

Lithuania's President vetoes controversial citizenship law

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Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaite on Thursday vetoed the Citizenship Law that provides broader opportunities for dual citizenship, saying it could run counter the Constitution.

The law was returned to the parliament over the articles, which allow dual citizenship to those who have acquired passports of countries of the European Union (EU) or NATO.

"According to the Constitution, dual citizenship is a rare exception, not a common case. Expanding the opportunities for dual citizenship can only be done by amending the Constitution," the president said in a press release circulated by the President's Office.

Discussions on the new version of the law have lasted for two years. Major changes were made to the version proposed in 2009 by a panel 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 an EU or NATO member-nation.

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

Article 12 of the Constitution envisages that "with the exception of individual cases provided for by law, no one may be a citizen of both the Republic of Lithuania and another state at the same time."