

Enhanced back office for Lithuania

November 26, 2019 [About the EUIPO](#)

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The State Patent Bureau of the Republic of Lithuania ([SPB](#)), with the support of the EUIPO's European Cooperation Projects, has upgraded its back office system.

The upgrade, which took place on 15 November 2019, is designed to **increase the efficiency, operational effectiveness and security** of the back office system used at SPB, as well as to make maintenance easier.

The back office tool, developed by the EUIPO's [European Cooperation](#) activities, helps in the management of tasks related to the examination and registration of trade marks and designs, and follows the successful front office upgrade completed earlier in 2019.

The improvements were carried out within the framework of the European Cooperation projects, the main goal of which is to provide modern, state-of the art tools and services for IP offices, thus benefiting users across the EU.

[Press release – 2018 Sakharov laureate](#)

[Oleg Sentsov receives his award](#)



He was able to receive the [2018 prize for Freedom of Thought](#) in person after being released from prison on 7 September 2019 as part of a prisoner exchange deal between Russia and Ukraine. He was imprisoned for protesting against Russia's annexation of his native Crimea on Independence Square in Kyiv.

Awarding the prize, EP President David Sassoli said: "You have clearly stood by your principles and convictions, Mr. Sentsov, for which you have paid the very high price of freedom. No person should ever pay for that."

President Sassoli praised the courage of freedom fighters who speak up when human rights are being violated. "Mr Sentsov has been released but many others, including bloggers and journalists like Stanyslav Aseev, are still held hostage in Eastern Ukraine. We call for them to be freed."

[Link to President Sassoli's full speech](#)

Receiving the prize, Oleg Sentsov said: "(...) It is a huge honour and a huge responsibility to receive this prize. I accept and take this prize not as a personal honour, but as a prize to all Ukrainian political prisoners that have been in Russian prisons and to all that are still there." He praised the EU and its democratic values and criticised Russia's "militarist" practices.

About Oleg Sentsov

Sentsov is a Ukrainian film director, sentenced to 20 years in prison for

“plotting terrorist acts” against the Russian de facto rule in Crimea. Amnesty International has described the court process as “an unfair trial before a military court”.

He has become a symbol for the approximately 70 Ukrainian citizens illegally arrested and given long prison sentences by the Russian occupation forces in the Crimean peninsula.

Sentsov was on hunger strike from mid-May until 6 October 2018, when he ended the strike under threat of being force-fed.

Watch our [video](#) to find out more about Oleg Sentsov.

More on the Sakharov Prize

The Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought, named in honour of the Soviet physicist and political dissident Andrei Sakharov, has been awarded annually since 1988 to individuals and organisations defending human rights and fundamental freedoms.

[Article – Sakharov Prize: 2018 laureate Oleg Sentsov receives his award](#)



The Ukrainian film director and human rights activist was able to collect the [2018 prize for Freedom of Thought](#) after being released from jail on 7 September as part of a prisoner exchange deal between Russia and Ukraine. He was imprisoned for protesting Russia's annexation of his native Crimea on Independence Square in Kyiv.

Awarding the prize, Parliament President David Sassoli said: "You have clearly stood by your principles and convictions, Mr Sentsov, for which you have paid a very high price of freedom. No person should ever pay for that."

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The 2018 finalists

Find out more about the other finalists for the 2018 prize – the NGOs protecting human rights and saving migrant lives across the Mediterranean Sea; and Nasser Zefzafi, the leader of Hirak, a mass protest movement in the Rif region in Morocco – in this [article](#).

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[Press release – Court of Auditors: MEPs back five members](#)



New members: France and Luxembourg

[François-Roger Cazala](#), nominated by France, was backed by MEPs by 568 votes to 42, with 55 abstentions. Cazala is a member and a former Vice-Chair of the

Board of Auditors of the European Stability Mechanism.

[Joëlle Elvinger](#), nominated by Luxembourg, was endorsed by 512 votes to 79, with 70 abstentions. She is currently a Member of Luxembourg's Chamber of Deputies and a lawyer.

Renewals: Germany, Greece and the Netherlands

MEPs voted by 497 votes to 130, with 32 abstentions to renew the mandate of the German ECA member [Klaus-Heiner Lehne](#), who is currently also president of the Court. He has been a long-standing member of the European Parliament and the former chair of the Committee on Legal Affairs.

[Nikolaos Milionis](#), nominated by Greece, was renewed in his office by 590 votes to 15, with 47 abstentions. [Alex Brenninkmeijer](#), put forward by the Netherlands, was backed by 555 votes to 17, with 47 abstentions. They both have been ECA members since 2014.

Next steps

Once they have obtained the support of the full house, the appointments need to be [sealed by the Council](#).

Background

The ECA, the EU's independent external auditor, has 28 members, one from each EU country.

They are appointed for a renewable term of six years by the Council, after consulting the European Parliament. Each member has their own "portfolio" and is responsible for checking the EU's finances in a particular subject area.

The ECA president is elected by its members.

The Court, based in Luxembourg, assists the European Parliament in its role of watchdog for the implementation of the EU budget, in particular through the discharge procedure, ensuring the interests of European taxpayers.

The five members were [heard](#) and [subsequently endorsed by the Budgetary Control committee](#) on 12 November.

[Press release – Children's rights: combatting exploitation, forced marriage and sexual abuse](#)



Following the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on 20 November, the European Parliament adopted a resolution, assessing the many challenges that children and youth face today. The text was approved by 495 votes in favour, 58 against and 87 abstentions on Tuesday.

Vulnerable children, children in migration

MEPs condemn all forms of violence against children, including forced marriage, female genital mutilation, trafficking, psychological violence and urge all EU countries to work on new strategies to eradicate sexual violence and child abuse both online and offline. They also call on member states to uphold legislation penalising the corporal punishment of kids.

The resolution calls for the Common European Asylum System to be fully implemented to improve conditions for children in migration. The best interests of the child should be a primary consideration in all decisions concerning children and migration. In particular, child protection should be the leading principle when dealing with unaccompanied children, rather than migration policies, says the text.

Children in armed conflicts, statelessness, inclusive education

Some children continue to be born stateless, including in the EU, and MEPs call on the countries concerned to address these problems. They also highlight, among others, children with disabilities, migrant backgrounds, children of LGBTI parents, those with imprisoned parents and children of so-called "foreign fighters" as disproportionately exposed to discrimination on multiple grounds.

Concerning children of foreign terrorist fighters held in north-east Syria, the resolution urges all EU countries to repatriate all kids with EU nationalities, taking into account their specific family situation.

The Parliament also calls on all EU countries to guarantee all children the right to an inclusive education, including age-appropriate information about

sex and sexuality.

Kids, drivers of change

On a positive note, the resolution highlights the significant role children can play in shaping the political agenda as illustrated by the recent mobilisation against climate change led by young people. It finally urges all countries that have not yet ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its additional protocols to do so as a matter of urgency.

Background

[This United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) has become the [most widely](#) ratified human rights treaty in history. The European Parliament organised [a high-level conference](#) on 20 November to mark its 30th anniversary, attended by, among others, Her Majesty the Queen of the Belgians.