

Translation of article in *Respublika* (27 March 2010) at

[http://www.respublika.lt/lt/naujienos/lietuva/kitos\\_lietuvos\\_zinios/ambasadorius\\_kurste\\_nesantaika\\_atnaujinta\\_1729/](http://www.respublika.lt/lt/naujienos/lietuva/kitos_lietuvos_zinios/ambasadorius_kurste_nesantaika_atnaujinta_1729/)

# Ambassador Incites Discord

Yesterday the Union of Lithuanian National Youth presented Norwegian ambassador Steinar Gil a petition expressing their outrage at his public statements, in the hope that the Ambassador will apologize to patriots who marched in a procession on March 11. Not only did the ambassador fail to apologize, he began to complain.

Union of Lithuanian National Youth chairman Julius Panka told Respublika that his organization participated in the March 11 march organized by the Lithuanian Nationalist Center. Union members celebrated the 20th anniversary of the day Lithuania declared itself free of Soviet occupation. Young people marched with the national flag and with the flag of their organization, chanting the slogan "Lithuania for Lithuanians."

Several days later, the Norwegian ambassador speaking at an event in the parliament vented outrage and hurled insults at marchers, accusing them of imaginary things, calling them 'neo-Nazis' and tried to teach our members of parliament how they should respond.

"Our has had to suffer very much. We would like to remind this rude guest of our country's history. We want him to understand that we aren't saying 'Lithuania for Lithuanians *only*,' because ethnic minorities have lived in Lithuania for hundreds of years. Most of them are perfectly integrated into Lithuanian society and enrich the culture of the Lithuanian nation," the representative of the youth organization said. "Lithuania has been

renowned since the Middle Ages as one of the most tolerant European countries. We just want to have our freedom, a national state of Lithuania [ethnic nation-state] and the loyal minorities of Lithuania are our coworkers in preserving and celebrating our homeland."

J. Panka said union members feel hurt by the diplomat's statements, and are expecting an official apology from him. They believe the ambassador should represent his country instead of engaging in cheap politics.

S. Gil went out to meet with representatives of the Union of Lithuanian National Youth and received their petition, but instead of an apology they only received criticism from the ambassador and his disapproval of their activities.

"What do you think, how would the twenty to thirty thousand Lithuanians in Norway feel if Norwegians marched through the streets on their national holiday chanting 'Norway for Norwegians!' I don't think they'd like it," the ambassador said.

"We are pleased the ambassador met with us and expressed his opinion, but he didn't convince us. Lithuania is a democratic state. Just as we have the right to express our views, so does he. But we suggest he not preach to Lithuania... He is a foreign diplomat in Lithuania and by trying to teach us, he is breaching diplomatic ethics. I do not believe the Lithuanian ambassador to Norway would dare to speak at their parliament like this" J. Panka said when leaving the embassy.