ministry of Transport and Communications and the Information Society Development Committee.

Andrius Kubilius to Lecture in London

Andrius Kubilius, Prime Minister of the Republic of Lithuania, is to give a public lecture at the London School of Economics at 6.30 pm, 22 June.

As well as his duties in politics, Kubilius is interested in political science, history and the knowledge economy. He is Chairman of the Policy Committee of the Knowledge Economy Forum, and has been a Member of the international Advisory Board of the Baltic Development Forum since 2001.

The lecture is free and open to all, however a ticket is required and can be requested from: www2.lse.ac.uk

Lithuania to consider easing visa rules for Kaliningrad

Vilnius, May 31 (RIA Novosti-ELTA) - Lithuania may once again consider adding its name to a Russian-Polish request to the European Commission asking for the easing of visa rules for the Russian Baltic enclave of Kaliningrad, the country's prime minister told RIA Novosti in an interview on Monday.

The European Parliament's resolution 1931/2006 allows states parties to the Schengen agreement to establish a simplified visa regime for people living in the 30-km (or 50-km) zone from both sides of the external border.

In July 2009, Lithuania, Poland and Russia started preparing a request to the European Union's main executive body, seeking to extend the resolution to all Kaliningrad Region residents. Lithuania, however, later withdrew from the preparations.

"We will once again consider [joining the request], I think the issue got stuck somewhere on the bureaucratic level. I always speak in favor of easier travel of citizens... It may need some time, but I think the issue will be solved. I'm optimistic about it," Andrius Kubilius said.

Sandwiched between Poland and Lithuania, Russia's westernmost Kaliningrad Region has no land border with Russia.



• President Grybauskaitė with Dr Birutė Galdikas. Photo: Džoja Gunda Barysaitė.

To preserve nature, we first have to change ourselves

President Dalia Grybauskaitė met with Dr. Birutė Galdikas, the well-known Lithuanian Canadian primatologist, conservationist, ethologist, and author of several books relating to the endangered orangutan.

Their conversation centered on Dr. Galdikas' research, conservation activities and plans for the future. The President underlined that Birutė Galdikas, who is internationally recognized for environmental initiatives, was making a significant contribution to protecting animals and their natural habitats and to fighting the destruction of living nature.

"The Earth is our only refuge and home. By devastating the environment, we are devastating ourselves. Your invaluable

experience, enthusiasm and high aspiration to stop the demolition of nature is an example to be followed and a great incentive to protect our surroundings. We cannot live for this day only. To change the situation, we first have to change ourselves: we must preserve nature for those who will come after us," the President said.

The President expressed her strong hope that Birutė Galdikas, whose environmental activities were promoting the name of Lithuania around the world, would share her priceless experience and knowledge with Lithuanian researchers and students by including them into joint work projects.

Lithuania Leading in Broadband and Digital TV

The 15th Progress Report on the Single European Electronic Communications Market – 2009 prepared by the European Commission places Lithuania among EU's leading countries in terms of the development of broadband infrastructure, mobile communications as well as digital television.

Lithuania is ranked 3rd leading among EU-27 in the development of fibre and wireless broadband connections, outpacing Denmark, Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Germany. In 2009 up to 64% of broadband lines in Lithuania

were provided using a non-DSL technology in January 2010, largely above the EU average of 21%. And with the completion of the publicly funded rural fibre network project (called RAIN), access to broadband will be available to 98% of the Lithuanian population.

Digital terrestrial television (DTTV) network covers 92% of the territory of Lithuania, and it is in service for 95% of the population. In terms of the development of the DTTV network, Lithuania stands in one line with France, the UK and Slovakia.

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State Budget collects more income than planned in May

Vilnius, June 11 (ELTA) - Over May this year the state budget received LTL1.657 billion (€0.479 billion), while the projected revenues stood at LTL1.223 billion (€0.354 billion).

According to the Finance Ministry, the state budget collected most revenues from value-added tax (VAT). Over May, revenues from VAT amounted to LTL585.6 million (€169.52 million) compared with the expected LTL518.6 billion (€150.13 billion).

Over the said month, revenues of LTL256 million (€74.10 million) were received from excise duty as compared to the predicted LTL280 million (€81.05 million).

In May, LTL71.6 million

(€20.72 million) were received from income tax as compared to the planned LTL76.8 million (€22.23 million).

Over a period of five months this year, the state budget collected LTL8.382.2 billion together with the funds of the European Union and other countries (the EU funds stood at LTL2.489.6 billion).

Over the five months of 2010, the state budget received LTL5.892.6 billion as compared to the planned LTL5.489.4 billion.

In 2010, the state budget deficit stands at LTL4.930 billion. All additional income is used to reduce the budget deficit, states the report of the Finance Ministry.



Vilnius Declaration from the Council of the Baltic Sea States

The Heads of Government and other high-level representatives of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden and the President of the European Commission gathered in Vilnius on 1-2 June 2010 for the 8th Baltic Sea States Summit.

The Summit stated its conviction that the Baltic Sea Region, on the basis of:

1. respect for democratic principles, human rights and the rule of law,
2. active civil societies,
3. increasingly integrated and interdependent economies,
4. developed social dialogue and social cohesion,

has the potential to become one of the most prosperous, innovative and competitive regions in the world, using the strengths of the Council of the Baltic Sea States and other existing Baltic Sea regional cooperation frameworks.

The Summit made a strong political commitment to turn into reality the following Vision for the Baltic Sea Region by 2020:

The Region has a well-balanced intergovernmental structure for political dialogue and practical cooperation.

The Baltic Sea is regaining its ecological health, with its littoral States playing a leading and exemplary role in dealing with the environmental challenges.

Marked progress has been achieved in fostering investment-friendly economies and innovation driven production.

Using the potential of public-private partnerships and driven by a common understanding, the public sector and the business community

take a shared responsibility for sustainable development.

Regional economic growth benefits from an integrated maritime policy and well-interconnected transport networks.

All countries in the Region enjoy the results of integrated energy markets, improved energy efficiency and extended use of clean and renewable energy.

The people of the Region benefit from positive dynamics of socio-economic development, ensuring good public health and social well-being.

The countries of the Region are effectively reducing unemployment, social exclusion and inequality in the labour market.

The Region benefits from advanced regional networks built on active application of information technologies.

The people of the Region are experiencing a steady progress in combating terrorism, in enhancing the protection and resilience of critical infrastructure and in fighting organized crime, especially trafficking in human beings, including children, and in illegal drugs.

A strong regional identity is emerging, fostered by research, education, culture, and the common heritage of the region.

The Region benefits from promotion of tolerance and extended people-to-people contacts.

The Summit expressed its gratitude to Lithuania for its Presidency of the CBSS during 2009-2010, and welcomed Norway as the incoming Presidency for 2010-2011.

The Summit welcomed the invitation from Germany to host the 9th Baltic Sea States Summit in June 2012.

Belgian Etex Group Opens a Plant in Lithuania

The Belgian industrial group, specialising in the manufacture and marketing of high quality building materials and systems, Etex Group, opened its new fibre cement roofing sheet plant in Lithuania, the only one of its kind in the Baltic States.

With over 110 employees, the company aims to produce about 7 million square meters of fibre cement sheets in its eco-friendly factory building which required an investment of over 70 million

for its state-of-the-art building with modern technology and the latest quality standards.

The capacity of the new plant will be 2-3 times higher than the entire production of fibre cement sheets in the past, says the newly established Eternit Baltic's Director Gediminas Vaitkevicius.

The company expects to export the fibre cement sheets to Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Germany, Romania, Russia and other European countries.

Summer season increases passenger flows

Vilnius, June 3 (ELTA) - In the five months this year, Vilnius International Airport (TVOU) served 517,170 passengers, an increase of 10% as compared with the same period last year.

In April (134,000), the number of passengers increased by 19% as compared with the same month last year.

Comparing the results of April and May this year, passenger flow increased by 37% in May. Over a period of five months, the number of flights increased by 23% (10,868) and the amount of cargo transported grew to 2,052 tons.

"The beginning of summer sea-

son, the variety of scheduled and charter flights attract considerable number of passengers travelling via Vilnius airport," says TVOU CEO Tomas Vaišvila.

According to him, Vilnius captured the second place, after Riga (1.621 million passengers), among the airports of the Baltic States, whereas Tallinn remained in the third place (495,257 passengers).

This year Copenhagen, Riga, London, Frankfurt, Prague, Dublin, Helsinki, Warsaw, Moscow and Vienna remain the most popular destinations.

Vilnius International Airport expects to serve about 2 million passengers this year.

SUDOKU

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Solutions for Issue 8

Easy

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8	9	5	7	2	1	3	6	4
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Medium

1	2	4	7	5	3	6	8	9
3	7	8	9	6	4	2	5	1
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7	4	5	6	8	1	9	2	3
4	8	3	1	7	6	5	9	2
2	6	7	4	9	5	1	3	8
9	5	1	2	3	8	4	7	6

Lithuania to sell euro-denominated domestic debt from July

Vilnius, June 14 (Bloomberg-ELTA) - Lithuania plans to begin sales of euro-denominated bonds in domestic auctions from next month to diversify borrowing opportunities.

The notes, which will be auctioned at the NASDAQ-OMX Vilnius, are expected to hold maturities of more than one year, the Finance Ministry said in an emailed statement.

Zero inflation predicted for June

Vilnius, June 14 (ELTA) - The Department of Statistics forecasts that inflation measured by the harmonized index of consumer prices will stand at 0.0 percent in June, as compared with May.

According to the Department, annual inflation will reach 0.8 percent, while average annual inflation will stand at 0.9 percent in June.

The inflation rate predicted for June will be slightly influenced by rising transport prices as well as the prices for foodstuffs and non-alcoholic beverages. The overall price growth will be stopped by declining prices of stationery and office supplies and a decrease in the prices of ready-made apparel and footwear.

Top 10 Richest Lithuanians

Veidas magazine recently published their list of the richest people in Lithuania.

The richest person is Bronislovas Lubys (LTL1.2 billion), a major shareholder of Achemos grupė.

Next on the list, in order of wealth are: Nerijus Numavičius (LTL1.1 billion, Vilniaus prekyba), Darius Mockus (LTL1 billion, MG Baltic), Augustinas and Artūras Rakauskas (LTL726 million, Senukai), Žilvinas Marcinkevičius (LTL648 million, Vilniaus prekyba), Dainius Dundulis (LTL600 million, Rivona), Vidmantas Kučinskas (LTL525 million, Arvi ir ko), Arūnas Martinkevičius (LTL504 million, SBA), Ramūnas Karbauskis (LTL486 million, Agrokoncernas) and Nerijus Dagilis (LTL323 million, Hermis Capital).

Hourly labour costs down by 10.3% in Q1 y-o-y

Vilnius, June 10 (ELTA) - In the first quarter of this year, compared with the first quarter of 2009, hourly labour costs in industrial, construction and services companies, including sole proprietorships, went down by 10.3%. In business companies, hourly labour costs dropped by 10.8%, the Department of Statistics reports.

The EU is interested in trade relations with the east - Ažubalis

The European Union is economically interested to reach an agreement on stable and global rules-based trade relations with its neighbours in the East as soon as possible, Lithuania's Minister of Foreign Affairs Audronius Ažubalis said during the meeting with Péter Balás, Deputy Director General of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Trade in Vilnius on 11 May.

The goal of this meeting was to discuss important issues of the European Union's (EU) trade policy. Special attention was dedicated to the EU's trade relations with Russia and Ukraine, projects of the Eastern Partnership initiative and an appropriate use of EU's instruments of trade protection.

During the conversation the Minister stressed that during negotiations with Russia on the new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, the European Commission must persistently aim at having Russia's clear commitments in the area of foreign trade, in compliance with the rules that are set out by the

World Trade Organization, as it is especially important for the economy of the European Union.

In Minister A. Ažubalis's opinion, during the negotiations with Ukraine on free trade the EU has to aim to make an ambitious agreement and, at the same time, the EU has to be prepared to demonstrate flexibility, especially regarding the opening of the agricultural produce market. It is important to conclude this agreement as soon as possible and in this way to support European integration aspirations of Ukraine.

When discussing the EU's Eastern Partnership programme, the Minister said that Lithuania aimed to use the projects that were based on this initiative to have the EU open talks with Georgia on Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement as soon as possible.

According to Minister A. Ažubalis, instruments of trade protection must remain an important means of ensuring fair trade.

Western Union is yet another result of consistent effort

Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius welcomed the choice of Western Union, the international financial services company and leader of innovations, to invest in Lithuania and stressed that this move was yet more proof that consistent efforts by the Government to attract global high-tech leaders to Lithuania yields excellent results.

"I am glad that more and more innovation and high-tech leaders, of all the countries around the world, choose Lithuania as the best place to establish their advanced service centres. This shows that we are able to win in the global competition for talent and attraction of high technologies, as well as provide the best environment for investment", said Prime Minister Kubilius.

"Investments like this will not only lead to the creation of new jobs in Lithuania and increase in export of the Lithuanian services, but they will also stimulate Lithuania to make a breakthrough moving towards the high value-added economy. I know that a number of well-

known companies are going to follow the footsteps of Barclays, IBM, Fermento and now Western Union", said Prime Minister Kubilius.

The services centre in Vilnius is going to be the fourth international centre of Western Union. Western Union has more than 6,000 employees, and its turnover was US\$5.1 billion in 2009.

In March 2010 the global foreign direct investment monitor database FDiMarkets.com announced that 28 foreign investors entered the Lithuanian market in 2009; they invested over LTL3.5 billion (€1 billion) and created 5,300 new jobs.

Moog Medical, the US manufacturer of medical devices, launched production, services and R&D of medical devices in Lithuania. The leading ventilation company, Sweden's Systemair plans to open a new ventilation equipment manufacturing plant in Ukmergė, and Spain's Gruppo Sopena plans to open an aluminium parts plant in Alytus industrial park.

In May SoDra benefits exceeded revenues by LTL246.3 mill

Vilnius, June 15 (ELTA) - According to preliminary data, in May 2010, SoDra budget revenue stood at 845.9 million litas (244.88 million euros), which is 12 million litas (3.47 million euros) or 1.4 percent more than planned and 70.2 million litas (20.32 million euros) or 7.7 percent less as compared with the same period last year.

In May, as planned, SoDra received 29 million litas (8.38 million euros) assignments from the state budget and other state financial re-

sources.

In May 2010, monthly benefits stood at 1.920,2 billion litas, which is 42.7 million litas or 4.1 percent more than planned. As compared to the same period last year, the benefits were 101.1 million litas or 8.5 percent smaller.

In May this year, monthly benefits exceeded revenues by 246.3 million litas (71.30 million euros).

Over five months this year, SoDra received 4.24,7 billion litas revenues, which is 114.7 million litas or 2.9 percent more than planned.

Totals and changes in trade with key foreign partners

Exports	Jan –April 2010	%	against Jan–April 2009, growth, drop (-), %	Imports	Jan –April 2010.	%	against Jan–April 2009, growth, drop (-), %
	LTL million				LTL million		
Total	14691.9	100	17.2	Total	16814.4	100	21.8
EU	9341.4	63.6	14.8	EU	9117.4	54.2	10.6
CIS¹	3492.5	23.8	26.3	CIS¹	6415.5	38.2	49.6
EFTA²	448.4	3.1	-1.5	EFTA²	119.1	0.7	-20.7
Russia	1956.9	13.3	23.6	Russia	5963.1	35.5	52.2
Germany	1634.2	11.1	40.8	Germany	1747.2	10.4	9.7
Latvia	1357.6	9.2	5.7	Poland	1455.0	8.7	4.7
Poland	1164.6	7.9	58.3	Latvia	905.1	5.4	2.6
Estonia	782.8	5.3	-5.0	Netherlands	652.2	3.9	2.2
Belarus	760.2	5.2	26.8	Belgium	566.9	3.4	41.5
Netherlands	723.4	4.9	20.5	Italy	518.8	3.1	13.3
UK	677.9	4.6	22.8	Sweden	498.6	3.0	34.2
Sweden	578.1	3.9	17.2	France	438.6	2.6	26.0
USA	563.3	3.8	32.1	Estonia	433.9	2.6	23.2
Denmark	549.6	3.7	2.8	China	433.3	2.6	0.2
Ukraine	528.0	3.6	78.8	Denmark	321.7	1.9	-11.4
Other	3415.3	23.5	-	Other	2880.0	16.9	-

1 Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan. 2 Island, Lichtenstein, Norway, Switzerland.

Lithuanian Foreign trade January – April 2010

Statistics Lithuania reports that, based on non-final data obtained from customs declarations and Intrastat reporting data, exports in April 2010 amounted to LTL 4.1 billion, imports – LTL 4.9 billion. The foreign trade deficit of Lithuania amounted to LTL 0.8 billion, which is 2.6 times more than in April 2009. Data on trade with EU countries was adjusted after VAT returns data had been received.

In April 2010, compared to April 2009, exports and imports increased by 36.2 and 46.9% respectively; mineral products excluded, exports and imports increased by 22.5%. Exports of goods of Lithuanian origin grew by 37.2, mineral products excluded – by 15.8%. The increase in exports was influenced by a 2.3-fold increase in exports of petroleum oils and oils obtained from bituminous minerals, a 47.7% increase in exports of motor vehicles, 24.3% – plastics and plastic products. The increase in imports was influenced by a 2.8-fold increase in imports of crude oil and a 66.2% increase in imports of motor vehicles.

In April 2010, compared to March 2010, exports and imports increased by 7.6 and 8.6% respectively; mineral products excluded, exports increased by 2.9%, while imports decreased by 4.3%. Exports of goods of Lithuanian origin grew by 12.2%; mineral products excluded, exports of goods of Lithuanian origin grew by 6%. The increase in exports was influenced by a 28.4% increase in exports of petroleum oils and oils obtained from bituminous minerals, 41.7% – fertilisers. The increase in imports was influenced by a 2.1-fold increase in imports of crude oil.

In January–April 2010, compared to the same period in 2009, exports and imports grew by 17.2 and 21.8% respectively; mineral products excluded, exports increased by 12.7, imports – by 8.1%. Exports of goods of Lithuanian origin grew by 16.7%; mineral products excluded, exports of goods of Lithuanian origin grew by 10%. An impact on the increase in exports was made by a 37.9% increase in exports of petroleum oils and oils obtained from bituminous minerals,

36.6% – plastics and plastic products, a 3.2-fold increase in exports of ships, boats and floating structures, and a 27.2% increase in exports of motor vehicles. The increase in imports was influenced by a 71.8% increase in imports of crude oil, 30.2% – motor vehicles, 59.2% – organic chemicals.

In January–April 2010, the most important partners in exports were Russia (13.3%), Germany (11.1%), Latvia (9.2%), Poland (7.9%), in imports – Russia (35.5%), Germany (10.4%), Poland (8.7%), Latvia (5.4%).

In January–April 2010, the largest share in exports fell within mineral products (22.5%), machinery and mechanical appliances, electrical equipment (9.4%), vehicles, aircraft, vessels and associated transport equipment (8.9%), in imports – mineral products (35.1%), products of the chemical or allied industries (12.1%), machinery and mechanical appliances, electrical equipment (11%).

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Sport Shorts

Macijauskas Retires

Arvydas Macijauskas announced his retirement from basketball. The Lithuanian Kalashnikov, as he was sometimes referred to, cited back problems as the reason.

Earlier surgery to his Achilles tendon resulted in a back problem that would need surgery and another year of rehabilitation, and the 30 year old shooting

guard reluctantly contacted the Lithuanian Basketball Federation with his retirement decision because he was on the preliminary list for the national team.

After training hard in Miami for the last month he realised the extent of the injury and says that he wants to continue a career in basketball, but this time calling the shots rather than making them.

Lithuanians pull out of NBA draft

Both of Lithuania's brightest prospects for the NBA draft have withdrawn their applications, opting instead for another year in the European leagues.

Mindaugas Kuzminskas had offers from many NBA clubs to participate in training camps, but in the end decided to take up the invitation for the National Team Second Squad.

It was also expected that Kuzminskas would only be picked in the second round and he hopes to improve his

stock for next year and a better chance of being a first round pick.

Donatas Motiejūnas had pulled out of the draft a bit earlier after a somewhat disappointing season in Italy.

Many experts cited his reliance on natural ability rather than hard graft for his fall from grace, but both boys need more experience and a lot of time in the weight room before they can be considered legitimate NBA contenders.

Savickas lifts another Strongman Trophy

Žydrūnas Savickas was equal first in the Strongman Champions League-Ireland contest on 6 June.

Savickas tied with Terry Hollands after a count-back failed to separate the two big men. Both competitors had taken three wins, two second placings and a fourth on the day, so the judging committee took the rare decision of announcing them joint winners.

The battle for third was equally enthralling as Agris Kazelniks pipped Alexander Klyushev by three points after being tied coming into the final event.



Courtesy of IronMind Enterprises, Inc.
CRandall J. Strossen

Ireland turned on a nice sunny Sunday in Limerick for the first Strongman Champions League to be held on the Emerald Isle and organisers, fans and competitors are looking forward to making the trip again next year.

Kurtinaitis Cut Loose

It's official, Rimas Kurtinaitis will be looking for a new job next season.

Lietuvos Rytas has signed Croatian Drazen Anzulovic to take the reigns of the Vilnius club, and the new coach was in Vilnius for a few days recently to meet some of the players and advise them on their training regime.

Kurtinaitis and Vainauskas are said to have held talks and Kurtinaitis stated on the TV program Panorama that the club basically needed a coach with a lower salary.

Both parties are said to have parted amicably and appreciate each other's position as well as their work together over the preceding year and a half.

Kurtinaitis presided over one of the more successful eras of Lietuvos Rytas, but management was concerned about the fall in form from February, and the hardship in overcoming Žalgiris who were playing without a coach for most of the LKL final series.

The need for change was probably the over-riding factor as both camps hope to reinvigorate their efforts next season.

Robert Stelmahers has been appointed assistant coach and Arvydas Gronskis retains his position as second assistant coach.

On the player front Aron Baynes, Stepas Babrauskas, Donatas Zavadskas, Vidas Ginevičius and Justas Sinica have left the team.

Again money is the central issue and Rytas would probably like to retain some of their services, but unable to match offers they can get on the open market.

Baynes and Sinica were not performing as hoped and management had lost faith in them. Sinica might still play with Perlas.

The players remaining at Rytas will be Jonas Valančiūnas, Milko Bjelica, Kenan Bajramovic, Artūras Jomantas, the new team captain, Žydrūnas Kelys, Martynas Gecevičius, Simas Buterleivičius and Igor Milosevic.

New signings are Australian Brad Newley, Šiauliai forward Arvydas Kšnius and with an eye on developing young talent, three Perlas players; Giedrius Staniulis, Paulius Dambrauskas and Eimantas Bendžius.

Negotiations were concluded in the signing of the two final players for the roster; point guard Jerry Johnson and centre Cemal Nalga.

Johnson will be the main point guard for the team and has played



• Stepas Babrauskas will sadly not don a Rytas uniform next season.

Off Season sparks wholesale changes for Lithuanian basketball

with coach Drazen Anzulovic before.

Nalga is said to be an intelligent tall who will play second big man behind Valančiūnas.

There is a lot of excitement around the development of the 210 cm Valančiūnas who many regard as the next Sabonis, so much so in fact that there is said to be a lot of interest from Olympiacos in buying his contract.

Still, at 18 it is expected he will remain in Lithuania at least for next season where he will receive the court time he still needs in his development.

Žalgiris

Žalgiris will go into next season with a much more stable line-up. Only three players are out of contract - Povilas Čukinas, Travis Watson and Tadas Klimavičius. Given Klimavičius' performance last season, especially in the finals, the club is expected to work hard to retain his services. All three have a plus one clause in their contracts.

The management in Kaunas are also looking to sign a new point guard and centre for next season, and there is some talk that they might lend some of their younger players to other clubs where they would get more court time, leaving room for other new signings.

As far as the coaching position goes, there was talk of Kurtinaitis and Chomičius being possible candidates. Kurtinaitis has all but ruled himself out after meeting Romanov and stating he wants a say in recruitment, as well as total control of the team.

Kurtinaitis is still awaiting further offers and has stated he wants to coach in Euroleague next season.

Off Court

The off court banter continues with public letters flying both ways. Jonas Vainauskas is still threatening Romanov with libel, who in turn said he would agree to apologise if Jonas admits he suggested buying the LKL title in jest.



Dancing for the Championships

It's not just the men that have to perform for the European Championships to be held in Lithuania next year. Recently seven Lithuanian dance groups were put through their paces to see if they qualify for the upcoming championships.

The basketball team dancers for

Šiauliai, Vilniaus Lietuvos Rytas and Kaunas Žalgiris, as well as Amber Dance from Vilnius, Energym from Panevėžys and Arebescas from Marijampolė all had to perform seven routines in Klaipėda where they were judged on dance, acrobatics, dress and communication with the audience, among other things.

Irena Valantinienė said that Lietuvos

Rytas, Kaunas Žalgiris and Amber Dance stood above the rest and will be recommended for Eurobasket 2011, though there was still room for improvement.

Further she said that hopefully it will be all Lithuanian dancers used for the tournament and if Šiauliai should work on their routines they have the best chance of also making the grade.

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VII – IV 17.00 – 01.00
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