



**LIETUVOS RESPUBLIKOS SEIMO KONTROLIERIŲ ĮSTAIGA**  
**THE SEIMAS OMBUDSMEN'S OFFICE OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA**

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Ms. Emily O'Reilly  
Médiateur européen  
1 avenue du Président Robert Schuman  
CS 30403  
F-67001 Strasbourg Cedex  
France

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Médiateur européen

- 9 DEC. 2014

Date d'arrivée

Dear Ms O'Reilly,

Thank you for your interest in forced return operations and in national ombudsmen's role in it. We think you have undertaken a very relevant inquiry.

In reference to your letter of 20/10/2014, we would like to explain you the situation in Lithuania regarding forced return operations and the involvement of national monitoring bodies.

In Lithuania, forced return operations are regulated by the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners. Article 126 paragraph 2 of the Law stipulates that international organizations and non-governmental organizations may monitor a forced return operation.

From October 2010 to June 2014 forced returns were monitored by an NGO "Lithuanian Red Cross Society" (Lietuvos Raudonojo kryžiaus draugija). No state institution was monitoring forced returns at that time.

Currently forced returns are not monitored in Lithuania since no state institution has been awarded with this function. The amendments of the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners have been prepared and the draft law is being discussed in the Parliament at the moment. It is envisaged that forced returns will be monitored by the Ministry of Interior together with international organizations and non-governmental organizations.

Seimas Ombudsmen's Office, as an independent body seeking to become a NHRI, expressed its view during the drafting procedure that the Office could become a monitoring body of forced returns unless sufficient funding and human resources are provided.

At the moment, since no monitoring body exists in Lithuania and since it is still undecided which institution will be designated as a monitoring body, cooperation among monitoring bodies is not

possible. However, we as an ombuds-institution would be willing to cooperate with monitoring bodies in other states, especially with ombuds-institutions awarded with the function of monitoring forced returns.

In reference to your question on the possibility to launch an inquiry in the area of forced returns, we would like to stress that if we see feasible grounds for launching an inquiry *ex officio* we would consider the possibility to launch such an inquiry.

Thank you for your interest in this area and we are at your disposal if you need any further details.

Wishing all the best with the investigation,

Sincerely,

Augustinas Normantas

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Normantas', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Seimas Ombudsman, Head of the Seimas Ombudsmen's Office