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Press release
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Lithuanian yachtsmen to present country and investment opportunities to Turks

Lithuania, European Union member state famous for its courageous deeds, and its capital, Vilnius, expands diplomatic, cultural, and economic relationships with Mediterranean Sea area towns.

This year in July a group of Lithuanian yachtsmen will visit 17 Mediterranean Sea ports and introduce their country and certain investment opportunities at official meetings with the municipalities. A 40 square meter flag of Lithuania will wave above a yacht named *Gold of Lithuania* in all the ports. The flag symbolizes two events significant to the country: the 600-year anniversary of the Battle of Grunewald when the Lithuanian army defeated the Teutonic Order, and, the 20-year anniversary of the declaration of independence of the republic of Lithuania, which historians consider the beginning of the fall of the Soviet empire.

Gold of Lithuania will moor in Turkey in the following places: Marmaris - on 5th of July, Fethiye - on 5th of July, Kas - on 6th of July, Kale - on 7th of July, Finike - on 8th of July, Antalya - on 9th-10th of July, Alanya - on 11th of July and Bodrum - on 31st of July. All interested including media representatives are very welcome.

“We are sending our best wishes to all towns and invite their citizens to visit Lithuania. Be sure to see Vilnius, long famous for wonderful cultural events. I hope our sea scouts will encourage future cooperation,” states Vilnius Navickas, Mayor of Vilnius, in his letter to the towns to be visited.

“The goal of this historical trip is to enlighten ideological centres of Mediterranean Sea about our history and cultural phenomena of our country. We are the most Northern Catholic country, but Vilnius, our capital, has been known as a tolerant town from the 16th century on, where Catholics, Jews and Muslims live in harmony,” says Alfredas Bumblauskas, professor of Vilnius University, who created the historical precedent for the trip.

“Our goal is not only to propagate yachting, patriotism, and love for our native country, but at the same time also to popularize the idea of business pilgrimage,” says the steersman of the *Gold of Lithuania*, Donatas Juškus. According to him, the yacht brings much information and representative material about Lithuania, its economics, investments, and tourism opportunities.

Each city visited by *Gold of Lithuania's* will also receive an official invitation to the Lithuanian Baltic Sea Klaipeda port to arrive to the regatta of tall historical ships The Culture 2011 Tall Ships Regatta. Yachtsmen from all over the world participate in the biggest yachting festival in Europe, held in Klaipeda on August 18-21, 2011.

JCI Vilnius and the city of Vilnius began the *Gold of Lithuania* initiative in 2009, the purpose of which is to develop relationships among cities, and to encourage mutual tourism and business. This mission is supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Economy, and the Republic of Lithuania. In 2010 the yachtsmen of *Gold of Lithuania* will sail 1500 Nautical miles will visit cities in 5 countries: Rhodes (Greece), Bodrum, Marmaris, Fethiye, Finike, Kas (Turkey), Larnaca, Limassol, Paphos (Cyprus), Haifa, Tel-Aviv, Ashkelon (Israel), and Alexandria (Egypt).

During the second annual historical trip the yachtsmen set a peaceful mission for themselves – to repeat the pilgrimage to the Holy Land made by nobleman M. K. Radvila (1583-1584) from Lithuanian Grand Duchy 400 years ago. Mr. Bumblauskas, historian, established the historical precedent for this trip with the unique mission: the diplomatic experience of the yachtsmen will be recorded in a book of essays written by the famous Lithuanian writer Tomas Staniulis.

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Facts about the last year journey: In 2009, *Gold of Lithuania* yacht sailed 3,200 nautical miles in the Mediterranean. Lithuanian delegation on the noble mission met with the Mayors of Dubrovnik (Croatia), Durrës (Albania), Chania (Crete) and Ajaccio (Corsica) and Vice-Mayors of Valletta (Malta), Arzachena (Sardinia) and Bari (Italy). Vice-President of Palermo region (Sicily) received the Lithuanians on the top level and so did Cardinal Giovanni Lajolo, President of the Governorate of Vatican City State. The delegation presented their home country to all these officials, communicated the official invitation of Vilnius City to visit Lithuanian capital and expressed their willingness to develop the partnership further.

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