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**National Youth Conference**

(November 19, 2011. Vilnius “Santara”School)

**Summary of the speech and discussion with Vice-minister of Education of Lithuania Vaidas Bacys**

**Motion: This House Would require emigrants return the governments of their home country the expenses of their education**

Gedmine:

According to the EU and UN, a long-term migrant is a person who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least a year (12 months), so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence. In this case, I will be talking about the graduates of universities, who, after receiving government funding for higher education, choose to enter a job-market of a different country.

Today we should debate on the principle level, and that person has an obligation to his country of origin (active role of government) and legislation on this bond would be beneﬁcial to the society. Therefore, I have brought 2 arguments to support this motion:

**1. Individual has an obligation to his nation of origin**

For the country to function efﬁciently, the government assumes a role of prioritizing policies on behalf of its people. The taxpayers money is thus invested in various policies, including higher education. In order to ensure the continuity of the state, the government develops a relationship with its young citizens by granting a special entitlement to the students. In most cases, this is an ofﬁcial privilege by investing in the most potential young human capital in a state and incentivizing them to seek for higher education. EVI - prices of education, LT - 40 000. On the other end, potential students consent to entering this relationship with the government, because they do not choose to pay for their education in say private institutions. In the long term, the government expects this investment to pay off. Either directly - by paying taxes, or indirectly - by adding value to the nation’s economy, consuming and investing, or contributing to nation`s culture, the citizens who graduate and enter the national job-market repay their debt to the government. The emigrants, however, is a lost investment. Unless they compensate the government by paying for their own expenses, they misbalance the fairness in the society. This is unfair for a) the government, as the emigrants broke the relationship and engaged in a free-ride on governments expenses, to satisfy their individual needs for job opportunities, but not working to repay.

b) other students, who did not get the funding, but had great potential to do so

c) society as a whole, as they exploit the societal resources and do not beneﬁt it.

Just as the university dropouts are compelled to pay for their tuition, or the two parties are bound by a business contract and are penalized for breaking it, our policy makes the contract between a student and government official. It’s impossible to determine mathematically which of the group members is getting a fair share of the Gross Group Income or who is putting more than a fair share into the group effort and taking less than a fair share out because it’s impossible to determine how any single individual subjectively measures the non-material income he earns by participating in a cooperative effort.

**2. Education is a service, not a right**

There's no doubt the vast majority would argue that primary education is a right, although there still is a wide disagreement on whether higher education should be granted the same status as well. e.g. Countries with long democratic traditions do not deﬁne higher education as a right in their respective constitutions (the Bill of Rights etc.) Even if we make an assumption that every human being has a right to higher education, that certainly doesn't mean that the state is obliged to pay for it. Today I suggest to consider higher education to be a negative right, meaning that although it cannot be ignored, no party has a duty to provide it.

Thus, paying for higher education of a particular group of individuals would be described as a special entitlement which, in contrast to inherent rights, is basically a privilege granted after birth. The government, as a legal representative of taxpayers, chooses to pay for the expenses of its citizen’s higher education even though it is not obliged to.

By sponsoring the studies of certain individuals, which oftentimes tend to be the smartest and most competitive human resources available within a country, the state trades off taxpayers' money for the potential long term beneﬁts associated with common good of a community as a whole. Consequently, if the most talented students choose to emigrate rather than contribute to their nation of origin in the long run, returning the expenses of their education would be the only logical conclusion with regards to fairness for fellow citizens. Since all the eligible taxpayers contributed a share of their income to pay for a higher education of a tiny but talented portion of young people, their only morally responsible action would be to pay back to the state's budget in return.

All in all, I proved to you that citizens have a moral obligation to pay back the country for its investment, because education in a service, not an inherent right. Therefore, this model will prevent a brain drain, and help concentrate the motivated people within the country and make higher education more valuable than it is now.