

## **Lithuanian ForMin accuses Polish officials of spreading false information**

*2010 10 21 11:24*

VILNIUS, Oct 21, BNS - On Thursday, Lithuania's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said it had brought to the Polish ambassador's notice Polish officials' public statements on energy projects and the ethnic minority situation that contain "false facts that could mislead and confuse the society."

The ministry reported that Neris Germanas, the acting director of Europe Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, met with Janusz Skolimowski, the Polish Ambassador to Lithuania, on October 19.

"The meeting focused on the statements that were recently made by high-ranking Polish officials in the Lithuanian and foreign media. These statements contained false facts that could mislead and confuse the society," the ministry's statement said.

"The officials spoke about the media statements by the Polish ambassadors to Lithuania and Latvia. The statements contained false facts about the activities of the company Orlen Lietuva, the construction of a new nuclear power plant, the issues of national minorities, and a tendentious account of the investment climate in Lithuania and in the Baltic region," the Foreign Ministry reported.

Poland blames Lithuania for supposed obstacles to Polish investments and discrimination of the Polish ethnic minority. Lithuania refutes such accusations and considers them unfounded.

In an interview to the Lithuanian daily Lietuvos Zinios, Skolimowski said that "the catalogue of violations by the Lithuanian government or non-exercised rights of the Polish minority remains the same." He mentioned problems with land restitution in Vilnius city and region, the status of Polish education, the spelling of Polish names and double street names in areas with the Polish majority.

Jerzy Marek Nowakowski, Poland's ambassador to Latvia, has recently

accused Lithuania of discriminating Polish investors.

"In the wake of an unpleasant situation related to Polish investments into ORLEN Lietuva (ex Mazeikiu Nafta) refinery, currently owned by Poland's PKN Orlen, the relations can change. ORLEN Lietuva is the biggest foreign investor in Lithuania and the largest client of Lithuanian rail company Lietuvos Gelezinkeliai. But rates for the transportation of the company's products to Klaipėdos Nafta terminal are higher than those for Lithuanians. And they are set to increase. The discrimination of Polish investors in Lithuania has an effect on our investors' business activities in Latvia and the whole Baltic region," Nowakowski.

In the ambassador's words, the contract with Lietuvos Gelezinkeliai costs the Polish side hundreds of millions euros every year.

"The acquisition of ORLEN Lietuva, including its modernization, cost 3 billion dollar. And now the Polish are offered only 1 billion dollar for it. The decision to invest in ORLEN Lietuva was a political one as we wanted to help our neighbors. It turned out that is was a mistake. And when there is no politics, only an economic issue remains," Nowakowski said.

The diplomat added that Poland has so far been ready to participate in and co-finance the new Visaginas nuclear power plant project, but the project got stuck as the Lithuanians got entangled in never-ending discussions. The Russians, on the contrary, started the construction of its nuclear power plant in Kaliningrad this February and plan to finish it by 2016, the Polish ambassador noted.

The Polish ambassadors were cited by a Russian-language newspaper Biznes & Baltija.

Vilnius newsroom, +370 5 2058514, [politika@bns.lt](mailto:politika@bns.lt)