

LITHUANIAN DAILY NEWS BULLETIN

December 27, 2007

With Complement From

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In this issue:

- UPCOMING EVENTS FOR FRIDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2007 IN LITHUANIA
- LESS DRUNK DRIVERS DETAINED IN LITHUANIA THAN ELSEWHERE IN EUROPE
- LITHUANIA TO SUPPORT LATVIA AGAINST EC IN COURT ON CO2 POLLUTION PERMITS
- LITHUANIA: STRATEGIC ISSUES MULLED OVER PRESIDENT'S FESTIVE LUNCHEON WITH MINISTERS
- CONSERVATIVES DIAGNOSE LITHUANIAN DEMOCRACY AS AILING IN 2007
- LITHUANIAN PRESIDENT URGES APPOINTMENT OF NEW POLICE CHIEF WITHOUT DELAY
- RAW, WINDY WEATHER FORECAST IN LITHUANIA
- GOVT GIVES GREEN LIGHT TO LITHUANIAN-UKRAINIAN COOPERATION
- LITHUANIANS GLAD WITH 2007, MORE PESSIMISTIC ABOUT 2008 -- POLL
- LITHUANIAN PRESIDENT'S CHRISTMAS GREETING ON YOUTUBE

- UPCOMING EVENTS FOR FRIDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2007 IN LITHUANIA

VILNIUS, Dec 27, BNS - The following events are scheduled for Friday, December 28, 2007 in Lithuania:

PRESIDENT Valdas Adamkus to have meetings with advisers and work with documents.

PRIME MINISTER Gediminas Kirkilas to visit the State Border Guard Service at 8:30 a.m. and to hold a meeting on restitution of property rights to land at 9:30 a.m.

PARLIAMENTARY SPEAKER Viktoras Muntianas to congratulate employees of the Seimas office at 1 p.m. and visit social institutions of the Kaunas district at 2 p.m.

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- LESS DRUNK DRIVERS DETAINED IN LITHUANIA THAN ELSEWHERE IN EUROPE

VILNIUS, Dec 27, BNS - Lithuania performed better than average during the police raids across Europe targeted against drivers under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

The police raids were organized by the European Traffic Police Network TISPOL in 23 countries across Europe on Dec. 10-16.

In the framework of the police campaign in Lithuania, police officers checked 32,160 drivers and established 518 of them (1.6 percent) were under the influence of alcohol, the Lithuanian Police Traffic Supervision Service said.

Police officers checked more than 880,000 drivers in all 23 countries during the week, revealing 22,424 drunk drivers (2.5 percent) and 737 persons driving under the influence of drugs. As compared with the analogous raid carried out in 2006, the percentage of drunk drivers has increased by almost 44 percent.

The highest percentage of drunk and intoxicated drivers (11 percent of the checked 10,647) was established in Germany, while the lowest percentage was reported in Norway (0.2 percent of the examined 46,693 drivers).

In Lithuania, about 10 percent of traffic accidents are caused by drunk drivers every year. This year, such accidents claimed 69 lives, as compared with 66 in 2006 and 92 in 2005.

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- LITHUANIA TO SUPPORT LATVIA AGAINST EC IN COURT ON CO2 POLLUTION PERMITS

VILNIUS, Dec 27, BNS - Lithuania will support Latvia in court against the European Commission in an effort to cancel the EC ruling on distribution of greenhouse gases emission permits.

The decision was made at the government's meeting on Thursday.

Latvia has sent a complaint to the court of first instance of the European Communities, saying that the EC decision violated general principles of the community law, provisions of the agreement of European Communities and directions, as well as procedural requirements.

The Lithuanian government has said that Lithuania has to get involved in the case because the Latvian suit is based on the same argumentation as in the analogous suit of Lithuania. Furthermore, Lithuania's participation in similar cases opened based on Czech, Hungarian, Estonian, Polish and Slovak suits means consistent position.

Lithuania, which was granted less than half of the requested carbon dioxide emissions quota, has also filed a suit with a court. Lithuania complained that the EU's executive body had breached the principles of sound administration and loyal cooperation, and discriminated against the country.

In Lithuania's opinion, the EC ruling violated the principle of non-discrimination because the EC failed to take account of the country's specific situation when applying the method for determination of the maximum amount of pollution permits.

The Commission allocated Lithuania an annual carbon dioxide emissions quota of 8.8 million tons for 2008-2012, which was 53 percent lower than the country had requested.

Pollution quotas are distributed among companies in proportion to their emission of greenhouse gases. Lacking permits may be purchased and the unused may be sold to other enterprises.

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- LITHUANIA: STRATEGIC ISSUES MULLED OVER PRESIDENT'S FESTIVE LUNCHEON WITH MINISTERS

VILNIUS, Dec 27, BNS - Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus and members of the government had a festive luncheon on Thursday, indulging in traditional meals and strategic issues.

"The main part of the conversation focused on structural issues of our country, namely, whether our system was operating in the way it should, whether the path we have chosen and the structure was suitable for the period we are living in," Adamkus told journalists after the luncheon.

In his words, communication with the media and energy were also in focus of the meeting.

"There was a common issue - whether Lithuania needs to work to ensure electricity supplies and the answer was "yes", said the president.

He restated the earlier critical opinion about proposals to hold premature elections to the parliament.

"I believe that statements about early elections or finishing of the government's operations at an earlier date would not be beneficial for the people and state of Lithuania. I have said this before and I am restating it now," said Adamkus.

In the prime minister's opinion, the meeting with the president over luncheon was very useful for "verification of strategic plans."

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- CONSERVATIVES DIAGNOSE LITHUANIAN DEMOCRACY AS AILING IN 2007

VILNIUS, Dec 27, BNS - Lithuania's democracy and political system was affected by long-standing diseases during the outgoing year 2007, the opposition Conservative party leader Andrius Kubilius diagnosed on Thursday.

Speaking at a news conference in Vilnius, Kubilius named a series of "ailments" that he believes indicate Lithuania's living under conditions of limited democracy, lack of political leadership, cynicism of ruling figures, stagnation and populist radicalism.

Kubilius, the leader of the parliament's right wing, spoke about stalling lustration and counter-corruption efforts, unsolved issues of dual citizenship, the State Security Department, education, health care and police, stating that the "breakthrough charge" of the last decade was running out.

"Therefore, we can end 2007 with a not very happy diagnosis that the political system has long-standing diseases that exist everywhere: in the ruling bloc, in the opposition, in parties and the media, in state institutions and the civil consciousness of the electorate," said Kubilius.

In his words, consequences of political stagnation can already be sensed in the country's economic sector, which "the administration has left for working by gravity."

Kubilius said that the situation was unlikely to change until the next parliamentary elections, expressing certitude that the elections would become a breaking point "towards the healing of Lithuania" regardless of whether they are held in the fall as planned or in spring as urged by the Conservatives.

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- LITHUANIAN PRESIDENT URGES APPOINTMENT OF NEW POLICE CHIEF WITHOUT DELAY

VILNIUS, Dec 27, BNS - Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus says he wants replacement of the resigning Police Commissioner General Vytautas Grigaravicius as soon as possible.

Adamkus told journalists on Thursday that potential candidacies would be discussed at a meeting with Interior Minister Regimantas Ciupaila during the coming days.

"Tomorrow or the day after - I have asked him to meet me as soon as possible. I want to assure you of one thing - I want to close the matter with the commissioner general as soon as possible to give the police a very clear direction of work, a commander and possible reforms," said the president.

Under Lithuanian laws, the police commissioner general is appointed by the president under proposal of the interior minister and the government's approval.

Grigaravicius resigned after a tragic car accident that occurred in the northern Skuodas district in the beginning of November when a police officer who was driving in a drunken condition killed three boys.

Raimondas Sukys then left the post of interior minister together with Grigaravicius.

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- RAW, WINDY WEATHER FORECAST IN LITHUANIA

VILNIUS, Dec 27, BNS - Precipitation, sleet and strong winds are expected in Lithuania during the coming few days, weather services said.

The night to Friday will bring sleet, fogs and icy covering to some parts of the country. Southwestern winds of 6-11 m/s will reach 15-18 m/s in gusts in western districts. The lowest night temperature will be -4-+1 degrees Celsius, while the highest day temperature will range between -2 and +3 degrees.

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- GOVT GIVES GREEN LIGHT TO LITHUANIAN-UKRAINIAN COOPERATION

VILNIUS, Dec 27, BNS - The Lithuanian government approved on Thursday the governmental agreement aimed at expanding economic, industrial, scientific and technical cooperation between Lithuania and Ukraine.

Priority fields of the agreement include light industry, transport and communications, energy, public health and pharmaceutical industry.

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- LITHUANIANS GLAD WITH 2007, MORE PESSIMISTIC ABOUT 2008 -- POLL

VILNIUS, Dec 27, BNS - The majority of the Lithuanian population sees the outgoing year as successful, however, the growing inflation has considerably shrank the ranks of optimists and swelled the group of people worried about the future, shows a poll published in the Lietuvos Rytas daily on Thursday.

According to the survey carried out by Baltijos Tyrimai (Baltic Surveys) pollster, 39 percent of residents representing the age group of 15-74 years views the year 2007 as successful to them personally. The percentage was somewhat higher last year.

Meanwhile, the number of pessimists has increased by 5 percentage points as compared with 2006. Another 17 percent have described the year 2007 as unsuccessful.

The assessment highly depends on the financial situation of the respondents. The biggest share of optimists comes from the group of 15-29-year-olds - 52 percent of the age group think that the outgoing year was successful.

Whereas, the percentage of those holding such opinion is merely a fourth (24 percent) in the age group of 50 and older.

Among those describing 2007 as rather unsuccessful were people with the lowest income (less than 1,000 litas (EUR 290) per household per month). Some 19 percent of the group sees 2007 as successful and 33 percent as unsuccessful.

Pessimism with regard to the outgoing year was expressed by unemployed

pensioners: 21 percent of them referred to 2007 as an unsuccessful year and 19 percent described it as successful to them personally.

Optimists about the year 2007 included residents of the country's largest cities (43 percent), youth enrolled in educational institutions (62 percent), specialists and office workers (48 persons) and people with monthly income of 2,800 litas and more per household (50 percent).

The respondents who described the year 2007 as successful to them personally were also likely to describe the outgoing year as successful to the country: 33 percent of them think that the year was a success to Lithuania, as well.

The pessimists who referred to the year as unsuccessful to them personally also said they were not successful to the rest of Lithuania: 67 percent of them replied that 2007 did not bring success to Lithuania. About a sixth (16 percent) of respondents said the year was successful to Lithuania, which indicates a decrease by 11 percentage points year-on-year.

Nearly a third of those polled (31 percent) expressed certitude that 2007 was unsuccessful to Lithuania, while the biggest share (43 percent) said that the year was neither very successful, nor highly unsuccessful to the Baltic state.

About a fourth (23 percent, which indicates a drop by 16 percentage points as compared with 2006) of adult respondents believe that the year 2008 will be better for Lithuania and a third (34 percent) anticipated it to be like the year 2007.

According to the poll, a third (32 percent) of Lithuanian residents of 15-74 years of age are pessimistic about the future and think that 2008 will be worse to Lithuania. The figure went up by 21 percentage points since 2006.

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- LITHUANIAN PRESIDENT'S CHRISTMAS GREETING ON YOUTUBE

VILNIUS, Dec 27, BNS - Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus' Christmas greeting was for the first time published on the popular website YouTube.

The greeting was available on YouTube a day before it was broadcast on the Lithuanian national television.

A channel titled "press service" was opened on YouTube on Dec. 23

(youtube.com/spaudostarnyba) and now contains two videos - Christmas greetings by Adamkus and his wife Alma, one intended for Lithuanians living abroad and one for the people of Lithuania.

YouTube recently opened an official channel of the British Queen Elizabeth II (youtube.com/theroyalchannel) and channels of the British prime minister and

French President Nicolas Sarkozy. One of the biggest political steps to YouTube was the political debates of the US presidential election campaign online ([youtube.com/youchoose](https://www.youtube.com/youchoose)). YouTube users had an opportunity to ask questions and hear their answers and statements on various topics on the channel.

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