
147 legal acts

Bank supervisory and restructuring mechanisms, recovery and resolution directive, deposit guarantee schemes.

In order to benefit from the Internal market, e-signature is being developed and an agreement reached regarding telecommunications networks, ICT 2013 in Vilnius.

2013 European Semester completed, the new economic coordination cycle started.

For the first time, the EU budget includes financial line for strategic connections; the Council reports on the completion of the energy market and strengthening of the external dimension of EU energy policy.

Fight against fraud and hate crime, concern for data protection, consular assistance.

The Vilnius meeting highlighted the importance of the EU Eastern Partnership; 5 agreements signed and initialled. Transport ministers agreed on infrastructure projects; Justice and home affairs cooperation.

Three negotiation rounds with the USA, common EU position and progress in WTO negotiations.

Approved 7 year EU budget of 960 billion euros.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU.
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Credible Europe

The Lithuanian Presidency of the EU Council sought to strengthen the financial sector and the public finances of Member States, and move the EU economy towards growth, effective management and a stronger social dimension. The Lithuanian Presidency reached substantial progress in the establishment of the Banking Union; devoted much attention to the responsible economic policies of Member States, and achieved the adoption of significant legislation that strengthens the protection of the financial interests of EU citizens and their rights.

Banking Union is important for the EU banking system's stability

The Banking Union is aimed at ensuring the EU's financial stability, and preventing or at least mitigating potential crises as much as possible. The Banking Union will consist of two key components – the Single Supervisory Mechanism, which was previously negotiated and then approved during the Lithuanian Presidency, and the Single Resolution Mechanism. These two elements of the Banking Union will be governed by the same rules across the EU, namely the Bank Recovery and Resolution Directive, the Deposit Guarantee Schemes Directive and the Capital Requirements Regulation. The Lithuanian Presidency has set and reached agreements on the following three elements of the Banking Union:

- EU Member States have found a compromise on the second element of the Banking Union, namely a Single Resolution Mechanism which would strengthen the credibility of the EU financial system for financial markets and EU citizens. It is expected that a new authority for bank restructuring and bank resolution fund will be established.
- The Lithuanian Presidency has reached agreement with the European Parliament on the Bank Recovery and Resolution Directive which aims to create an operational and single mechanism to deal with the problems of credit institutions and protect taxpayers' money. It will introduce a key innovation: major difficulties of banks will be solved through private funds, as EU Member States have limited capacities to support such credit institutions.
- The agreement reached with the European Parliament on the deposit guarantee schemes aims to ensure the credibility of national deposit insurance systems. After this legislation enters into force, the necessary insurance payments to depositors will be paid more efficiently. In addition, EU Member States will be obliged to collect funds for the deposit insurance founding.

Focus on responsible economic policy

Particular recommendations for EU Member States approved and the draft budgets of Eurozone countries assessed

During the Lithuanian Presidency, EU finance ministers approved country-specific recommendations in accordance with the European Semester. EU Member States had to follow these recommendations when deciding the 2014 national budgets as well as structural reforms, employment aims and social policy. Eurozone countries for the first time submitted draft budgets for pre-assessment by EU institutions. The report by the Lithuanian Presidency on the lessons learned from the 2013 European Semester suggests how to improve economic coordination.

The new economic coordination cycle began with the presentation of the European Commission's Annual Growth Survey. The Lithuanian Presidency presented it at meetings which had great importance for the coordination of economic policy, namely the General Affairs, Competitiveness, Economic and Financial Affairs, Justice, Employment and Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Councils.
Focus on strengthening the Economic and Monetary Union

Financial crisis has revealed weaknesses in the Economic and Monetary Union. During the Lithuanian Presidency, EU finance ministers proposed options to strengthen the Economic and Monetary Union to the European Council. At two ministerial debates, the Lithuanian Presidency also pointed out that social policy is important in strengthening the Economic and Monetary Union.

Protection of EU citizens' financial interests

Agreement reached with the European Parliament on audit reform

EU Member States have agreed to strengthen the requirements for auditors and audit firms to support their impartiality. The main objective of the reform is to ensure that auditor activities serve the public interest, restore the confidence of investors, especially banks, insurance companies and public interest entities, and help to develop the economy.

Agreement reached with the European Parliament on the Directive on the freezing and confiscation of proceeds of crime

The Lithuanian Presidency has reached one of the most important priorities in the field of justice – in concluding negotiations with the European Parliament on the Directive on the freezing and confiscation of proceeds of crime. The legislation aims to create efficient, simple and practical mechanisms to freeze and confiscate the proceeds of crime. It would also represent a serious blow to organized crime by reducing the financial incentives and benefits of financial crimes.

EU Council reached agreement on a Directive that provides legal measures to ensure the better protection of the euro against counterfeiting

The euro is used by 330 million EU citizens, and is the second most important currency in the world. Currency counterfeiting is one of the most common offences, and EU citizens and businesses have suffered losses of at least EUR 500 million over the past decade. The purpose of this legislative act is to better protect the Eurozone's currency. Effective, proportionate and dissuasive measures implemented by EU Member States will strengthen the protection of not only coins and banknotes in circulation but also those for future issuance.

EU Council agreed on the European Account Preservation Order

The Lithuanian Presidency reached agreement among EU Member States for a regulation establishing a European alternative procedure for the blocking of bank accounts. The adoption of the European Account Preservation Order will make it easier for creditors to recover debts, and debtors’ rights will be adequately protected.

Agreement reached with the European Parliament on the Directive regarding the European Investigation Order in Criminal Matters

EU citizens’ trust in national and EU courts will be enhanced by the Directive on the European Investigation Order in Criminal Matters, which aims to improve mechanisms for obtaining evidence and cooperation of EU Member States in criminal cases.

EU Council approved a proposal amending the Regulation on jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of judgements in civil and commercial matters

EU unitary patent protection has been strengthened by the agreement to amend the Regulation on jurisdiction, and the recognition and enforcement of judgments in civil and commercial matters (“Brussels I Regulation”). This agreement is a serious step towards the activities of the new Unified Patent Court aimed at reducing bureaucratic obstacles and additional costs, and avoiding situations whereby companies are forced to sue in courts of different countries in the case of disputes.
European Year of Citizens highlighted the protection of EU citizens' rights

**Progress on data protection**

The Lithuanian Presidency actively sought progress in the field of data protection by allowing EU citizens better control over their personal data in the digital space. The Data Protection Package was one of the main priorities of the Lithuanian Presidency which aimed to find a balance between the rights of EU citizens and the promotion of economic growth. This issue was constantly discussed in the expert group and in all meetings of the Justice and Home Affairs ministers.

**Approval of Council conclusions on the EU Citizenship Report 2013**

500 million EU citizens over the past 20 years have had the right to benefit from EU citizenship in their daily lives. The Council’s conclusions emphasize the necessity to inform EU citizens of their rights, focus on obstacles to the free movement of workers, students and trainees within the EU, and the protection of vulnerable groups of EU citizens. The accessibility of information and opportunities for citizens to actively participate in democratic processes also strengthen EU citizenship.

**Approval of Council conclusions on the fight against hate crimes**

The financial crisis in Europe has had dire social consequences, as especially evidently reflected in the number of often violent attacks against vulnerable groups such as Roma, migrants, and ethnic and religious minorities. The Council’s conclusions approved at the initiative of the Lithuanian Presidency aim to raise awareness of hate crimes by calling for the drafting of concrete proposals to combat manifestations of hatred in the EU and Member States, and to improve the situation of victims of hate crimes.
Growing Europe

In seeking to maintain and strengthen the economic recovery in Europe, the Lithuanian Presidency reached the timely approval of the growth-oriented multi-annual EU budget. Important measures to increase employment have been taken, especially for youth. Focusing on strengthening the future-oriented internal market, the Lithuanian Presidency gave impetus to the development of the internal market in the Digital agenda and energy areas. Important decisions were taken in the area of citizens’ health care. The Council also highlighted the added value of macro-regional strategies. The EU has shown responsibility for the possible negative effects of climate change and the environmental consequences thereof.

EU budget opens opportunities for using programmes from January 1

Approved EU multi-annual budget for 2014–2020

The Lithuanian Presidency successfully completed inter-institutional negotiations on the EU multi-annual financial framework for 2014–2020. Lithuania guided and finalised negotiations on over 60 legal acts related to the multi-annual budget, including such programmes as Horizon 2020, EaSi, Creative Europe, LIFE, Customs 2020, and CEF, which were negotiated during the Irish Presidency and formally approved during the Lithuanian Presidency.

The following agreements were reached during the Lithuanian Presidency:

• For the implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy Reform agreed during the Lithuanian Presidency, transitional provisions shall be applied to certain aspects in 2014. This will allow farmers to follow clear rules and have financial guarantees;

• After two years of tough negotiations, the reformed Cohesion Policy focuses on areas that help to ensure the long-term competitiveness of EU Member States and their 270 regions. More than EUR 325 billion investments into research, innovation, development of small and medium-sized enterprises, information technologies and energy efficiency will contribute to economic growth and job creation;

• Simplified procedures and rules, application of programmes for different needs, attention to human rights, good governance and democracy will contribute to the more efficient application of EUR 51 billion allocated for financial instruments for external action. According to the seven measures of external funding, around EUR 20 billion will be dedicated to development cooperation. Eastern and Southern neighbours and strategic EU partners across the world will receive support as well;

• The European Investment Bank will continue funding external activities by applying a EUR 30 billion limit for EU guarantees;

• Close cooperation of EU Member States in the event of natural disasters and help for victims will be ensured by the Union Civil Protection Mechanism;

• In the area of EU Home Affairs, the Internal Security Fund will finance measures for external borders and visas, law enforcement cooperation, the fight against crime and the prevention of crime and crisis management, while the Asylum and Migration Fund will be used to integrate migration management;

• Citizens will be granted more powers and guaranteed rights when purchasing goods and services from other EU Member States, and their trust in the quality of goods will grow through the strengthening of the Consumer Programme;

• The safety of EU citizens will be ensured by means of the European Earth Observatory Programme Copernicus, which includes data gathering and the provision of information via the global monitoring of land, marine and atmosphere;

• Over the seven years, nearly EUR 3.5 billion will be allocated through the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived.
Approved EU budget for 2014

The Lithuanian Presidency in its first weeks reached agreement between EU Member States on the EU budget for 2014. Nearly half of the budget will be allocated to initiatives to enhance the funding of research, innovation and education. The successful completion of negotiations with the European Parliament later in the Presidency and the final adoption of the budget was possible due to the swift agreements achieved on the supplementary expenditure of the EU budget for 2013.

Priority for Increasing Employment

Attention on increasing youth employment

The most negative impact of the financial crisis was on EU youth: youth unemployment is double the general unemployment average of EU Member States. EUR 6 billion from the European Social Fund will be allocated for the Youth Employment Initiative in regions where youth unemployment is higher than 25 per cent. The Lithuanian Presidency prepared the Declaration on the European Alliance for Apprenticeships which was approved by the EU Council. In the document, EU Member States express the common goal of enhancing the quality and supply of apprenticeship schemes, which provide more opportunities for youth moving from the educational system to the labour market. Reflecting the priority of the Lithuanian Presidency, EU ministers adopted the Council conclusions on enhancing the social inclusion of young people not in employment, education or training.

EU Council agreed on the implementation of the Posting of Workers Directive

In recent years, increasing numbers of temporary highly-qualified workers have been seconded from one EU Member State to another. So far their movements have been hampered because of the different procedures used for accepting these employees in EU Member States, and the insufficient social rights of posted workers. This Directive is intended to facilitate the movement of such workers by providing cross-border services, ensure fair competition and prevent the violation of rights.

Agreement with the European Parliament on the Supplementary Pension Rights of European Union Workers Moving Between Member States

In accordance with EU legal acts, an employee shall retain guaranteed statutory pension rights when leaving to work in another EU Member State. However, until now the supplementary pension rights of workers moving between Member States, funded by an employer according to the rules of supplementary pension schemes, had not been protected. This agreement will grant EU workers more opportunities to search for employment in other EU Member States.

Agreement reached with the European Parliament on the Directive which facilitates the better application of rights of workers exercising their right to free movement

Freedom of movement of workers is one of the most important rights of EU citizens. This Directive is intended to resolve the remaining problems that workers face when moving from one EU Member State to another: legal protection for workers and their families who suffer discrimination because of their nationality or other undue restrictions on the right to freedom of movement.

Agreement with the European Parliament on the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund

The EU will continue to extend assistance to people who have lost jobs due to changes caused by globalisation. The new agreement will allow this assistance to be applied to self-employed workers and those with fixed-term employment agreements.

Implementation of the Digital Single Market

Progress in the implementation of the Digital Agenda

In order to timely create – by 2015 – the Digital single market, the Lithuanian Presidency contributed to the preparation of the European Council summit discussion on the topic in October. The Lithuanian Presidency made considerable efforts to start negotiations with the European Parliament regarding the Directive on e-identification, which will help to define the legal framework for electronic services in the EU such as electronic signatures, electronic stamps, electronic time marks, electronic documents, electronic delivery services, and site identification services. During the Presidency much attention was devoted to cyber security and combating cybercrime in cyberspace. The cyber security issue was discussed at the informal meeting of ministers of Home Affairs, and EU ministers also agreed on the implementation of the EU cyber security monitoring mechanism.
Agreement with the European Parliament on the guidelines for the development of the Trans-European Telecommunication Network

Guidelines for Telecommunication Networks are an important part of the Digital Agenda for Europe. They establish solutions for the funding of broadband networks, the selection of priority projects of Digital Services Infrastructure, and the inclusion of EU Member States in managing this tool.

The importance of switching to electronic public procurement

The EU Internal Market and Industry ministers recognized the importance of electronic public procurement for the modernization of public administration at the informal meeting organized by the Lithuanian Presidency. The EU public sector spends up to EUR 420 billion a year on public procurement. According to the World Bank, e-procurement can trigger savings of 6 to 13.5 per cent of the total public procurement expenditure. During the Lithuanian Presidency the EU public procurement reform was adopted.

Foundation of common EU energy policy

EU Council reports on the development of energy policy

For the first time EU ministers approved the reports on the progress of the completion of the EU Internal Energy Market and on Strengthening the External Dimension of the EU Energy Policy. This evaluation allows for assessing a number of factors influencing the development of energy policy, including nuclear safety and level playing field with third countries' energy enterprises.

Agreement with the European Parliament on the notification of investment projects of energy infrastructure

EU Member States every second year will notify the Commission about the investment projects of energy infrastructure. Due to the coordination on the EU level, the shortcomings of infrastructure and investments will be allocated. This Regulation will also contribute to strengthening the external dimension of the EU’s energy policy.

The first EU-wide list of Projects of Common Interest introduced

An EU-wide list of projects of common interest was drawn up by the Commission and presented during the high-level energy conference in Vilnius. For the first time the seven-year EU budget provides a financial line for strategic energy infrastructure projects: in the years of 2014-2020 248 projects will have an opportunity to get the EU funding which will represent up to EUR 6 billion.

High-level protection of health to meet the main needs of patients

Agreement with the European Parliament on Tobacco Products Directive

The revised Tobacco Products Directive will discourage youth from smoking, prevent smoking-related diseases, and tighten up tobacco products’ marketing and advertising to provide more effective warnings of the harm caused by smoking. According to the agreement, the warnings must cover 65 per cent of packaging, and as of summer 2020, mentholated tobacco products will be banned. This agreement establishes clear rules for manufacturers, retailers and consumers.

Agreement with the European Parliament on clinical trials

Clinical trials are a necessary measure for the creation of new medicinal products for human use. The agreement provides for the simplification of bureaucratic procedures and the faster issuance of permits for clinical trials, while establishing high standards for medicinal product quality and safety.

Sustainable growth of regions

Agreement of EU Member States on the Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and added value of the macro-regional strategies

Agreement on the added value of macro-regional strategies demonstrates that cooperation between Baltic and Nordic countries can serve as an example to the entire EU. The Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, the first example of macro-regional cooperation in Europe, contributed to the creation of new strategies: in addition to the Strategy for the Danube Region, the Strategies for the Adriatic and Ionian Regions are expected to be drawn up.
Responsibility for the possible negative impact of environmental effects and climate change

Position of EU Member States presented at the United Nations Conference in Warsaw

One of the Lithuanian Presidency priorities in the area of environmental protection was proper preparation for the UN Climate Change Conference held on November 11–22 in Warsaw. EU Ministers of Environment consented to the Council conclusions based on the compromise of the Lithuanian Presidency in presenting the negotiated EU position. During the conference the EU delegation succeeded in having each country present clear, transparent and understandable responsibilities, and to do their “homework” before the 2015 Paris conference.

Agreement with the European Parliament on the EU Emission Trading Scheme

Due to the financial crisis and the high number of issued allowances there was a significant drop in the price of carbon dioxide emissions in recent years, therefore, investments into technologies to reduce emissions became commercially inefficient. After complex negotiations, the Lithuanian Presidency reached a compromise which should help the EU Emission Trading System to recover, and give impetus to the economy boosted by emission reduction and industrial investments into technologies that reduce environmental impacts.

Agreement with the European Parliament on reducing CO₂ emissions from passenger cars

Passenger cars emit more than 10 per cent of the total amount of carbon dioxide emissions of EU Member States, therefore the agreement on the reduction of CO₂ emissions from passenger cars should ensure more effective cars that are less dependable on petroleum resources.

Agreement with the European Parliament on the Regulation of Fluorinated Greenhouse Gases

Fluorinated gases comprise 2 per cent of all greenhouse gases in the EU, but have much more potent atmospheric warming potential than CO₂. These gases are used in cooling and air-conditioning equipment, foam insulation, electrical equipment, aerosol sprays, fire protection systems and as solvents. The new agreement ensures the reduction of fluorinated greenhouse gases by providing a phase down schedule and introducing conditions for products and equipment containing F-gases.

Agreement with the European Parliament on the Directive on Environmental Assessment

The new Directive takes into consideration current environmental, social and economic changes. Environmental impact assessment procedures will be simplified and their quality improved. It will be easier to assess the environmental impact of large projects.
Open Europe

In seeking an open Europe, the Lithuanian Presidency gave new impetus to the Eastern Partnership program and supported the EU enlargement policy by implementing specific steps. During the Presidency, significant progress was achieved in strengthening the transatlantic trade and other trade policies, and strengthening the EU’s role in the globalised world.

Eastern Partnership

Third Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius

The Lithuanian Presidency put the greatest efforts to ensure that the third meeting of the Heads of State and Government of EU Member States and Eastern Partners in Vilnius on November 28–29 would mark the achievements of the Eastern Partnership and would consolidate the highest political attention to this policy. The Eastern Partnership Business Forum, Civil Society Conference and Eastern Youth Forum, organized on the sidelines of the Summit, were widely reflected as well. The following strategic agreements were signed and initialled during the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius:

• The EU-Georgia Association Agreement, including DCFTA, was initialled. It is expected that in the long term, the implementation of DCFTA provisions will increase Georgian exports to the EU by 12 per cent, imports by 7.5 per cent, while its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) can increase by 4.3 per cent;

• The EU-Moldova Association Agreement, including DCFTA, was initialled. It is expected that in the long term, the implementation of DCFTA provisions will increase Moldovian exports to the EU by 16 per cent, imports by 8 per cent, while its GDP can increase by 5.4 per cent;

• After the signing of the EU–Azerbaijan Visa Facilitation Agreement, Azerbaijan citizens, especially those travelling often, will have a simpler and cheaper visa issuance process for traveling to EU Member States;

• Agreement with Georgia on Participation in EU crisis management missions was signed;

• The Air Services Agreement with Ukraine was initialled. It will create a common aviation area where airline companies will comply with the same aviation safety and customer service standards; international flight tariffs will be reduced;

• The Joint Declaration of the Vilnius Summit indicates the progress achieved in the past two years and defines future guidelines for the Eastern Partnership programme in seeking closer cooperation in strategic areas;

• Belarus has finally expressed its readiness to take up the EU’s offer to begin negotiations on the Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements.

• During the Summit, the EU was ready to sign the Association and free trade agreement with Ukraine. EU Member States have agreed that in case of the signing the most of it could be applied provisionally without waiting for full ratification. The EU remains committed to the citizens of Ukraine who demonstrated their determination to achieve convergence with Europe, and the offer to sign the Association and free trade agreement is still open.

Strengthened Sectorial Cooperation between the EU and Eastern Partners

The work on opening EU Agencies and programmes for participation of the Eastern Partners has been continued. Under the Lithuanian Presidency, two formal Eastern Partnership ministerial meetings – in the sectors of Justice and Home Affairs (October 7-8), and Transport (October 9) – created an opportunity for an in-depth discussion by the ministers on a wide spectrum of reforms undertaken by the partner countries, and support that is provided by the EU and its Member States. Moreover, the Eastern Partnership Transport ministers agreed on the trans-European transport network (TEN-T) extension to the six Eastern Partners.
Visa Free Travel for Moldova and progress in mobility area with other Eastern Partners

The Republic of Moldova became the first Eastern partner that has successfully concluded implementation of its Visa Liberalisation Action Plan (VLAP). The Permanent Representatives Committee (COREPER II) agreed to grant the citizens of the Republic of Moldova with visa-free travels to the EU. The final adoption of the decision is expected in early 2014.

The citizens of Armenia will now enjoy the benefits of the facilitated visa regime with the EU starting from January 1, 2014. The respective negotiations with Azerbaijan were finalised, and the Visa Facilitation Agreement was signed at the Vilnius Eastern Partnership Summit. The EU-Azerbaijan Mobility Partnership has been launched in December.

Ukraine and Georgia have continued their work to implement the first phase of their respective VLAPs. During the Vilnius Eastern Partnership summit, Belarus announced its readiness to take up the EU’s offer to launch negotiations on the Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements.

Agenda for Enlargement

New step in Turkey’s accession negotiations with the EU

After a three-year break, a new negotiations chapter has been opened in EU accession negotiations with Turkey. The EU and Turkey also signed the Readmission Agreement.

EU Council approves mandate on accession negotiations with Serbia

EU ministers gave a positive evaluation of the Serbian democratic reforms and efforts in normalising relations with Kosovo. The EU Council approved the negotiating mandate for the accession negotiations with Serbia. The Intergovernmental Conference will take place on January 21, 2014.

Five new chapters opened in accession negotiations with Montenegro

The Lithuanian Presidency presided over the Intergovernmental Conference where five negotiation chapters with Montenegro were opened, including chapter 23 (Judiciary and Fundamental Rights) and chapter 24 (Justice, Freedom and Security) determining the process of negotiations.

EU Council adopts Conclusions on Guidelines for Enlargement Policy

The EU Council has once again confirmed its commitment to continue the enlargement process and to evaluate every country seeking EU accession according to its own merits and the implementation of obligations for EU membership. The conclusions once again emphasise that the rule of law is the axis of the enlargement process as a whole.

Free trade with strategic partners

Three negotiation rounds with the US on the free trade agreement

Having launched a dialogue with the US on data protection, three EU negotiation rounds on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership Agreement with the USA have been held as planned. After signing the largest global free trade agreement, both parties would benefit: the EU’s GDP would grow at half per cent a year and exports to the US would grow by up to a third.

Coordinated position of EU Member States for the IX World Trade Organisation Ministerial Conference

Before the WTO Ministerial Conference held on December 3–6, EU ministers evaluated the situation in the negotiations on the main components of the WTO Bali negotiations package. After the conference the EU welcomed the draft Trade Facilitation Agreement which is seen as the core of this package, accompanied by decisions on agriculture issues as well as a number of development issues.

Free trade developments with Canada and ASEAN countries

During the Lithuanian Presidency, the EU and Canada reached the final accord on the Free Trade Agreement. Upon its coming into effect, 98 per cent of customs tariffs between the EU and Canada will be abolished, and the remaining restrictions will be gradually removed over the seven-year transition period. During the Lithuanian Presidency, EU trade ministers have approved the mandate for negotiations on the EU–China investment agreement; the first agreement of its kind which would allow EU businesses to establish businesses in China more easily and stimulate bilateral investment. It was also decided to include investment protection provisions in the ongoing negotiations with ASEAN countries.
EU’s global role

**Strengthening the European External Action Service**

In the past six months the Lithuanian Presidency prepared conclusions on the review of the European External Action Service. The approved EU Council Conclusions will help to strengthen and develop the EU diplomatic service and strengthen consular protection in the EU as well as in third countries.

**Focus on the EU Common Security and Defence Policy**

During the Lithuanian Presidency, for the first time in five years EU leaders discussed European defence issues. The Lithuanian Presidency actively contributed to the December meeting of the European Council, where EU leaders agreed on strengthening the EU Common Security and Defence Policy, re-evaluated the transformed strategic environment, and delegated a more effective role for the EU in ensuring the security of European citizens.

**Development cooperation**

During the Lithuanian Presidency, the Council approved conclusions on the future financing of the eradication of poverty and the EU development agenda beyond 2015, which will replace the Millennium Development Goals approved in 2000. Particular attention was devoted to the preparation of the United Nations General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals, which was held on September 25. Council Conclusions on Policy Coherence for Development were also approved. In relation to the EU partnership with African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, the Council Decision on the provisional application of measures of the 11th European Development Fund was approved, thus ensuring uninterrupted EU funding from the beginning of 2014; and an important decision of the Council on the Overseas Countries and Territories was also approved.

**EU Member States reached agreement on visa-free travel for citizens of 20 countries**

Agreement between EU Member States was reached that citizens of 16 Caribbean and Pacific countries, United Arab Emirates, Peru, Colombia and Moldova will be able to travel to the EU without visas.

**Steps to avoid future disasters like the Lampedusa tragedy**

Following the sea tragedy near the Italian island of Lampedusa, the Task Force for the Mediterranean was established, which proposed a plan for priority steps to manage and improve the situation. The EU Council discussed the plan which was presented to the European Council in December.

**EU Council Conclusions on combating cigarette smuggling**

The EU and Member States lose more than EUR 10 billion annually because of cigarette smuggling. To deal with the problem, EU finance ministers endorsed the Council conclusions which emphasize the need for the EU to strengthen the fight against cigarette smuggling and other forms of illicit trade in tobacco products.

**Progress towards simple and effective external borders control**

The Lithuanian Presidency devoted particular attention and time to the discussions of the “smart borders package”. External border management should ensure the simple and effective crossing of external borders, and create more favourable travelling conditions for third-country nationals. The control of external borders should also become an effective means for tackling crime, for example terrorism, illegal migration and cross-border criminal activities, and strengthen the EU’s internal security.
The Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union comprised six months of intensive work by the Permanent Representatives Committee, working parties and committees, negotiations and discussions at Council meetings – sometimes lasting till dawn, – and efforts to find a consensus among the Member States and with other EU institutions. Issues important for the entire EU were discussed not only in Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg but also in the Presidency meetings in Vilnius with the participation of high-ranking guests. Lithuanian culture was extensively presented in Europe and beyond. The most important achievements of the semester, work carried out in public and in the background is summarized in facts and figures about the Lithuanian Presidency of the EU Council.

184 – the number of days (July 1 to December 31) that Lithuania guided the decision-making in the EU Council.

In 14 years. Lithuania will hold the second Presidency of the EU Council in or around 2027. However, this date is preliminary as the official EU presidencies line-up so far extends only to 2020.

Relay. Lithuania took over the Presidency from Ireland, and handed it over to Greece on January 1, 2014. It is symbolic that in 2003, when Greece last held the Presidency, Lithuania and nine Central and Eastern European countries signed EU accession agreements in Athens and became full-fledged Community members a year later, when Ireland held the previous Presidency.

EU Agenda. During the six months the Lithuanian Presidency has reached agreements in the Permanent Representatives Committee on 147 legislative acts, 234 non-legislative acts and 47 EU Council conclusions.

960 billion euros. This is the amount of the EU multiannual budget approved for 2014–2020. The Lithuanian Presidency finalized negotiations on more than 60 legal acts related to the EU multiannual budget that will ensure the smooth flow of funds in the new financial period. The Presidency reached the agreement with the European Parliament on the EU budget for 2014.

39 – the number of meetings of the EU Council chaired by Lithuanian ministers.

1176 – the number of meetings of the Council’s working groups and committees in Brussels.
45 – the number of times the Permanent Representatives Committee (COREPER) gathered during the six months. COREPER II formation held 23 meetings, COREPER I met 22 times.

4.5 days of discussions. Discussions on issues where Lithuanian Presidency representatives addressed the European Parliament on behalf of the EU Council, lasted 111 hours.

81 debates at the European Parliament. During this half year Lithuanian ministers participated in 81 debates at the plenary sessions and committee meetings of the European Parliament.

61.98 million euros. This was the amount allocated from the state budget for the Lithuanian Presidency of the EU Council for the period of 2012–2014. According to the preliminary data, in 2012–2013 about EUR 50.39 million were spent and about EUR 8.69 million saved. Another EUR 2.9 million were allocated for the implementation of the concluding measures of the Lithuanian Presidency in 2014.

Nearly 300 – the number of events organised during the half year in Lithuania, including 22 high-level meetings.

Guests. The Presidency meetings attracted 45 thousand guests from Lithuania and abroad.

World and European leaders. During these six months Lithuania was visited by the leaders of the European Union (President of the European Union Herman van Rompuy, President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Parliament Martin Schulz, and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton), members of the European Commission, European and world leaders (Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom David Cameron, President of France François Hollande, Secretary General of NATO Anders Fogh Rasmussen, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, and many others).

1.8 thousand – the number of journalists covering the high-level meetings in Vilnius.

Sąšauka (Link-up). The opening ceremony of the Presidency of the EU Council was held on July 5 in the Grand Courtyard of Vilnius University. Lithuania introduced itself with the musical composition Link-up by Kipras Mašanauskas, written specially for this occasion and performed by Lithuanian and European musicians. Lithuanian “sutartinės” (polyphonic folk songs) inspired this composition of 28 musical fragments.
New impetus for the Eastern Partnership. 34 Heads of State and Governments, ministers and EU leaders attended the Vilnius Summit on November 28–29. During the summit, the EU Association Agreements with Moldova and Georgia were initialled, progressed was achieved in the EU visa liberalisation for the Eastern Partnership countries, agreement with Georgia on its participation in the European Union crisis management operations was signed, and the EU–Ukraine Air Services Agreement was initialled.

Robot and ballerina dance, and electro-mobile which fits into an elevator. These and many other technological innovations were presented at the European research and innovation event ICT 2013: Create, Connect, Grow, held in Vilnius together with the European Commission. This largest event of the Presidency gathered 4.8 thousand participants from 74 countries.

Energy projects. The EU-wide list of projects of common interest was officially presented at the high-level energy conference held in Vilnius on November 4–5, which included 248 projects, of which 15 are from the Baltic States. These projects are eligible for EU funding.

Sustainable development in the Baltic Sea Region. The 4th Annual Forum of the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region was attended by nearly 700 participants. The challenges and opportunities for the implementation of environmental requirements stimulating economic growth, job creation and competitive ability were discussed.
Every year a year for citizens. Representatives of non-governmental organizations and European institutions gathered at the final conference of the European Year of Citizens on December 12–13 in Vilnius. Participants discussed the role and future of NGOs in creating Europe, cherishing the rights of EU citizens, new ways that citizens can influence policy makers, and the upcoming 2014 elections of the European Parliament.

219 – the number of countries and territories whose residents visited the Presidency website eu2013.lt at least once (as recorded by Google Analytics). The majority of visitors were from Lithuania, Belgium, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, USA, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands and Poland.

0.5 million visitors. This number of visits of the eu2013.lt website was reached in mid-December, and it continues to grow. The number of viewed pages is 1.4 million.

5 news pieces daily. During the half year, 920 press releases, speeches and articles were published on the internet website – five a day on average.

4.9 thousand – the numbers of followers of the official account of the Lithuanian Presidency on Twitter, where 1.8 thousand messages were posted.

4.4 thousand – the number of fans of the official account of the Lithuanian Presidency on Facebook.

39 thousand – the number of times that 226 video recordings of the Presidency were watched on YouTube. Visitors spent 84.6 thousand minutes (58 days and 18 hours) watching them.

Photographs. The official photographer took over 6 thousand photos at Presidency events in Lithuania. Photographs capturing the most interesting moments of the Presidency have been selected for an exhibition which will be opened in January at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

50 live hours. Live broadcasts of Presidency events lasted over 50 hours and were later edited into 422 recordings.

19 partners. 19 companies became partners of the Presidency, and their assistance amounted to EUR 580 thousand.

Interactive programme VIALITHUANIA revealing Lithuania’s historical and cultural links with the 27 EU Member States was launched

Connection. During the Lithuanian Presidency, the interactive programme VIALITHUANIA that revealed Lithuania’s historical and cultural links with the 27 EU Member States was created. A special version of the programme adopted for regular internet browsers is available at vialithuania.eu. The mobile version of VIALITHUANIA can be downloaded for free from the official digital distribution platforms for applications for Android and iPhone – Google Play and iTunes.

257 – the number of interpreters assisting during the visit of the European Commission and informal ministerial meetings, simultaneously interpreting from 24 to 7 languages.

26 – the number of press conferences organised during high-level events in Vilnius.

More than 4 times around the Earth. The cars transporting guests drove nearly 179 thousand kilometres, 4.5 times the distance around the Equator.

751 – the number of delegations arriving through the VIP hall at Vilnius Airport.

Highest number of planes. When leaders of the EU and other countries were gathering for the Eastern Partnership Summit, 83 planes landed in Vilnius in one day. On a regular day, the airport receives about 40 flights.

More than 8.7 thousand – the number of accreditation badges printed for high-level participants and organisers of Presidency events. 80 ink cartridges were used for this purpose.
Some 2 thousand pairs of woollen mittens were given to the guests of the Presidency events. Special postcards with greetings from Lithuania issued for the Presidency, which participants of high-level meetings could send for free, went mainly to France, Norway, Germany, Italy, Belgium, the United Kingdom, and Lithuania, as well as Australia, the United Arab Emirates, Mexico, Taiwan, Chile, South Korea, Japan and Brazil.

Nearly 2.2 thousand greetings from Lithuania. Special postcards with greetings from Lithuania issued for the Presidency, which participants of high-level meetings could send for free, went mainly to France, Norway, Germany, Italy, Belgium, the United Kingdom, and Lithuania, as well as Australia, the United Arab Emirates, Mexico, Taiwan, Chile, South Korea, Japan and Brazil.

Lithuania in Belgium. During the Presidency, the official cultural programme in Belgium presented nearly fifty events of music, fine arts, cinema, theatre, literature, poetry and interdisciplinary arts, the partners of which were the prestigious cultural and arts institutions BOZAR, Flagey, CINEMATEK, the Museum of Fine Arts in Gent, Klara and Flandria music festivals and EU institutions.

Personalities – the extensive cultural programme gave the opportunity to learn more about the Lithuanian artists: Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis, Jonas Mekas, Oskaras Koršunovas, Šarūnas Bartas, Violeta Urmana and others.

15 – the number of countries toured by the Presidency exhibitions that introduced the Lithuanian photography, cinema, fine arts, architecture and nature. They were displayed in the town hall in Berlin (Germany), Parc de l’Orangerie (Strasbourg, France), Belém Tower (Lisbon, Portugal), Nová Scena exposition hall of the National Theatre in Prague (Czech Republic) and elsewhere.