Lietuvos Rytas takes LKL title in Game 7

After a gruelling seven game series, Lietuvos Rytas lifted the LKL trophy with a 80 - 71 win in the final game.

In a series that had a bit of everything, it will unfortunately most likely be best remembered for the match-fixing and corruption in the sport.

It was widely believed that Vladimir Romanov, the owner of Žalgiris, fired coach Maskoliūnas with a 80 - 71 win in the final game.

Jonas Vainauskas, Chair of the Lietuvos Rytas board, vehemently denied the accusations and said he was still considering legal action for slander.

LKL was paramount and all coach and management staff vehemently denied the accusations.

Coach Kurtinaitis of Lietuvos Rytas also stated in the press conference after game seven that he was disappointed to be fielding questions from abroad about the corruption issue instead of the intriguing basketball series that had just concluded.

With a ticket to Euroleague on the line for Lietuvos Rytas (Žalgiris already has a contractual right to play in Euroleague), a win in the LKL was paramount and all coaching and management staff vehemently denied the accusations.

Mantas Kuhnietis, point guard for Žalgiris, also assured everyone that their team did all it could to win their team did all it could to win.

Kidnapped ship captain safe

Vilnius, May 18 (ELTA) - Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius expects that previous experience and international practice will help Lithuania in an inknown direction.

“This is a painful event. We formed a working group headed by the minister of foreign affairs to coordinate the actions related to the freeing of the Lithuanian citizen. The group is headed by Foreign Minister Audronius Ažubalis. The rest of the crew is reported to be safe and healthy. The ship was seized on 16 May 16 at 2:00 am (the Lithuanian time). Armed men captured a crew member, Captain Bashkirov, and escaped in a motor boat in an identified direction.

Klaipeda, May 21 (ELTA) - The Lithuanian shipping company Limarko reports having contacted ship captain Dmitry Bashkirov who was captured near the West African coast.

“He has affirmed that he is healthy. The company takes all the necessary measures together with state institutions to ensure as rapid return of the captain to Klaipeda as possible,” the company said in its statement.

Limarko refused to provide any further details on the situation to avoid any problems.

Captain Bashkirov of the motor vessel Argo, owned by Limarko, was seized on 16 May 16 at 2:00 am (the Lithuanian time). Armed men captured one crew member, Captain Bashkirov, and escaped in a motor boat in an identified direction.

At present, the motor vessel, which sails under the Lithuanian flag, is moored in the Cameroonian port of Douala.

Other crew members are reported to be healthy and safe.

An interdepartmental working group has been formed to coordinate the actions related to the freeing of the Lithuanian citizen.

Prime minister hopes experience will help in release of Lithuanian sailor

Prime minister hopes experience will help in release of Lithuanian sailor

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Vilnius, May 17 (ELTA) - The Prosecutor General’s Office expressed high regard for the foreign investigators who conducted the examination of Dražius Kędy’s body which was carried out by Lithuanian experts without bias and in order to conclude that the Lithuanian experts performed all actions properly.

Acting Prosecutor General Raimondas Petrauskas says believing that additional examinations carried out by competent foreign experts will contribute to obtaining “the most accurate results in this terrible case.”

Public confidence in law enforcement institutions and dispel any doubts and speculations over the matter.

The State Forensic Service under the Ministry of Justice, in agreement with the Prosecutor General’s Office, addressed the Institute of Forensic Medicine of the University of Cologne (Germany) and the Vilnius university hospital.

The consultations of foreign experts are expected to aid in making appropriate decisions and conclusions regarding the forensic examination of Kędy’s body was conducted properly.

The examination carried out by the Lithuanian experts revealed that Kędy was set up. He denied the charges and still have to give evidence. The persons by themselves; they did not answer the question at all.

Among those polled, 42% of the respondents gave the most favourable rating to President Grybauskaitė, 35% to Prime Minister Algirdas Brazauskas, leader of the Social Democrats (7%), ex-President Valdas Adamkus (3%), MEP Viktor Uspaskich, leader of the Liberal Democratic Party (3%), ex-President Algirdas Brazauskas (4%), Vilija Bliūnaitė-Kūtėnienė (3%), MEP Rolandas Paksas, leader of the Seimas’ opposition (3%), and Deputy Speaker of the Seimas Irena Degutienė says the Seimas’ opposition (3%), and Deputy Speaker of the Seimas’ opposition.

For the most part, the Seimas Irena Degutienė says that most probably this case would be done at the sitting of the party’s leadership.

The sitting of the Homeland Union - Lithuanian Christian Democrats political party leadership will be held on Wednesday.

It was very unpleasant to watch veterans’ parade at Cathedral Square - Cathagiątene

Vilnius, May 11 (ELTA) - Speaker of the Seimas Irena Degutienė says that it was very unpleasant for her to watch the parade of Soviet World War II veterans in Cathedral Square. Thus, she says, the question of the responsibility of Vilnius Mayor Vilius Navikas should be raised at the sitting of the Homeland Union - Lithuanian Christian Democrats political party.

“It was very unpleasant for me to watch the parade of the World War II veterans at the Cathedral Square. After 20 years of independence, for me, a Lithuanian citizen, who waited for the freedom, it was very unpleasant to see veterans at the Cathedral Square,” Irena Degutienė said on Žinių Radijas on Wednesday.

According to the speaker of the Seimas, the war was cruel to all nations, however, for Lithuania, the end of the war meant occupation.

When asked whether the question regarding the responsibility of Vilnius Mayor Vilius Navikas should be raised, Irena Degutienė said that most probably this would be done at the sitting of the party’s leadership.

The sitting of the Homeland Union - Lithuanian Christian Democrats political party leadership will be held on Wednesday.

Europe’s Unseen Heroes - Forbes

Forbes Magazine and www.forbes.com ran an interview with Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius during his visit to the USA:

Not every recession-hit country in Europe is like Wayward Greece, Portugal and Spain.

Recently Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius of Lithuania dropped by our offices to discuss his small country’s economic prospects. Unlike Greece, which has garnered headlines for its economic woes, Lithuania more than a year ago firmly faced up to the economic crisis and took stern measures.

Government spending was slashed by 30%. Public-sector salaries were cut by 20% to 30%. And pensions were knocked down an average of 5%. The prime minister himself took a pay cut of 45%. Yes, some taxes were raised, and the corporate rate was hiked from 15% to 20%. But then it was knocked back to 15% in January.

And Lithuania’s flat tax—also 15%—was left alone. Amazingly, Lithuania’s unions went along with the government’s policies. There were no street riots in la Grèce.

Lithuania is now showing positive growth again. In the years ahead its recovery should Outpace that of most members of the EU because Lithuania isn’t wedded to slow-growth policies, as are most western European states.

In fact, before the crisis the Lithuanian economy had been one of the fastest growing in Europe. It didn’t wait for a collapse before it went into recession. But unlike its Baltic neighbors, Lithuania resisted intense pressure to ditch its currency. Like the Baltic states, it had become an economic miracle, with its business-friendly tax regime and growth policies. They know that being linked to the European and global economies is a ticket to greater prosperity.

Ireland is another nation that has taken stiff economic medicine. Like the Baltic states, it has become an economic miracle, with its business-friendly tax regime and recession policies. It is well known for its young, ambitious police officer, who 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 community where he lives to seek cases. Each day of the sun's course, he and his local counterparts and other experts try to solve the crimes of the island residents.

In 2009, the highest number of asylum applicants were registered in France, Germany and UK. In 2009, there were nearly 261,000 asylum applicants registered in the EU 27, or 520 applicants per million inhabitants.

The main countries of citizenship of these applicants were Afghanistan (20,400 or 8% of the total number of applicants), Russia (20,100 or 8%), Somalia (19,100 or 7%), Iraq (18,700 or 7%) and Kosovo (17,500), the Netherlands (16,100, Greece (15,000) and Austria (15,800).

When compared with the population of each Member State, the highest rate of applicants registered was recorded in Malta (5,800 applicants per million inhabitants), Cyprus (3,300), Sweden (2,600), Belgium (2,000) and Austria (1,300).

In some Member States, a large proportion of the asylum applicants came from a single country. The Member States with the highest concentrations were Malta (60% of the applicants came from Somalia), Lithuania (54% from Russia), Poland (54% from Russia), Hungary (38% from Kosovo under UN Security Council Resolution 1244) and the Netherlands (37% from Somalia).
Kubilius promises stronger ruling coalition

Vilnius, May 17 (ELTA) - Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius says that the ruling coalition will be joined by new members who will be named over the coming weeks.

“We have also discussed common political issues, the possibilities of strengthening the coalition. We view such possibilities as very likely. I think that we will be able to make them a reality over the next few weeks. I would not like to comment on any further details now,” Kubilius said after a working lunch with coalition partners on Monday.

The prime speaker emphasized that the coalition had demonstrated its strength on Thursday, during the non-confidence proceedings against Transport Minister Eligijus Masiulis and the deliberation on the Government’s performance report.

Kubilius was not specific about the new members, but informed that the coalition might be joined by individual politicians rather than a specific parliamentary group.

The present ruling coalition is composed of 71 MPs who belong to the Homeland Union-Lithuanian Christian Democrats, the Liberal Movement, the Nation’s Resurrection Party and the Liberal and Centre Union.

Three Lithuanian troops injured in southern Afghanistan

Vilnius, May 13 (ELTA) - On May 12, three troops of the Lithuanian Special Operations Forces Squadron “Alitaras” experienced light injuries in southern Afghanistan when indirect fire was opened at them during night patrol, informs Ministry of National Defence.

The troops received first aid and were put into medical care, but the injuries were not life-threatening. Nest of kin have been notified about the incident.

No further coverage of the incident will be provided to maintain security of the operation and participating troops.

Lithuania hosts its first gay pride march

The on-again, off-again march was cancelled late in the week after a ‘technical’ appeal regarding the safety of participants and police, but this objection was later rejected and the march allowed to take place according to the original schedule.

The march route was cut short after smoke bombs were hurled into their path, and after consultation with police, the route was cut short.

The marchers were peacefully bussed out after about two hours.

Following the exit of the Baltic Pride delegation two Lithuanian MPs, Petras Gražulis, and Kazimieras Uoka, were arrested for inciting riot.

MEP Vytautas Landsbergis called for Uoka to be kicked out of the Homeland Union - Lithuanian Christian Democrats because of his actions.

Gražulis and Uoka are facing ongoing criminal charges for inciting a riot.

Government decides on reformation of energy sector

The Lithuanian energy sector will be divided into several blocks that will be managed by the state through designated boards and supervisory councils, Ayradas Sekmokas, Energy Minister announced recently.

It is planned to separate electricity generation, transmission and distribution activities. Companies providing services for the energy sector will make up a separate group.

According to Sekmokas, a company - Lithuanian Distribution Networks - will be formed by joining Eastern Distribution Networks and VST.

Transmission system operator Litgrid, will be separated from Lietuvos Energija, and HalfPool will run electricity transmission.

Lietuvos Energija will deal with distribution of electricity.

Visaginas Nuclear Power Plant will continue taking care of the construction of the new nuclear plant in Lithuania.

According to Sekmokas, all the reformation processes are expected to be completed by the end of 2010.

IBM and Lithuanian Government vow to set up large research centre in Lithuania

The Lithuanian Government and the multinational computer, IT and technology corporation IBM have signed a letter of intent setting up a joint research centre in Lithuania earlier today at the headquarters of the IBM in New York. The document has been signed by Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius, and Reeves Thomas, IBM’s global vice president for research and intellectual property licensing.

The agreement regarding the largest (as it is hoped) IT project in the history of Lithuania is expected to be signed within the current half year.

The future centre will conduct research in the strategic IBM areas: nanotechnology, life sciences, healthcare innovation, and intellectual property for innovative management. Researchers will study advanced nanotechnologies, including an integrated silicon photonics, new photovoltaics and photonic materials. Lithuanian university researchers working in the field of innovations will cooperate in the centre.

“Joint research centre with a global high-tech giant undoubtedly marks a huge achievement for Lithuania. This means that out of a country applying innovation we are turning into a country creating innovations for the entire world,” said Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius.

“It is a concrete step towards our ambition to become a regional innovations centre in 2020,” said Minister of Economy Dainius Kreivys. According to the Minister, foundation of a joint research centre will keep Lithuania’s researchers from leaving the country and provide an opportunity to work in the world-class laboratories.

IBM is among the companies holding the largest number of patents in the world: it ranked fourth in 2009 on the Top Ten list of 2009 patent recipients in the US, with the number of patents several times exceeding its closest high-tech rivals. In 2009 alone, IBM inventors received 4,914 patents for a range of potentially world-changing inventions, such as sending alarms to hearing impaired individuals during fire.

Prime Minister Kubilius and Minister of Economy Kreivys were on a working visit to the US; the major aim was to attract investment to Lithuania’s high-tech sector.

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Rail Baltica – EU Rail Integration on the Right Track

After many years of talk and discussion, the first concrete steps in the construction of the Rail Baltica link were commenced recently. Rail Baltica will eventually connect Lithuania with the rest of Europe via Warsaw to the south, and to Riga, Tallin and Helsinki in the north.

The project was first envisioned as far back as 20 years ago and only become a practical reality on Lithuania’s entry into the EU. Since that time there has been much talk and planning, but now track work has begun and the first section of track linking Sestokai – Mockava is underway, and will later run through Marijampole to Česlovas Telicka, coordinator of the Rail Baltica project, Česlovas Stankevičius, Eligušis Musaitis and others.

“Lithuanian and other European Union countries, have said repeatedly that the Rail Baltica project is hard to start, and even harder to implement, so it’s very pleasing to stand here and announce the beginning of construction,” said Dailidžka on the day.

“Rail Baltica is the first real railway development project on the eastern Baltic Sea coast, and is needed to address the very significant growth of North-South freight flows as well as offering the environmentally friendly and economical mode of transport that rail can provide.

“For Rail Baltica to function effectively, it’s not enough to just build a new track and integrate it into the EU transport market. It is necessary to create a complete system to ensure adequate flows of passengers and cargo and attract private funding. This requires the establishment of public transport and logistics centres, the development of passenger and freight transport and close cooperation with other modes of transport,” Dailidžka said.

The importance of an integrated EU rail network was never more apparent than during the recent volcanic ash activities which brought Europe to a standstill and sent international passengers and businesses scurrying for alternate modes of safe and reliable transport.

Having an integrated transport system will provide greater business opportunities for Lithuanian products, as well as establishing Lithuania as a logistics centre and a doorway into the markets of Eastern Europe.

Joint Lithuania-Polish History Research

Vilnius, May 14 (ELTA) - On 12 May, a round table discussion “Through Exploring the Past We Shape the Future” was held at the Lithuanian Embassy in Warsaw. The Lithuania Institute of History organized the discussion in cooperation with the History Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

The Lithuanian and Polish parliamentarians, historians, journalists, representatives from Foreign Ministries and Lithuanian diplomats took part in the discussion.

At the beginning of the event, greetings of Lithuanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Audronius Ažubalis were conveyed to the participants of the discussion, informs Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

“Through mutual cooperation in a united Europe, Lithuania and Poland must benefit from our rich heritage, develop an objective and open attitude to the past, and admit that even when dealing with complicated periods of our history, we need an open and sincere dialogue. I trust that this event will be another important step towards a common approach, which will allow us to gain better understanding of the glorious historic past of our nations”, the Lithuanian’s Minister of Foreign Affairs wrote in his congratulatory letter.

The discussion “Cooperation between Lithuanian and Polish historians over the past twenty years and its prospects” started with opening speeches by Prof. Andrzej Rachuba from the History Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences and Dr. Rimantas Mikons from the Lithuanian Institute of History. During the discussion, intensive contacts between the historians of our two countries were evaluated. However, the importance to institutionalize the cooperation of historians was highlighted. A possibility to establish a History Commission of the two countries was discussed.

Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Seimas (Parliament) Emilianas Zingeris and Chairman of the Group for Parliamentary Relations with the Republic of Lithuania of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland Tadeusz Ażiewicz spoke during the second part of the event, which was called “Impact of joint history research on current bilateral relations”. T.Ażiewicz stressed the necessity to fight with myths and stereotypes that harm the Lithuania–Polish relations. The participants of the discussion underlined the necessity for Lithuania and Poland to research history more intensively, including the events in the 20th century history that are painful to both nations.

Hotel Occupancy 3.8%

Number of hotels and guesthouses by stars (March 31)

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According to provisional data of Statistics Lithuania, in I quarter 2010, accommodation establishments had 3.8% less guests than in the same period of 2009.

The number of guests from EU countries decreased by 8.5%. Lithuanian residents 4.2%; the number of guests from non-EU countries increased by 4.8%.

The majority of guests were from Russia – 19,000 (in I quarter 2009, 18,000), Poland – 14,700 (in I quarter 2009, 15,500), Belarus – 14,400 (in I quarter 2009, 11,600), Latvia – 9,500 (in I quarter 2009, 10,500), Germany – 6,900 (in I quarter 2009, 8,700), Estonia – 4,900 (in I quarter 2009, 4,700), the United Kingdom – 4,300 (in I quarter 2009, 4,400).

Against I quarter 2009, the number of guests in the accommodation establishments of Druskininkai municipality accommodated 47,400, Palanga municipality 15,500, Birštonas municipal 6,000, Neringa municipality – 5,100 guests.

In I quarter 2010, against the same period of 2009, hotels and guesthouses accommodated 2.2% less guests; the number of foreigners decreased by 3.9%. In I quarter 2010, the hotel and guesthouse room occupancy rate was 25.8% (in I quarter 2009, 26.4%).

In I quarter 2010, Vilnius hotels and guesthouses accommodated 77,400 guests, or 6.1% less than in the same period of 2009. The number of foreigners was 57,800, or 7% less than in the same period of 2009. In I quarter 2010, the occupancy rate of Vilnius hotel and guesthouse rooms was 32.6% (in I quarter 2009, 33.2%).
US Vicksburg Visits Lithuania

**Text: Ensign Marc D. Schron**

**Sailors aboard the guided missile cruiser US Vicksburg (CG 69) visited Kaipada, Lithuania in May for a three-day theatre security cooperation (TSC) port visit.**

Sailors took part in various events including community relations (COMREL) projects, school tours, sporting events and multiple receptions hosted both aboard Vicksburg and by the Lithuanian Navy.

Distinguished guests included various officials from the Lithuanian Ministry of Defence and Lithuanian Navy.

Melitrage Municipality was the center of COMREL efforts, where Sailors cleared five kilometers of beachfront, dug out 15 beach accesses, cleared playgrounds and removed cement debris.

Following the clean-up, the Lithuanian and US navies partnered to host a barbecue at the nearby Palanga radar station.

Crewmembers on Vicksburg’s basketball and soccer teams also participated in games against Lithuanian Navy teams.

The events are part of a scheduled U.S. 6th Fleet TSC port visit, focused on promoting maritime safety and security through strengthened relationships with partner nations.

**Baltic Development Forum Summit 2010 - Vilnius 1-2 June 2010**

For the first time Lithuania and Vilnius will be hosting the Summit of the Baltic Development Forum. It will take place on 1-2 June 2010 in Vilnius.

The annual Forum of decision-makers, business, academia and media from the Baltic Sea Region and beyond will be organized back-to-back with the Prime Ministers’ Summit that will mark the end of the Lithuanian Presidency of Council of the Baltic Sea States. Beyond doubts, these two events will transform Vilnius, the European Capital of Culture 2009, into the “Baltic Sea Region Capital”.

The Lithuanian Government and the Municipality of Vilnius are looking forward to welcoming participants with traditional Lithuanian hospitality and to ensure highest organizational standards. The Baltic Development Forum Summit will be held in the premises of the Lithuanian Exhibition and Convention Centre LITEXPO, having a good record of hosting large international conferences and meetings.

The highly relevant agenda of the Summit will highlight questions related to sustainable economic growth, competitive industries, innovation and financial recovery. Energy and climate change, economic relations with the Eastern neighbors and Northern Dimension will be the part of the Summit programme that will also include the most pressing issues that are on the agenda of the business, including innovation, research and development.

The Summit’s exhibition and networking village will be an improved venue for cross-country, cross-sector and cross-level encounters, discussions and debates. We will continue with new initiatives that will create an even more dynamic and creative atmosphere in Networking Village where many different events and activities will be taking place. Summit participants will be invited to join parallel sessions, interviews, discussions, networking activities, book presentations and other activities in Networking Village, which will be open during the both days of the Summit.

**Founding of New York’s SoHo to be Featured in Vilnius Exhibition**

The exhibition “George Mačunas: Father of SoHo” will open on 1 June in Vilnius, a city that seeks to become the 21st Century’s capital of Fluxus.

George Mačunas, architect and visionary founder of the Fluxus art movement, conceived the idea of establishing cooperative buildings in New York where people could freely work and create.

Rare documents, structural maps and correspondence with officials detail the exorcising process he underwent to legalize SoHo that transformed the entire downtown area.

Visual works by renowned Fluxus artists Shigeko Kubota and Larry Miller will be shown along with those of filmmaker Jeffrey Perkins and photographer Peter Moore.

First-person interviews and historical footage will complement the exhibition.

A special Guest of Honour will be the legendary avant-garde filmmaker Jonas Mekas who met with George Mačunas during the early period of the creation of SoHo.

“The SoHo phenomenon was an important creative initiative that made a significant impact on social urban development in New York.

“it is compelling in its grand scope and should be appreciated by both a local Lithuanian audience as well as an international one,” said Artūras Zuckas, founder of the Jonas Mekas Visual Arts Center.

The publication of *Segal Living: 80 Wooster Street and the Evolution of SoHo* by authors Roslyn Bernstein and Shael Shaprio will be presented at the opening.

Hundreds of artists, including Allen Ginsberg, Philip Glass, John Lennon, Hermann Nitsch, Yoko Ono, Nan June Paik, and Andy Warhol were drawn to the building by Jonas Mekas’ Cinematheque and showed their work in and around it.

In conjunction with the opening of the exhibition, Deputy Director of the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York, John Hatfield, will give a series of lectures highlighting the effects and significance of cultural neighborhoods on the economic, social and political life of a city.

His main presentation in Vilnius will be at the “Ministry of Fluxus”, a new venue containing studios, galleries and performance areas for avant-garde artists.

The exhibition is being hosted by the Jonas Mekas Visual Arts Center, the Jonas Mekas Foundation and The American Center and will run through 1 September. Major corporate sponsors of the exhibition are Akropolis, Uko Bankas, Ranga Group and LAMIN.

Martyna Jatkauskaitė wins the Guildhall School Gold Medal

**The Guildhall School is delighted to announce that 25 year old Lithuanian born pianist Martyna Jatkauskaitė is the winner of this year’s Gold Medal, the School’s most prestigious prize for outstanding soloists.**

The prize presents a sum of £1000 along with the gold medal, generously donated by The Worshipful Company of Musicians.

The three Gold Medal finalists each performed a concerto with the Guildhall Symphony Orchestra conducted by Peter Stark to a capacity audience in the Barbican Hall on Wednesday 5 May. The other two finalists were Romanian born Diana Ionescu, pianist, and Irish cellist Brian O’Kane.

Martyna Jatkauskaitė’s winning performance was Prokofiev Concerto No 3 in C Op26. Martyna was awarded the prestigious Baltic State Scholarship in 2005 to study at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama with Joan Havill.

She received a first class Bachelor’s Diploma in Music with Honours (2007) and completed her Masters Degree in Music in Music Performance (2009); Martyna is now a Fellow at the Guildhall School.

The final took place before a distinguished panel of judges including Jonathan Vaughan, Director of Music at the Guildhall School; conductor James Gaffigan who is Chief Conductor of the Lucerne Symphony Orchestra and Principal Guest conductor of the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra; and Peter Stark who conducts a number of the world’s leading ensembles, Nicholas Mathias who is Senior Vice-President and Co-Director of the Conductors and Instrumentalists Department at IMG Artists, journalist Tom Service who writes for *The Guardian* and BBC Music Magazine, and is presenter of BBC Radio 3 Music Matters.

Lithuanian-born pianist Martyna Jatkauskaitė leads an active concert life as a soloist in England and Europe. She has appeared as a soloist with the Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra, the Lithuania Chamber Orchestra, the Kaunas Symphony Orchestra, the Guildhall Symphony Orchestra and the London Festival Orchestra among others. Under renowned conductors such as Saulius Sondeckis, Modestas Pintenas, Vasily Petrenko, Espen Selvik, Ovidiu Balan and Ross Pople.

Martyna’s musical journey started at the Kaunas J. Naujalis Music College where she studied with Birute Kumpiene, and later with Veronika Viteite at the Lithuanian Music and Drama Academy. In 2005 Martyna was awarded the prestigious Baltic State Scholarship to study at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama with Joan Havill. Martyna received a first class Bachelor’s Diploma in Music with Honours (2007) and completed her Masters Degree of Music in Music Performance (2009). Martyna is now a Fellow at the Guildhall School.
Euro area annual inflation 1.5% in April 2010, up from 1.4% in March. A year earlier the rate was 0.8%. Monthly inflation was 0.5% in April 2010, according to Eurostat.

EU annual inflation was 2.0% in April 2010, up from 1.9% in March. A year earlier the rate was 1.3%. Monthly inflation was 0.4% in April 2010.

Inflation in the EU Member States

In April 2010, the lowest annual rates were observed in Latvia (-2.8%), Ireland (-2.5%) and Lithuania (0.2%), and the highest in Hungary (5.7%). Inflation was 4.7% in Romania (4.2%). Compared with March 2010, annual inflation fell in six Member States, remained stable in three and rose in seventeen.

The lowest 12-month averages up to April 2010 were registered in Ireland (-2.5%), Portugal (-0.7%), Estonia and Latvia (both -0.6%). Lithuania stood at 1.5%, while the highest were in Hungary (5.0%), Romania (4.9%) and Poland (3.8%).

Euro area

The main components with the highest annual rates in April 2010 were transport (5.9%) and alcohol & tobacco (4.2%) while the lowest annual rates were observed for housing (0.7%), recreation & culture (1.0%), communications (0.6%) and food (-0.2%).

Central Government Debt in March

According to the data by the Ministry of Finance, the end-March central government debt was LTL3,291.8 million or 33.4% of the projected GDP for 2010 (LTL93,819 million).

During March central government foreign debt decreased by LTL324.2 million and made up LTL2,097.4 million (76.3% of total central government debt). Central government domestic debt increased by LTL150.7 million and accounted for LTL7,484.4 million (23.9% of total central government debt).

Central Government Revenue in March

According to the data by the Ministry of Finance, the end-March central government revenue was LTL2,196.1 million, expenditure – LTL2,818.2 million, while transactions in non-financial assets – LTL168.5 million.

In March central government deficit (calculated on cash basis) was LTL790.6 million and accounted for 0.8% of the projected GDP for 2010 (LTL93,819 million).

Three-month central government revenue amounted to LTL6,056.4 million, expenditure made up LTL8,159.7 million, while transactions in non-financial assets – LTL446.4 million.

Three-month central government deficit (calculated on cash basis) was LTL2,099.7 million or represented 2.2% of GDP.

State budget – LTL1,192.2 million, extrabudgetary funds – LTL110.5 million and social security funds – LTL299.2 million.

In March the major share of revenue was collected from taxes (46.6%) and social contributions (39%). The major share of expenditure was designated to social payments (49.4% of total expenditure).

Central government covers the State budget, social security funds (“Sodra”, Compul- saly Health Insurance Fund and Employment Fund), as well as extrabudgetary funds, i.e. Privatisation Fund, Guarantee Fund, Reserve (Stabilisation) Fund, Ignalina NPP Decommissioning Fund, Rural Credit Guarantee Fund and Savings Restitution Account as well as State Property Fund and AB Toruto bankas.

Labour exchanges register more jobs

The latest figures from the Lithuanian Labour Exchange show that 5,400 unemployed were registered for the week, 11.5% less than the previous week. On average 1071 unemployed persons were registered last week - (227).

The unemployment rate remained virtually unchanged last week at 326,000 registered unemployed, 15.1% of the country’s working age population (0.01% more than last week).

Government saved LTL23 million last year

Vilnius, May 17 (ELTA) - Last year the Government halved its costs for representation, transportation, business trips, thus saving LTL23.2 million (€6.56 million).

The Government reduced its representation costs significantly - last year, the Government spent 57% less money on representation as compared to the year 2008, and thus saved LTL10.1 million (€2.85 million). Also, LTL10 million was saved by reducing costs for business trips by 49%, and another LTL3.2 million (€0.85 million) by reducing transportation costs.

The Ministry of Justice reduced its costs by 97%, the Ministry of Interior by 87%, and the Ministry of National Defence by 81%.

By cutting representation costs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs saved LTL4.9 million (the ministry spent 54% less money on representation as compared to 2008), Prime Minister’s Office saved LTL1.1 million (it spent 63% less), and the Ministry of Agriculture LTL0.5 million (€0.14 million), Prime Minister’s Office - LTL0.7 million (€0.19 million).

The Ministry of Finance reduced its transportation costs by 65.5%, the Ministry of Transport by 63%, the Ministry of Justice 58%, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs saved LTL1.5 million (€0.42 million), the Ministry of Agriculture LTL0.5 million (€0.14 million), Prime Minister’s Office LTL0.3 million (€0.085 million).

World Economic Forum points to Lithuania as example

(ELTA) - President of the Republic of Lithuania Dalia Grybauskaitė participated, for the first time, in the working session “Implementing the Euro- pean 2020 Strategy: Key Next Steps” organized by the World Economic Forum, organizer of the Davos Forum. The President and other European leaders discuss tools to be taken to promote economic recovery and ensure sustainable growth in the EU, informs press service of the president.

President Dalia Grybauskaitė underlined that the whole world, including Europe, must decide now which way to go, what kind of economic stabilisation instruments to use and for how long.

The fact that actions taken by Lithuania are interesting to other countries signifies that Lithuania’s experience might be helpful to others who look for solutions to their own problems.

According to the president, the European Union must take more resolute actions and demonstrate solidarity and responsibility not only when it comes to emerging from the crisis but also when it comes to projecting the future until 2020.

“The Forum focused on the problems Europe faces, but this is not enough. These problems are international, global, whereas solutions, unfortunately, are national, taken on the level of individual states. This is not enough anymore. Europe must stand united, adopt a common policy, coordinate actions and look for common solutions. Even more - international organizations, too, need reforms and global solutions. I therefore urge Europe to talk less about problems but instead solve them as fast as it can and take concrete solutions that could be beneficial not only to individual countries but also to the whole Europe and the entire world,” President Grybauskaitė said.

In the after-lunch session on nuclear energy, higher capacities, the president of Lithuania underlined that the economic growth in Europe was hampered by uneven development of infrastructure, especially in the field of energy. The development of both electricity connections and generation capacities is therefore a must.

According to the president, the new nuclear power plant will play a crucial role in the Baltic region as it will ensure reliable supply of clean energy in the region, making use of the experience gathered so far and of the existing potential.
East Europe threatened by West’s debt, euro crisis - EBRD

London, May 17 (Bloomberg-ELTA) - The Greek debt crisis, which is threatening to bring down the decade-old euro, may spill east across Europe, according to the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).

The EBRD, a London-based development bank that helps former communist countries of eastern Europe and central Asia transform their economies, said May 15 that the 30 countries it invests in may expand a combined 3.7% this year. The struggle to contain the debt crisis in western Europe may ruin that forecast, especially on the Balkan peninsula, the EBRD said.

"We have the Greek crisis, and it poses a risk in particular to southern-eastern Europe," EBRD Chief Economist Erik Berglof said during the bank's annual meeting in Zagreb, Croatia. "But there is a broader risk for the region. Clearly this is something we are very concerned about."

The former communist countries in Europe and the former Soviet republics in central Asia are recovering from the deepest recession since switching to free-market policies two decades ago. Challenges include adjusting to a slower pace of growth as the European Union, the largest export market for most of the region, grapples with mounting fiscal problems, the EBRD said.

The euro has fallen 3.9% to 1.2358 million dollars in the past seven days. It traded for 1.2511 million dollars at 9:14 a.m. Central European Time.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said May 14 that Europe is in a "very, very serious situation," even after a rescue package for the region's most indebted nations. The Spanish newspaper El Pais reported the same day that French President Nicolas Sarkozy threatened to withdraw his country from the euro. Finance Minister Christine Lagarde and other government officials denied the report.

EU Monetary Affairs Commission Olli Rehn told participants at the Zagreb conference that "it is important that markets read our package and see that we are serious about our defence of the euro area."

Yesterday, Greek Prime Minister George Papandreou said his country may take legal action against US investment bank Lehman Brothers that might have contributed to the country's debt crisis.

The euro region's tensions may affect eastern Europe through "a disruption of capital markets" as well as "a decrease in import demand from countries like Germany or France," EBRD President Thomas Mirow said at the close of the annual meeting. "There are potential risks that can be channelled through the subsidiaries of Greek banks. Up until now we haven’t seen this materializing. We have to watch and encourage policy makers to bear this risk in mind."

The EBRD raised its forecast for Russian economic growth this year to 4.4% from 3.9%. It also boosted its outlook for Turkey, Poland, Hungary, and Ukraine, while lowering expectations for Romania and Bulgaria.

"The outlook remains very uncertain because of a shift in risks from the domestic to the external," Berglof said. "External risks have risen dramatically."

While the EBRD now expects most countries where it operates to rebound, the recovery will be protracted, it said. Growth rates will remain below pre-crisis levels and former drivers of growth, such as investment from abroad and consumer spending, will remain subdued. The region grew at an average pace of 5% annually before 2008.

The EBRD’s shareholders increased the bank’s resources for the next five years. They approved raising the bank’s capital by 50% to €30 billion, enabling it to invest about €52 billion until 2015. That’s more than the bank’s combined investments since its 1991 inception.

The capital increase will open the way to investments of €9 billion in each of the next two years and €5.5 billion in the succeeding three years. The bank this year will spend €8 billion on loans and company stakes. Funding reached €1.76 billion in the first quarter, and €8.5 billion in the succeeding three years. The bank this year and next will invest about €52 billion until 2015.

With the decrease in the number of employed persons, the employment rate declined as well. In 2010, the employment rate of the population aged 15-64 was 58.6%. Over the quarter it dropped by 1.9%, while over the year by 4.2%. The male unemployment rate was 54.5%, female 59.8% .

In quarter 2010, according to the data of the Lithuanian Labour Exchange, the average number of the registered unemployed was 298,000. A noticeable increase in the number of the unemployed registered at the labour exchange was observed at the end of the March, which was due to the obligation for the unemployed who are not registered at the labour exchange to pay compulsory health insurance contributions, set in the Law on Health Insurance of the Republic of Lithuania.

With the increase in unemployment, the number of employed persons decreased. In quarter 2010, the number of employed persons in the whole economy was 1,328,000, which is 5.4% (4%) less than in quarter 2009. The most marked decrease in the number of employed persons over the quarter was observed in construction – 11,800, and industry – 10,300.

In quarter 2010, against quarter 2009, the number of employed persons dropped by 104,700, or 7.3%. Over the year the number of persons employed in construction dropped by 38.5%, in industry 12.4%.

Unemployment 18.1% in 1 quarter 2010

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Lithuanian economic outlook improved at Danske Bank

Vilnius, May 18 (Bloomberg-ELTA) - The Lithuanian and Estonian economies may contract less than previously estimated this year on rebonding industrial production, Danske Bank A/S said.

Lithuania’s economic output may fall 2.2% this year, compared with a previous estimate of 2.9% and Estonia’s will probably shrink 0.7%, rather than 0.9%, Copenhagen-based Danske Markets said in an emailed note on Tuesday.

Latvia’s output may drop 4%, Danske said, reiterating its earlier forecast.

The Danske estimates are the most pessimistic for the region. The governments of the two countries expect 1.6% growth in Lithuania and 1% expansion in Estonia. Lithuania’s industrial output grew in March for the first time in 17 months, while Estonia’s output rose at the fastest pace in more than three years as recovering sales to export markets increased demand.

Start1 Airlines launches flights to Girona (Barcelona)

On 23 May the Lithuanian low-cost carrier "Start1 Airlines" is launching direct flights from Vilnius to Girona. The route that was highly popular last summer shall be operated twice per week, on Thursdays and Sundays, until 3 October.

The head of "Start1 Airlines" Martynas Laivys confirms that last summer airline carried 5700 passengers on the route Vilnius – Girona – Vilnius that proved to be one of the most popular last summer.

"In summer season Barcelona becomes one of the largest attraction points for tourists from Europe and all over the world. No wonder we feel high interest from travellers in this destination. This year the timing of flights to Girona is extremely favourable for longer weekend trips – departing from Vilnius on Thursday morning tourists shall have 3.5 days for their stay at the Catalan capital and back to Vilnius Sunday afternoon" – says M. Laivys.

It is estimated that around 7000 travellers shall choose this route during this summer season. Flight to Girona shall take 3 hours and 15 minutes.
Sport Shorts

Lithuanian National Team Friendly Timetable
The Lithuanian Basketball Federation announced the National Men’s Team regime for the upcoming World Championships to be held in Turkey later this year.
Preparations will begin with a camp in Kaunas from 30 June to 3 July, followed by two games against the English National Team on 6 and 7 July.
The team then heads to China from 10 - 21 July where they will play the Chinese National Team three times as well as a couple of games against Chinese National League teams.
The team then has an “intense” physical, strategic and tactical camp in Palanga, before their next game against Finland in Sauliūnai on 30 July, and then The Czech Republic in Panevėžys 2 August, then returning to training camp in Kaunas 3-5 August.
The boys then head down to Spain for a three way tournament with Spain and Slovenia 5-7 August, then another short camp in Kaunas before heading off to Germany for four team tournament with Germany, Croatia and Turkey.
Then it’s back to Spain, first for a training camp, then to play Spain and the US 19 and 21 August.
The last training camp will be in Kaunas 23 - 26 August, where they will stop to play the final game again Iran in Kaunas 24 August.
The National Team will depart for Turkey 26 August to start their World Championship campaign.

Amber Rules
The contest to pick a mascot for Eurobasket 2011 was finalised recently. The prize money was LTL5000, 3000 and 2000 respectively.
The top three winning entries were: “Amberis – tai krepšinis, Lietuvos brangakmenis” (Amber - Basketball, the jewel of Lithuania) Tomas Jočys (Vilnius); “Geležinė dvasia – kelias į pergalę” (Iron strength - the road to victory) Tomas Ivaškevičius (Finland); “Už Lietuvà - iki kaulų smegamą” (For Lithuania - down to the bone) Skirmantas Rača (Vilnius).
The winning entries will be sent to FIBA Europe who will then decide the final winner and retain full copyright of the chosen design. FIBA will not necessarily choose the highest vote winning entry.
Almost 130,000 Lithuanian basketball fans voted for the mascot.

Rytas win LKL Final and a ticket to Euroleague
In front of a packed house of 10,000, Lietuvos Rytas made full use of its home court advantage to take the deciding game in the best of seven series 80-71.
While Rytas were favourites to take the win, when a series comes down to a single game anything can happen. As it turned out the home team settled the better of the Lithuanian rivals and pulled away in the third quarter on the back of a 10 - 0 run which they were able to defend for the rest of the game.
Both teams displayed nerves at the beginning of the encounter, but Žalgiris were able to make more of their early shots before a Rytas rally closed the first quarter at a modest 16 - 15 in favour of the visitors.
Baynes injured his leg and would not return for the game. Bjelica, starting off the bench, took on the added responsibility with relish and showed why he was so sorely missed during his injury.
In his characteristic unfussed style he provided the surety under the boards which had been missing for much of the series.
The arm-wrestled continued into the second stanza, this time Rytas went into the long break with a single point lead, and the series was further reduced to just 20 minutes on the floor.
Halfway through the third quarter the status quo was maintained with the scoreboard showing 41 - 40 to the advantage of the hosts as the teams swapped turnovers and missed shots.
Then the penny started to drop. A Pocius shot was matched by a pair from Bjelica, then Šalenga had his score equalised by Baurauskas, but then Rytas hit their straps.
Buoyed by the vocal and intense crowd Rytas put on the 10 - 0 run that would win them the game, and a reasonably comfortable 54 - 43 lead at the last break.
With turnovers still a factor, nothing was going Žalgiris way as even a buzzer beater on three quarter time was disallowed after the refs checked the video.
When Žalgiris couldn’t close the gap early in the last, they turned to fouling Rytas to stop the clock, but the hometown boys remained resolute and took their chances from the charity stripe. Both teams were good from the line, with Rytas especially making 27 from 28 on the night.
With 15 lead changes and 7 ties for the final game the fireworks literally started on the Rytas celebrations with a few minutes left. Bjelica finished with 24 including 2 of 3 from beyond the arc, and Gecevičius and Bajramovic 15 each. Gecevičius was also voted MVP for the series.
For Žalgiris Capin had 15, Kalnietis 13 and Šalenga 9.
Kurtinaitis also went on record to say that he would remain with the club if offered the job next season.

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VII – IV 17.00 – 01.00
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www.litnews.lt/litnews/gallery.htm for more photos.