

Lithuanian president considering veto of new Citizenship Law — adviser

VILNIUS, Nov 09, BNS - Lithuania's President Dalia Grybauskaite has not yet decided on a veto of the new version of the Citizenship Law, which expands boundaries of dual citizenship, presidential adviser Solveiga Cirtautiene said on Tuesday.

"The president has not yet made her final decision on whether she will sign the law or return to the parliament for repeated discussions. The final decision will be made upon receipt of the fully edited law from the parliament," Cirtautiene, senior adviser for legal matters, said in an interview to Ziniu Radijas news radio on Tuesday morning.

During discussion of the law, parliamentarians spoke of their intentions to ask the Constitutional Court whether the law is in line with the Constitution, however, in the presidential aide's words, "it is only a draft that can be adopted or not."

"Under the Constitution, there cannot be legal regulation that would allow cases of dual citizenship would not be a particularly rare exception, not a common phenomenon, as it would be the case with adoption and signing of the law," said Cirtautiene.

She emphasized that, in the president's opinion, the issue of dual citizenship should be decided by way of referendum.

Discussions of the new language of the law lasted for two years. Major changes were made in the version proposed in 2009 by a task force of the then president Valdas Adamkus.

The version of the President's Office that envisaged rather narrow possibilities for dual citizenship was expanded at the parliament to allow dual citizenship for not only those who left Lithuania prior to the declaration of its independence on March 11 1990, as proposed in the initial version, but also those who emigrated after the date, given that they acquired citizenship of a member-nation of the European Union (EU) or NATO.

Some of the experts and politicians believe that such regulation would run counter the Constitution, which stipulates strict restrictions of cases of dual citizenship.

According to the law, dual citizenship should be allowed to persons who acquired foreign citizenship through birth or marriage.

Dual citizenship has been a subject of heated debates in Lithuania ever since the Constitutional Court in the fall of 2006 found that the country's main law provides for dual citizenship as rare exceptions, declaring laws allowing dual citizenship as running counter the country's **Organic Law**.

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