

MOST LITHUANIAN MEPS CONDEMN CIA'S 'GUANTANAMO EXPRESS' OVER EUROPE

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Body

On Wednesday, seven out of twelve Lithuanian members of the European Parliament approved of the report condemning secret transportation of prisoners by the US Central Intelligence Agency and accusing European governments and secret services of putting up with the practice and concealing it.

Washington has admitted covert rendering of terrorists to third countries yet has denied that they were tortured or handed over to countries that might torture them. Terrorist suspects who were apprehended in Afghanistan and in other countries would be transported by US airplanes, the so-called Guantanamo Express, around the world and interrogated in countries that have little regard for the rights of people in arrest and on remand. Eventually, arrestees would find themselves in a special prison at the US Guantanamo base in Cuba.

The EP's report stating that the parliament is condemning the transportation or rendering of apprehended persons as an illegal measure used by the United States in combating terrorism had the approval of Sarunas Birutis, Danute Budreikaite, Arunas Degutis, Jolanta Dickute, Ona Jukneviene, Aloyzas Sakalas and Margarita Starkeviciute.

MEP Eugenijus Gentvilas abstained from voting.

MEPs Laima Andrikiene, Gintaras Didziokas, Eugenijus Maldeikis and Vytautas Landsbergis voted against the findings.

MEP Landsbergis commented the motives of his voting for BNS saying that the presentation of the findings was biased and one-sided.

"Most MEPs see, and obviously not from the left side, a unilateral chance and gloat over the possibility to express their anti-American mood. I do not think that these findings will do much harm to the relationship between the US and the European Union, but if the US is operating in not-quite-appropriate ways, then one should consider that this was done to protect ourselves as well before starting to criticize such measures," Landsbergis told BNS on Wednesday.

The EP's recommendation was adopted by a vast majority of votes, 382 MEPs voting in its favor, 256 voting against and 74 abstaining.

The report has the approval of Socialists, Liberals, Greens and left-wing parties.

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The report indicates that during four years since the attacks on the US of Sep. 11, 2001, CIA planes have made at least 1,245 flights to or above Europe.

CIA planes have flown a dozen of so times over Lithuania but have never landed on its territory.

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