

[AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION OF THE LITHUANIAN ORIGINAL]

This letter was approved unanimously at a meeting of the board of directors of the Lithuanian Jewish Community on October 14, 2010, in which 21 board members participated.

To the President of the Republic of Lithuania
Ms. Dalia Grybauskaitė
15 October 2010

Your Excellency,

The Lithuanian Jewish Community wishes to express its great concern concerning the thoughts expressed by the foreign minister of the Republic of Lithuania, A. Ažubalis, which sow discord between Lithuanians and Jews.

Reports have appeared in the mass media that A. Ažubalis said that “Everyone knows very well” by whom this law (Lithuanian dual citizenship) is most needed, and explained that Jews of Lithuanian origin are the main force pushing this law to the forefront. Moreover, the politician hinted that they probably expect to regain property here more easily in this manner.

One of the functions of the Foreign Ministry of the Republic of Lithuania and of the foreign minister is to represent the state of Lithuania abroad. Can a minister with such views represent the state. Does the state deserve this kind of minister?

The minister is deceiving Lithuanian society in this way. People who didn't have Lithuanian citizenship as of 31 December 2001, lost the option of regaining property that belonged to them. Thus, neither the current law nor the newly adopted law (even if it allowed Jews to become citizens of the Republic of Lithuania) would in fact provide an opportunity for regaining property.

Furthermore, the law currently in effect as well as the new legislative proposal are not favorable to Jews. First of all, Jews who are former

concentration camp and ghetto prisoners are not included in the category of people with the right to preserve [their option of acquiring] Lithuanian citizenship indefinitely (unlike deportees and political prisoners).

The law of the Republic of Lithuania on citizenship and the proposed amended law provides separate and special rights to ethnic Lithuanians. The words “of Lithuanian [ethnic] origin,” it appears, have nothing to do with Jews who are Lithuanian citizens. “Person of Lithuanian origin means a person whose parents or grandparents or one of whose parents or grandparents are or were Lithuanians and who considers himself Lithuanian.” We believe that this sort of statement would cause great confusion not only in the legislative process but also in the public life of other citizens of the European Union, for example, to Germans if the phrase were “a citizen of German ethnic origin is the one who counts as German.” The initiator of such an idea would face criminal prosecution.

Meanwhile, in our country, the foreign minister allows himself to think out loud about what is again useful for those Jews “who profit from everything.” At the same time the minister’s fellow party members are suggesting to the Lithuanian Jewish community to together create a “Litvak heritage forum” and a “virtual Litvak museum” to draw together Jewish émigrés from Lithuania located around the world.

In this sort of political situation, the Lithuanian Jewish community will be forced to abstain from agreeing to these kinds of projects.

We believe the honorable minister A. Ažubalis should apologize for such statements because this statement categorically sows discord between ethnic groups.

Sincerely,

**Dr. Simonas Alperavičius [Simon Alperovich]
Chairman, Lithuanian Jewish Community**

Copies to:

Prime Minister of the Republic of Lithuania Mr. Andrius Kubilius;
Chairwoman of the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania Ms. Irena Degutienė;
Foreign Minister of the Republic of Lithuania Mr. Audronius Ažubalis;
Ambassador of the Republic of Lithuania to the State of Israel Mr. Darius Degutis.