

[NOTE: The passage **highlighted in red** is for our readers' speed of reference; it is not highlighted in any way in the original]

# LITHUANIA SENDING BACK AMBASSADOR TO VIENNA

VILNIUS, Sep 28, BNS Lithuania's Ambassador to Austria Giedrius Puodziunas is returning to Vienna after being recalled for consultations in protest of Austria's move to release former KGB officer Mikhail Golovatov wanted by Lithuania in Jan. 13 attempted coup case.

Lithuania's Foreign Minister Audronius Azubalis made the decision in the light of the bilateral declaration signed by Lithuanian and Austrian justice ministers on Sept. 23. In the document, the Austrian justice minister committed herself to proposing reconsideration of application of the European arrest warrant, the Lithuanian Foreign Ministry said on Wednesday.

"Austria's intention to reconsider application of the clause is a sign demonstrating that the country heard the voices of Lithuania and other EU partners, as well as the opinion of European Commissioner Viviane Reding. Believe that the case of utmost sensitivity to Lithuania has become a good lesson for Europe and boosted its solidarity. Nevertheless, we should not stop in our efforts for a joint European attitude towards history, no matter how difficult the path may be," Azubalis said.

The Lithuanian diplomacy chief said Lithuania was "the first country to toll the bells of European consciousness."

"We did a lot to make sure that all of Europe hears about the case of Mikhail Golovatov and learns or remembers what Lithuania suffered on Jan. 13 and understand why we stood in front of tanks with our bare hands. I can say with certainty that hasty decisions in similar situations will not be made in Austria and any other country of the EU in the future," the minister said.

**The complexity of the issue, in Azubalis' words, is indicated by the long time it took the EU to formulate an aspiration to build a shared platform of European memory and consciousness, i.e., start talking about crimes committed by Communist regimes in the same language as it does about Nazi crimes.**

Golovatov, a Russian citizen, was detained in Vienna airport on July 14 but was released less than a day after the detention. Golovatov was commander of Russia's Alpha special purposes unit, which stormed the Vilnius TV tower in Vilnius on January 13, 1991. Fourteen people were killed and more than 1,000 incurred injuries during the night.

Lithuania was outraged by the decision and later received support from Latvia and Estonia. Some Lithuanian and Austrian politicians believe Austria yielded to Russia's pressure.

Meanwhile, Austrian officials maintains their country followed its laws, however, Lithuania emphasized Austria should have taken the EU law into consideration, as well.

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