THE SOCIAL REPORT
2012–2016
The Social Report

2012–2016

Vilnius
2016
Dear Readers,

In recent years, aiming at making social policy better meet the needs and expectations of Lithuanian people and contribute to the country’s economic growth, we have been step by step moving towards considerable changes.

Together with Lithuanian scientists we have developed a social model. For the first time it presents a structural approach to social insurance, labour relations and employment, and aims to balance the changes in different social spheres. Fragmentary changes cannot create added value; on the contrary, we may achieve it if we take an integrated approach and reconcile various changes. The road we have chosen will enable an increase in the employment rate, make labour relations more flexible, provide more opportunities to reconcile work and family responsibilities, seek sustainability of social insurance, and reduce poverty.

Another equally important step is the commenced reorganisation of institutional care which has been gaining momentum and is targeted at abolishing the long-lasting soviet system and creating a system which is totally new to Lithuania. None institution can give the sense of warmth and belonging which are offered in a family or community. Therefore, the reform of institutional care is aimed at creating a system of integrated services that will provide opportunities to every person with intellectual or mental disabilities or their families to receive individual services according to their needs. We have to ensure necessary assistance in the community as well as the possibility for each child deprived of parental care to grow up in a family or environment as close to family as possible.

This period is not only the time of structural reforms, but also of social justice. In 2014, we began to pay out compensations to residents who had received reduced pensions during the crisis, and in 2016, we started compensating to those old age pension recipients who had been working in 2010–2011 and received lower pensions. Moreover, the rates of sickness and unemployment benefits have been restored to the pre-crisis level. Consistently, step by step we have increased the minimum monthly wage. These changes resulted in the growth of income and the purchasing power of Lithuanian residents as well as reduction of deprivation in the country.

We are glad to note that pensions have been raised twice after a long break. Although the increase was modest, it is the first step in the gradual increase of pensions that have not been raised as of 2009. In order to further consistently increase pensions each year, with regard to the economic and demographic situation in the country and regardless of political circumstances, the social model came up with the proposal of the pension indexation mechanism enabling to raise pensions taking into consideration very objective criteria. Besides, the new procedure will not lead to cutting down pensions during the crisis.

Our vision and main goal is to continue pursuing that every Lithuanian citizen is able to live a dignified and provided life, has the possibility to work and earn, reconcile family and work responsibilities, create and share, achieve self-realisation, has all social guarantees and receives necessary assistance under complicated life circumstances. Thus, I invite you to become acquainted with the key topical issues of social policy, the results achieved and the plans for the future, targeted at the implementation of this vision.

I would like to express my gratefulness to all and everyone who contributed to this report as well as it readers for showing interest and understanding of the spheres, links and directions of social security, thus contributing to its improvement.

Sincerely,

Minister of Social Security and Labour
Algimanta Pabedinskiene
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1. Summary

Employment and unemployment:
The employment rate of residents aged 15–64: in 2012 – 62 per cent; in 2015 – 67.2 per cent
The employment rate of residents aged 55–64: in 2012 – 51.7 per cent; in 2015 – 60.4 per cent
The unemployment rate: in 2012 – 13.4 per cent; in 2015 – 9.1 per cent
Youth unemployment rate in 2012 – 26.7 per cent; in 2015 – 16.3 per cent

Wages:
The minimum monthly wage (MMW) of EUR 246.17 (LTL 850) as of 31 December 2012 increased by 42.2 per cent to EUR 350, effective as of 1 January 2016.

Support for the acquisition of housing
In early 2012, 31,584 individuals and families were included in the list of those entitled to support for the rental of housing, drawn up in municipalities. In accordance with the provisions of the Law, after the declarations of property and income of persons queued up for the rental of subsidised housing were checked, the number of those entitled to support for the rental of housing and queued up for this support decreased to 25,202 individuals and families in late 2015, and reached 17,173 individuals and families by May 2016.

SODRA (State Social Insurance Fund)
The deficit decreased from EUR 578.7 million in 2011 to EUR 136.8 million in 2016.
The average old-age pension increased from EUR 216.1 in 2011 to EUR 255.1 in 2016.
LABOUR MARKET, LABOUR RELATIONS, HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK

(Chapter 3)

EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Increase of employment and unemployment reduction are determined in the programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania 2012–2016 as essential operational priorities. In 2013, the Programme for Increasing Employment 2014–2020 was approved with a view to achieving a comprehensive solution to urgent employment problems through consolidation of the business, education and labour market sectors as well as involvement of social partners and municipalities into shaping and implementation of the employment policy. The measures provided for in the Programme contributed to implementation of the urgent employment increase priority established in the programme of the sixteenth Government 2012–2016, by promoting job creation, especially in the regions, improving compliance of qualifications of labour force with the labour market needs, integrating free labour resources into the labour market and retaining them there.

In 2015, if compared with 2011, the number of employed people increased by 6.5 per cent, from 1 253 600 up to 1 334 900 persons. In 2016, the trend of increasing number of people in employment successfully continued. In the first quarter of 2016, the number of people in employment increased by 12 300 persons (totalling 1 350 800 persons).

With the number of employed people growing and decreasing labour force due to demographic trends and economic emigration, the rates of employment growth were consistently increasing in 2012–2016. During 2011–2015, the employment rate increased by 5.2 per cent, from 48.6 per cent up to 53.8 per cent. In the first quarter of 2016, the employment rate increased up to 54.8 per cent.

In 2012–2016, Lithuania achieved progress in pursuit and implementation of the national employment goal of Europe 2020 strategy, i.e. to achieve 72.8 per cent employment rate in 20–64 age group of population by 2020. In the first quarter of 2016, the employment rate in 20–64 age group reached and exceeded the above-mentioned national employment goal and accounted for 73.3 per cent (66.9 per cent in 2011).

Following successful implementation of active labour market policy measures and decrease in the gap between labour supply and demand, the number of unemployed and unemployment level were decreasing. In 2015, the number of unemployed decreased by 94 000 people if compared with the year 2011, i.e. from 228 000 down to 134 000. In the first quarter of 2016, the number of unemployed dropped down to 122 500 people, while the unemployment rate decreased down to 8.3 per cent (15.4 per cent in 2011). A wide range of targeted measures and programmes contributed to reduction of unemployment of youth under 25 by 16.3 per cent, from 32.6 per cent (2011) down to 16.3 per cent (2015). A great attention is focused on integration of 16–29 aged young people not in employment, education or training into labour market through implementation of the Youth Guarantee Initiative or return of young people to the educational system.

With intermediation of territorial labour exchange offices, over 790 000 people found employment in the period of 2012–2015. Over 250 000 unemployed participated in active labour market policy measures. These measures contributed to integration of long-term unemployed, unqualified, over 50 year old jobseekers, people with disability and youth into the labour market. Having launched newly-developed vocational training model in 2012, attendance and efficiency of vocational training of unemployed improved. If in 2011 within six months after the completion of vocational training 52 per cent of training participants found employment, then following introduction of the new vocational training model over 90 per cent of training participants found jobs every year starting from 2012.
The Government of the Republic of Lithuania in order to make the minimum wage in the country reach 50 per cent of the average wage was consistently increasing the minimum monthly wage and minimum hourly rate, which from 2011 to 1 July 2016 increased by 64 per cent (from EUR 213.7 up to EUR 380) and in the first quarter of 2016 the minimum wage accounted for 53.8 per cent of the net average wage (46.8 per cent of the gross average wage).

In 2014–2016, the draft law on remuneration for employees of state and municipal institutions of the Republic of Lithuania was developed and elaborated, the goal of which is to develop a uniform remuneration system for employees of state and municipal institutions working under employment agreements. Consequently, the situation for lowest paid social workers, health and culture specialists would improve. Additional need for funds for implementation of the draft law would amount to about EUR 84 million.

Implementing the measure Social Dialogue Promotion of the 1st priority Quality Employment and Social Inclusion of the Lithuanian Operational Programme for Human Resources Development 2007–2013, projects financed by the European Social Fund and state budget of the Republic of Lithuania were carried out, at the result of which 45 collective agreements of territorial and industry-wide level were signed.

Since 2012, national responsible business competition was organised every year in order to award socially responsible companies.

In order to promote social responsibility and social dialogue, the Minister of Social Security and Labour adopted orders approving the action plans of social responsibility promotion in 2016–2020 and Social Dialogue Enhancement in Lithuania in 2016–2020.

Amendments to legal acts were adopted enabling attraction and retention on the labour market of bigger number of qualified labour force from third countries, providing a possibility for aliens, workers of high professional qualification and other specialists to obtain permits for temporary residence in the Republic of Lithuania.

Implementing the measures of the project Development of Legal–Administrative Model of Labour Relations and State Social Insurance and the recommendations of conducted research studies, draft Labour Code of the Republic of Lithuania, draft Employment Law of the Republic of Lithuania and draft Law on Unemployment Social Insurance of the Republic of Lithuania were drawn and submitted to the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania for consideration.

Significant attention was focused on health and safety at work, i.e. preventive measures aimed at preserving capacity to work, health and life. They are applied or planned in all stages of enterprises operations to protect workers against occupational risk or to minimise it. Amendments to the Labour Code, Law on Health and Safety at Work and Law on Social Insurance of Accidents at Work and Professional Diseases and amendments to the resolutions of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania regarding investigation of accidents at work and professional diseases were made to specify or simplify investigation procedures and to ensure thorough investigation and prevention of all events causing damage to workers’ health.
SOCIAL INSURANCE AND PENSIONS

(Chapter 4)

For Lithuanian residents encountering various social risks, for example, illness, loss of capacity to work, maternity and/or paternity, unemployment, old age, etc., social security level is essentially determined by the social insurance policy and funds allocated for its implementation. Social insurance is funded from the State Social Insurance Fund (SODRA) budget. It suffered from shortage of funds in the period of 2008–2016. SODRA budget debt in May 2016 if compared with December 2011 increased by 70 per cent, i.e. from EUR 2 204 million up to EUR 3 737.1 million.

In 2012–2016, legal acts regulating state social insurance were adopted in order to reduce SODRA expenses and to increase its revenues. After having increased the legal age of retirement in 2012, the average number of old age pensioners dropped down from 600 200 (2011) to 595 300 (2015). Social insurance contribution privilege for employers employing a person first time participating on the labour market was reduced from 31 down to 7.7 per cent. Later on, the new form of support, i.e. compensation of a fixed part of employee's wage, was introduced. From 2013 the scope of the state social insurance system was increased by including state officers who were not a part of the system before. From 2014, the state budget funds are used to cover interest of loans taken by SODRA. In 2012–2015, following increase of the revenues of SODRA by 2.1 per cent and decrease of the expenses by 9.8 per cent, the result of the current year improved from -578 700 (2011) down to -136 800 (2015).

More effective use of SODRA budget and human resources and improvement of the quality of services were achieved after moving increasing number of services provided for residents on Internet. Residents can submit applications via electronic residents services system (EGAS). The project (ADIS) was implemented with the outcome of more advanced personalised electronic services developed, which are aimed to ensure quality information and consulting of residents by authenticating service recipients by the use of voice recognition technologies, callers’ telephone number, client’s identification code and other tools.

In the period of 2013–2015, a new Lithuanian social model of enhanced sustainability was developed, which embraces employment increase, improvement of labour relations regulation and enhancement of social insurance sustainability. The social model was developed in order to prepare a new legal-administrative model which could ensure the balance of the state social insurance, labour relations and employment systems and encourage positive changes in the state social insurance and pension system. The complex of these measures would help to increase trust in the social insurance system, make it more attractive to both the insured and insurers.

The 16th Government’s programme 2012–2016 states that full life of Lithuanian people will be secured by efficient work, while social protection based on social solidarity principles will help those who are incapable to work. One of the social security priorities of 2012–2016, following recovery of economy, consistent increase of pensions was fulfilled after the basic pension of state social insurance was increased by 6.7 per cent in 2015–2016, i.e. from EUR 105 to 112 and after increasing the insured incomes of the current year from EUR 431 to 445. Another important priority measure is under implementation: the procedure of compensation of reduced pensions due to economic recession was established, according to which about EUR 290 million were paid to over 500 000 persons for compensation of reduced pensions due to applied smaller insured incomes of the current year in 2010–2011 and additional reduction for working pensioners.

In 2012–2015, the average annual old age pension increased by 12.8 per cent, from EUR 216.75 (2011) up to EUR 244.46 (2015). In the first quarter of 2016, the old age pension increased by 4.3 per cent and amounted to EUR 255.10. But the rates of growth of the average old age pension in 2012–2015 were behind the rates of growth of the average wage (19.9 per cent), therefore the share of the old age pension if compared with the average net wage decreased from 46.9 per cent (2011) down to 44.1 per cent (2015).
In order to increase the adequacy of pensions, a new draft of the Law on Social Insurance Pension was drawn in which a new pension composition, funding sources and pension indexation rules are suggested. A new procedure of calculation of work incapacity pension is also suggested according to which the work incapacity pension amount would be closer linked with the level of person's disability.

**CASH SOCIAL ASSISTANCE, SOCIAL SCOPE**

(Chapter 5)

Cash social assistance is one of the measures which affects the reduction of poverty and social exclusion as well as strengthens the family institution. In 2012–2015, seeking accurateness and efficiency of cash social assistance provided to poor residents, the cash social assistance system was reorganised (provision of assistance has been assigned as an independent municipal function as of 2015).

More efficient provision of assistance has been achieved by strengthening interinstitutional cooperation, trying to integrate recipients of benefits in the labour market and involving local communities in the process of provision of social assistance. The number of recipients of social benefits decreased twice during the abovementioned period, i.e. from 221 000 (in 2011) to 111 000 (in 2015) persons, and expenses of social benefit decreased by 56 per cent (from EUR 177 million to EUR 77 million). The expenses of all cash social assistance intensively decreased from EUR 333 million (in 2011) to EUR 187 million (in 2015). As the country’s economic situation stabilises, efficient measures are further searched in order to ensure improvement of the system of provision of cash social assistance, reduction of the risk of poverty trap, motivation of residents to work and independently realise their social purpose.

In 2012–2016, social services have been developed seeking to improve accessibility of social services as close to the person’s place of residence as possible and guarantee a possibility to choose and receive quality services meeting the needs of individuals and families, by helping to avoid social exclusion and integrate in society and the labour market, as well as motivate employees who provide social services for efficient performance. The development of social services has resulted in the increase of the number of recipients of services of assistance at home from 15 000 (in 2011) to 17 800 (in 2015); persons who received assistance in crisis centres – from 3 000 to 9 000; persons who received assistance in psychological and social rehabilitation institutions – from 600 to 1 200; persons who received assistance in elderly people’s care institutions – from 4 400 to 5 000.

The process of transition from institutional care to family and community-based services for people with disabilities and children deprived of parental care has commenced; integral assistance (nursing and social care) provided in municipalities to persons with disabilities and elderly people in their homes, by offering consultations to their family members who take care of these persons, has been developed.

After municipalities were encouraged to more actively work with families and individuals at social risk, positive changes have been observed. In 2012–2015, the number of families at social risk decreased by 6 per cent (from 10 400 to 9 800; the number of children raised in these families decreased by more than 13 per cent, i.e. from 22 000 (in 2011) to 19 000 (in 2015)). Financing for establishing positions of a social worker working with families at social risk has been constantly increased (from EUR 4 044 000 (in 2011) to EUR 6 691 000 (in 2015)).

The quality of social services was affected by the licensing of social care institutions, increase of the wages of employees who provide social services, and organised training in relation to their professional development.
Equal opportunities are among the key values and principles of modern society. Every ninth Lithuanian resident has a disability that heavily restricts an individual’s mental and social functions. In 2012–2016, a total of EUR 39 million were allocated for the social integration of the disabled. Social integration has been ensured by increasing independence of people with disabilities, promoting their employment opportunities, adapting their housing, supporting disabled students, providing these people with technical aids, and paying target compensations. Particular attention was paid to increasing the employment rate of people with disabilities. This has been achieved through the vocational rehabilitation programme which was allocated over EUR 14 million in 2012–2016. Vocational rehabilitation services were provided to 12 000 persons with disabilities. In 2015, a three-year-long project “Assistance for the Disabled” was launched with a view to providing vocational rehabilitation services to 2 000 disabled persons. The project value amounts to EUR 7.6 million.

In 2012–2015, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour implemented measures aimed at improving re-emigration conditions and helping third-country nationals, who have come to Lithuania, integrate in the country and social life, as well as providing support to political prisoners and exiles and their family members returning to Lithuania. Implementation of these measures has been continued in 2016.

In order to improve legal regulation of support for the acquisition or rental of housing and create the conditions for a bigger number of individuals and families to use these forms of support, the Law on Support for the Acquisition or Rental of Housing was adopted and came into force on 1 January 2015. The Law establishes new provisions related to support for the acquisition of housing (individuals and families may use a subsidy for paying part of the housing loan partially compensated by the state for the down-payment of the housing loan partially compensated by the state (or part thereof); the amounts of evaluated individual’s and family’s income and property have been increased by 11.9 per cent). These measures resulted in the increase of the number of individuals and families who have used support for the acquisition of housing. Regular submission of declarations of individuals’ and families’ property and income for every year and annual revision of the right to support for the rental of housing created the conditions to more accurately identify beneficiaries and draw up the lists of individuals and families entitled to this type of support and waiting for it.

Having evaluated limited financial resources to carry out the development of subsidised housing stock in municipalities, a new form of provision of support for the rental of housing – a compensation for part of rental or lease payment – has been established.

AFFAIRS OF COMMUNITIES, CHILDREN, YOUTH, FAMILY

(Chapter 6)

The Ministry of Social Security and Labour implementing the policy of communities and non-governmental organisations developed drafted a resolution of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania which was approved on 9 July 2014 by the Resolution No. 641 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuanian “On Approval of Composition of the Council of Non-Governmental Organisations and its Regulations”. Upon approval of the personal composition of the Council, an action plan 2015–2016 of the Council of Non-governmental Organisations was developed and approved, working groups in the areas relevant for non-governmental sector were initiated: working groups for formation of the fund of non-governmental organisations and supervision of national programmes, Interaction between state institutions and the platform of non-governmental organisations, and other. Action plan of the development of non-governmental organisations and communities 2014–2016 intended for long-term NGOs development is implemented.
In 2012–2015, the **Programme of local communities self-government** was successfully implemented, to which over EUR 2 million funds are allocated every year from the state budget. All 60 municipalities and all 550 neighbourhood authorities participated in the programme implementation. At the result of the programme implementation, the quality of public spaces and environment improved, cultural-educational events were organised and possibilities of employment for children and youth were increased. From 2016, the Programme of local communities self-government was repudiated. Funds for enhancement of community activities were included into the action plan of the development of non-governmental organisations and communities 2014–2016. Projects for enhancement of community activities are financed by selecting them through tender. The project received funding of EUR 3 million in 2016.

**To protect children’s rights**, the axis of the programme of the Sixteenth Government 2012–2016 was implemented regarding rights of the child and aimed at securing possibilities for every child to grow in family, developing accessibility of preventive and complex services for the child and family, and by creating adequate care (curatorship) or adoption conditions for a child who lost parental care, which would meet the best interests of a child.

From 2016, the **Action Plan of Comprehensive Provision of Services for Families 2016–2020** is launched in Lithuania. It represents coordinated provision of educational, social, health care and legal services for the child and family. Services for the child and family are funded from the state budget and European structural funds. When dealing with the matters of child’s rights protection, attempts are made to coordinate the whole system with the action plan 2014–2020 of transit from institution care to provision of services in family and community for people with disabilities and children who lost parental care which is already under implementation. Transit from institutional care is carried out through pilot projects in individual regions and 26 care institutions and all 5 children’s homes in the country are planned to be reorganised by 2020. Considering the long-term plans, attention is focused on enhancement of preventive work with family, which can ensure protection of child’s rights.

In 2012–2015, 5 396 children were potentially exposed to violence, 62 per cent of whom received comprehensive assistance. The new package of the Law on Fundamentals of the Protection of Child’s Rights is currently under consideration in the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania. The draft law aims to ensure examination of every single report about potential violation of child’s rights in municipalities.

**Youth Policy** targets persons aged 14–29, there were 617 000 persons of this age group in Lithuania in 2015. The basis for Youth policy implementation development is the national youth policy development programme 2011–2019 and the action plan for its implementation, major measures in which target spread information of youth about employment possibilities, development of work with youth in open youth centres and spaces. Youth organisations and bodies working with youth implemented various programmes and projects selected through tender in order to help youth to find employment or return to educational system.

From 2014, **Youth Guarantee Initiative** has been implemented in Lithuania. It helps to strengthen regional youth policy and helps **persons aged 14–29 not in employment, education or training** to integrate into social life and labour market. From the end of 2015, there were 27 open youth centres and 136 open youth spaces in Lithuania, which were attended by over 20 000 young people.

Implementing the **family policy**, the Ministry was implementing the family policy measures stipulated in the Government’s programme, by coordinating actions of various fields of policy and implementing measures reducing violence in closes environment.
EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN

(Chapter 7)

Equality between women and men is one of the principal values recognised on both the international and European Union levels and a horizontal priority for all policy areas, which was also highlighted in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted in 2015 by the United Nations (hereinafter the UN). In Lithuania, equal rights for women and men in all areas are guaranteed de jure by the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (hereinafter the Law). Programmes, measures and projects are consistently and systematically being implemented in order to solve equality between women and men related problems.

The guarantee of equal rights and equal opportunities for all is pointed out among the principal values in the Programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania 2012–2016. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour has been assigned to systematically and consistently implement gender equality initiatives aimed at addressing the issues of equality between women and men.

Amendments to the Law were adopted during the period of implementation of the Government Programme. These amendments ensure proper transposition of the directives of the European Parliament and of the Council into national law, horizontality of the principle of equality between women and men on both national and local levels, as well as smoother functioning of the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson.

A new National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2015–2021 (hereinafter the Programme) was approved in early 2015. In order to achieve its goals and objectives, the Action Plan 2015–2017 was developed. It is being implemented by a number of ministries, various national institutions, non-governmental organisations, centres of gender studies and social partners.

Seeking to ensure proper functioning of the mechanism of equal opportunities for women and men as well as the horizontality of this priority, the Commission on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the period of 2012–2016 has regularly held meetings and discussed the key current issues: the National Programme of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and its implementing Action Plan, international commitments, etc.

During the reporting period 2012–2016, a report was prepared and defended for the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (hereinafter CEDAW) on the implementation of The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The Lithuanian candidate was elected to CEDAW on June 2016. In March 2016, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour organised a side event at the UN for the first time.

In 2015, Lithuania’s position concerning the conformity of the provisions of the recommendation on gender equality in education, employment and entrepreneurship of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to national law was prepared. In May 2016, the position concerning the OECD recommendation on gender equality in public life was prepared.

The trainings financed from the European Social Fund were attended by about 52,000 persons; subsidised employment programmes involved over 24,000 unemployed persons; more than 5,000 unemployed persons participated in vocational training programmes; about 27,000 persons at social risk and socially excluded persons took part in project activities, of whom 31 per cent became employed or continued studying after 6 months after project accomplishment; having implemented the measure “Support for the first job”, employment of over 22,000 young persons under 29 without any work experience in companies was subsidised; 1,292 persons used a financial engineering measure (i.e. became self-employed) and created 3,580 new jobs; entrepreneurship training was attended by over 5,000 persons; 787 recipients of loans from the Entrepreneurship Promotion Fund used wage subsidies and employed 2,600 persons; integral assistance (social care and nursing at home) was provided to over 1,500 persons with disabilities and elderly persons; 436 young persons carried out voluntary activities in accredited institutions; over 3,500 young persons were involved in active labour market policy measures; while developing social dialogue, 12 sectoral collective agreements and 263 collective agreements were signed, and other activities were carried out.

While implementing projects under Priority 2 “Quality and access to public services: health, education and social infrastructure” of the Cohesion Promotion Operational Programme, 75 facilities of non-institutional services were built or reconstructed (of them 20 facilities started to provide social services); 57 facilities of institutional social services were built or reconstructed and started to provide services; as many as 228 facilities of social services were modernised or built with the view of providing services to about 254,000 persons.

In 2012–2015, projects financed under programmes of the European Refugee Fund and the European Fund for Integration of Third-Country Nationals were implemented. During this period, 42 projects of the European Fund for Integration of Third-Country Nationals were financed with EUR 4 million, and they were attended by about 1,700 foreign nationals and over 2,000 Lithuanian society members. In 2012–2015, 25 projects of the European Refugee Fund were financed with EUR 2.8 million, and they were attended by 600 foreign nationals who had been granted asylum and over 1,200 asylum seekers. Starting with 2015, implementation of projects financed under the 2014–2020 Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund programme was commenced. While implementing this programme, the programme management and control system has been created, the national legal framework required for programme administration has been developed and approved, descriptions of project financing conditions have been drawn up, applications have been evaluated and projects have been administered. In 2015–2016, 15 descriptions of financing conditions with regard to projects of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund were approved, and 11 project agreements were signed. 887 third-country nationals participated in the projects during this period.

The projects implemented since 2014 have been financed from the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived. Food product packages have been provided to the most deprived in all Lithuanian municipalities. The average annual amount allocated for food supply is EUR 12.5 million and it is used by about 284,000 persons whose income does not exceed EUR 153 per month per family member, or EUR 204 in exceptional cases under objective circumstances.

In the period 2014–2020, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour is responsible for implementation of the measures under Priority 7 “Promoting quality employment and participation in the labour market” and Priority 8 “Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty” within the framework of the Operational
1. Summary

Programme for European Union (EU) Structural Funds’ Investments 2014–2020. The measures have been allocated EUR 564 million. This amount comprises EUR 460.4 million from the European Social Fund (ESF) and EUR 103.6 million from the European Regional Development Fund. At least EUR 93 million will be allocated from co-financing funds.

While planning EU fund investments during 2014–2020, the priority lies with increasing the employment rate of the unemployed, in particular long-term and unskilled unemployed persons as well as the disabled; long-term integration into the labour market of young people, in particular those not in employment, education or training (through the Youth Guarantee); reduction of poverty and social exclusion; increasing accessibility of subsidised housing to the most vulnerable social groups; increasing accessibility and quality of services provided in the community through transition from institutional care to community-based services; and development of services rendered to family.

24 measures financed with EUR 528 million from the EU funds have been approved; 12 descriptions of measure financing conditions have been drafted; agreements for project implementation for the total value of EUR 211.6 million from EU funds have been signed; and measure projects have been carried out.

In 2014–2016, project activities were attended by over 25 000 unskilled long-term unemployed persons as well as persons aged over 54 who have not worked for a long time. In 2015–2016, support for employment of more than 5 700 disabled persons working in social enterprises was carried out by subsidising part of wages and state social insurance contributions; 92 per cent of these persons retained their jobs. Over 700 disabled persons participated in the vocational rehabilitation programme and upon completion thereof 42 per cent of project participants became employed; over 250 persons addicted to psychoactive substances and over 500 young persons participated in project activities; the system of monitoring the Youth Guarantee will be established in the short run; and public procurement for the organisation of refresher training of specialists of territorial labour exchange offices is being organised.

While implementing a project under measure “Reorganisation of institutional care” as of November 2015, a logo, website www.pertvarka.lt and four information video clips to be shown on public transport have been created, methodological document packages and a common training programme for guardians and foster parents have been developed, surveys have been conducted, and the conference of establishment of the Institutional Care Reorganisation Cluster has been organised.
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION
(Chapter 9)

In 2012–2016, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and its subordinate institutions took active participation in the process of decision making of the European Union and implementation of adopted decisions, were fulfilling political commitments undertaken by Lithuania at the EU level, by participating in the activities of the Council of the European Union, European Commission working groups and committees. The Minister of Social Security and Labour took part in the activities of two Councils of the European Union: Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) and Education, Youth, Culture and Sports Council (EYCS) by contributing to considerations of the matters of employment, social policy and youth.

One of the most significant and historically important events for Lithuania and the Ministry was – Presidency of the Council of the European Union taken over in 2013. Lithuania became the first Baltic State to ensure objective continuity of the EU agenda and smooth operation of the working structures of the Council of the EU. During the Presidency, Lithuania focused significant attention on the Youth Employment Package, Social Investment Package and other matters promoting employment and social inclusion.

Two main committees of the European Commission also belong to the competence of the Ministry. By working in the Employment Committee (EMCO) and Social Security Committee (SPC) Lithuanian experts together with representatives of other Member States have advisory right for the EPSCO, i.e. contribute to decision making at ministerial level by their analyses and insights.

The Ministry of Social Security and Labour is an active participant not only in the European Union but also in a number of international organisations joined by Lithuania. The Ministry contributes to the tackling major global problems in the fields of social security and labour. Representatives of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour participate in the activities of the International Labour Organisation and its Governing Body, in which Lithuania is a substitute member for the period of 2014–2017.

Lithuanian interests are represented in the activities of various committees and commissions of the Council of Europe: European Platform for Social Cohesion, the Governmental Committee of the European Social Charter and the European Code of Social Security and its board, the Committee of the state parties to the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, the Committee of Experts on the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child, the Gender Equality Commission and meetings of its National Focal Points, the Committee of Experts on the Rights of People with Disabilities.

Fulfilling international commitments, the Ministry together with other institutions every several years submits and defends reports of Lithuania on the progress of implementation of the conventions joined by Lithuania. At present, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour cooperates with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (hereinafter – the OECD), and represents Lithuania in the OECD Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee. Lithuania holds candidate’s status in this organisation.

The Ministry of Social Security and Labour is carrying out active bilateral cooperation with other countries on the social security and youth exchange issues. Between 2012 and 2016, bilateral international agreements in the field of social security were signed with Moldova and Latvia, agreement on youth exchange with New Zealand, cooperation agreements with Hungary, Georgia, Germany and Denmark. Negotiations are further carried out with Ukraine, Belarus and United States of America on signing agreements in the field of social security.
# List of Abbreviations

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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BSB</td>
<td>Basic social benefit</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross domestic product</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
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<td>EDAS</td>
<td>E-service system for insurers</td>
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<td>EIF</td>
<td>European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals</td>
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<td>ERF</td>
<td>European Refugee Fund</td>
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<td>ERDF</td>
<td>European Regional Development Fund</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>ESF</td>
<td>European Social Fund</td>
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<td>RF</td>
<td>European Return Fund</td>
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<td>YG</td>
<td>Youth Guarantee</td>
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<td>DYA</td>
<td>Department of Youth Affairs under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour</td>
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<td>YEI</td>
<td>Youth Employment Initiative</td>
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<td>LLE</td>
<td>Lithuanian Labour Exchange under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour</td>
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<tr>
<td>MMW</td>
<td>Minimum monthly wage</td>
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<td>MHR</td>
<td>Minimum hourly rate</td>
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<td>SODRA</td>
<td>State Social Insurance Fund</td>
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<td>SAC</td>
<td>Specialised assistance centres</td>
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<td>CPOP</td>
<td>Cohesion Promotion Operational Programme</td>
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<td>TLEO</td>
<td>Territorial labour exchange office</td>
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<td>TA</td>
<td>Technical aids</td>
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<td>SB</td>
<td>State budget</td>
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<td>CRPO</td>
<td>Child rights protection office</td>
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<td>OPHRD</td>
<td>Operational Programme for Human Resources Development</td>
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3. Labour Market, Labour Relations, Safety and Health at Work

3.1. LABOUR MARKET

3.1.1. EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

According to the statistical population employment survey conducted by Statistics Lithuania, the employment rate and activity rate of labour force were growing, while unemployment rate was decreasing in the period 2012–2015. In 2014, the population of 1,334,900 was in employment, or 59,200 (5%) more than in 2012. As Figure 3.1.1-1 shows, the employment rate of population aged 15–64 in 2015 was 67.2 per cent and increased by 5.2 percentage points in the period of four years. During this period, the rate of employment among the population aged 55–64 increased by 8.7 percentage points and accounted for 60.4 per cent in 2015. Unemployment rate in 2015 was 9.1 per cent and was 4.3 percentage points lower than in 2012.

Data of Statistics Lithuania

Figure 3.1.1-1
3.1.2. LABOUR MARKET

Gap between labour supply and demand was narrowing in 2012–2015. According to the data of the Lithuanian Labour Exchange (see Figure 3.1.1-2), the number of jobseekers registered in territorial labour exchange offices was decreasing, while the number of registered job vacancies was growing. Indefinite term job vacancies accounted for over 82 per cent, while fixed term job vacancies accounted for fewer than 18 per cent of the total vacancies.

With intermediation of territorial labour exchange offices, over 790 000 people found employment in the period of 2012–2015. Implementation of active labour market policy measures (hereinafter – ALMP) had a favourable impact on decreasing unemployment rate. For more than 250 000 jobseekers ALMPP have been organized. These measures contributed to integration of long-term unemployed, unqualified, over 50 year old jobseekers, people with disability and youth into the labour market. Implementation of ALMP measures was financed from the European Social Fund.

Significant efforts were focused on vocational training of jobseekers, trying to help them to acquire or improve qualifications and/or acquire competences needed in order to find job or start working as self-employed. Since 2012, with the help of a newly-developed vocational training implementation model, attempts were made to ensure quality of vocational training services and their compliance with the labour market needs and to provide every individual with a possibility to choose not only form of training, but also time and place. This model is associated with the introduction of a document guaranteeing payment for training services, training voucher into the existing order of organisation. It was also suggested to establish the clause of remuneration of territorial labour exchanges for vocational training related expenses, if a person terminates vocational training without a good reason, fails to find employment or to start self-employment upon completion of vocational training and employer does not offer a job or cuts a job in the period of six months. Since jobseekers were sent to training exclusively according to specific employers’ orders for job vacancies or when they planned to start self-employment upon completion of training, therefore much better efficiency of vocational training was achieved. As Figure 3.1.1-3 shows, if in 2011 within six months after the completion of vocational training 52 per cent of training participants found employment, then following introduction of the new vocational training model over 90 per cent of training participants found jobs every year starting from 2012.
Once employers were provided with a possibility to have an employee of adequate qualification trained or to participate in person’s training through apprenticeships in their companies, the interest of employers in vocational training increased. Vocational training not only became more effective but also more flexible, by creating a possibility to respond to market changes faster and to train employees meeting the requirements of the labour market, because jobseeker together with employer can choose vocational training programme and training provider. Results of sustainable employment after training were achieved – from 79 to 92 per cent of persons who found employment or became self-employed worked for at least six months.

Support to acquisition of working skills helped jobseekers to acquire missing working skills in companies and to find employment.

Subsidised employment helped jobseekers, 68 per cent of whom had profession and 29 per cent were highly qualified, to return to the labour market. Employers helped their integration into the labour market. Mainly participants of the measure are youth, long-term unemployed and jobseekers over 50 years old.

Job rotation provided jobseekers with a possibility to find temporary employment by replacing employees during their special leave. Professions in demand include shop assistants, tailors, cooks, cleaners, administrators, cashiers, social workers.

Agreements on acquisition of working skills helped young people to gain experience directly at the workplace, while employers could find adequate staff. After gaining experience relevant to their careers, young people became self-employed or found jobs under employment agreements.

Jobseekers of low qualifications worked public works according to the programmes approved by municipalities. This temporary form of employment was in particular helpful to rural population, long-term unemployed and elderly jobseekers. Through participation in public works programmes, they helped to renovate urban and rural environment, to create recreational green areas, to manage public zones.
Subsidised employment helped people with disability to return to the labour market by creating new or adapting the existing workplaces to their needs.

Self-employment promotion encouraged people to start or further develop their small businesses.

By increasing employment of population in individual areas and developing local social economic infrastructure, 405 local employment initiatives (hereinafter – LEI) were implemented in the period of 2012–2015, in unemployment areas. EUR 14,1 million state assistance funds were used to create 1 500 new jobs. Implementation of LEI projects brought positive multiplier effect – creation of new jobs promoted creation of additional jobs in other fields of activity.

3.1.3. INCREASING YOUTH EMPLOYMENT, YOUTH GUARANTEE

In recent five years, youth unemployment has been among priority issues in Lithuania. According to European statistical office Eurostat, unemployment rate of youth under 25 in 2010 was as high as 35.7 per cent.

After introducing tax privileges to promote employers to employ young people, granting loans on preferential terms to youth to start their own business, implementing targeted measures and programmes aimed at youth unemployment reduction, the youth unemployment rate was decreasing by 4 per cent on average a year and reached 16.3 per cent in 2015 and was 4.1 per cent below the EU average.

Improving youth employment situation results from consistent, targeted initiatives of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania:

• in 2012, inter-service working group established by the regulation of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Lithuania prepared a scheme of measures to increase youth employment. It consisted of non-formal education of youth through volunteering, apprenticeship forms, development of practical working skills of youth joining the labour market, promotion of entrepreneurship;
• in 2013, in addition to other projects promoting youth employment, innovative projects for youth “Pasitikėk savimi” (“Trust Yourself”) and “Jaunimo savanoriška tarnyba” (“Youth Volunteering Service”) were launched. Their aim is to prepare youth for labour market and/or educational system – to motivate young people through provision of personal, social, professional competences. Non-governmental organisations working with youth took active participation in the implementation of the projects;

• The network of Youth Job Centres (YJC) at territorial labour exchange offices providing information, consulting, education for career services if developed. In 1999–2009, there were 11 YJCs operating in the country, another 11 YJCs were established in 2013, 7 more in 2014, 8 more in 2015, 8 more centres are planned to be founded in 2016. Every year, YJCs organise over 5 000 events and workshops in which over 70 000 young people participate.

• In 2014, following the recommendation of the EU Council of 22 April 2013, Youth Guarantee was launched in Lithuania which is aimed to ensure that all young people aged 15-29 – whether registered with employment services or not – get a concrete offer of a job or further training, including apprenticeship, practicum placement or internship, within 4 months of them leaving formal education or becoming unemployed.

By implementing the Youth Guarantee in Lithuania efforts are made to ensure consistent, comprehensive package of services meeting individual needs of youth not in education, employment or training (NEET). Through this initiative, young people will be able to prepare themselves thoroughly for joining labour market or returning to education. For NEET young people finding themselves in more complicated situation access to complex assistance, which includes psychological counselling, acquisition of social skills, vocational guidance, active labour market measures is highly important.

About 160 000 young people participated in the measures of Youth Guarantee in the last two years. Every year, around 63 per cent of all registered young jobseekers are offered employment, the pace of employment process is gaining speed, participation in active labour market policy measures is growing – every year over 20 000 (around 22 per cent) young jobseekers acquire qualifications, working skills at workplace, receive support for job creation, find employment as employers are paid reimbursement for a part of their salaries and for tax expenses. It must be noted that after participating in the above-mentioned measures, 83–92 per cent (depending on the measure) of young people within six months successfully integrate into the labour market.

Furthermore, young people are showing increasing interest in self-employment. In 2015 activities under a business certificate started 10 000 unemployed young people. Once the Law on Support for Employment
was amended in September 2014, young people have been provided with more possibilities to acquire practical experience – at their own initiative young people can sign bilateral agreements with employers on acquisition of working skills or to participate in voluntary practical training. About 1 800 young people participated in this measure in 2015.

Despite improving transit from education to labour market, unqualified young people still find it difficult to establish themselves on the labour market, and therefore they must be prioritised.

![Participants of the “Trust Yourself” project implemented by the Lithuanian Labour Exchange together with 40 non-governmental organisations in 2013–2015 are trying trades](image)

In 2016–2018, over 35 000 NEET young people will participate in the projects “Atrask save” (“Discover Yourself”) and “Naujas startas” (“New Start”) financed from the Youth Employment Initiative and European Social Fund (EUR 69.2 million). During implementation of the primary intervention project “Discover Yourself”, youth whether registered or not in the labour exchange will be provided by activation and motivation services for the period of four months (including: job interview simulations, meetings with employers, small entrepreneurs, familiarisation with companies and educational and vocational training establishments operating on the local market, up to 20 days practicum placement in the selected company with technical mentor’s assistance, etc.). Should the project participants would not be invited to work, study or carry out practical training on the open market, they can participate in the project called “New Start”, during which the measures for integration into labour market are provided (subsidised employment, support for acquisition of working skills, and vocational training). The system consisting of the primary and secondary intervention projects will provide NEET young people in more complicated situation with comprehensive, consistent assistance comprising not only provision of basic social and working skills, acquisition of profession, but also assistance to integrate and stay on the labour market. Main activities in the framework of “Discover Yourself” project are organised by buying services. Potential providers of services are employers’ associations and other organisations (this demand is dictated by the type of services to be provided). The network of Youth Guarantee partners consisting of 57 youth organisations and organisations working with youth is involved in the work with young people not registered on the labour exchange.

More information is available on: [www.jaunimogarantijos.lt](http://www.jaunimogarantijos.lt), [www.facebook.com/jaunimogarantijos](http://www.facebook.com/jaunimogarantijos)

### 3.1.4. ALIENS’ EMPLOYMENT

In order to satisfy the demand for qualified labour in individual economic sectors, aliens from third countries were employed. Aliens’ labour relations are regulated by the Labour Code of the Republic of Lithuania, Law
on the Legal Status of Aliens of the Republic of Lithuania and EU legislation. In order to employ aliens, the demand of the labour market is assessed. Employer willing to employ an alien must register a job vacancy, specify qualification requirements and apply to the territorial labour exchange office for a work permit or a decision that alien's work satisfies the demands of the Lithuanian labour market. Aliens can work for the employer who committed himself to employ them. The latter is stated in the work permit or decision. Labour agreements signed with aliens must be registered by employers in territorial labour exchange office.

As Figure 3.1.4-5 shows, the number of aliens employed in the country was growing in 2012–2015, to whom the Lithuanian Labour Exchange issued permits to work in the Republic of Lithuania and adopted decisions on their compliance with the needs of the labour market of the Republic of Lithuania. Aliens mainly are employed in the sectors of services, construction and industry. By trades, they are mainly international freight transportation drivers, assemblers of metal ship hulls, welders, plasterers, cooks, bricklayers, etc. Aliens of high professional qualification mainly work in services and industry sectors. By profession, they are mainly engineers, economists and aviation workers.

Aliens from 40 countries work in Lithuania, however as Figure 3.1.4-6 shows most aliens are nationals of Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Russian Federation.
3.1.5. AMENDMENT TO LEGISLATION

Implementing the Programme 2012–2016 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, the Programme for Increasing Employment for 2014–2020 was approved in 2013. The Programme for Increasing Employment has been drafted with a view to achieving a comprehensive solution to urgent employment problems through consolidation of the business, education and labour market sectors as well as involvement of social partners and municipalities in shaping employment policy. The main goals (promoting job creation and demand for labour, improving compliance of labour force qualification with the labour market needs, sustainable integration of available labour resources into the labour market) and objectives for their achievement were set in the programme. To fulfil the goals and objectives of the programme and to achieve the planned results the inter-service action plan for 2014–2016 was approved by the Resolution No. 204 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of 26 February 2014 which was revised for the periods of 2015–2017 and 2016–2018. Implementation of the measures under the Programme for Increasing Employment is funded from the total appropriations approved by the state budget of the Republic of Lithuania and municipal budgets for respective years, Employment Fund, European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, EU Structural Funds, and other lawful funds.

In order to achieve more active reduction of unemployment, in particular of young people, promoting population’s employment to ensure more efficient application of the active labour market policy measures and to make them attractive to employers, the following amendments to the Law on Support of Employment of the Republic of Lithuania are effective from 1 September 2014:

- the law was supplemented by the clause establishing jobseekers’ duty to reimburse territorial labour exchange offices for vocational training related expenses, if jobseekers fail to fulfil the conditions established in vocational training agreements without a good reason. This way, targeted and more effective use of vocational training funds is ensured;
- to prevent employers from abusing subsidies available under the supported employment measures, the Law on Support of Employment was supplemented with safeguards stipulating employers’ duty to retain persons referred to by territorial labour exchange office for six months following completion of supported employment measures;
- to help young people to acquire practical skills and to find their first job and sustain it, and to help young people incapable of finding jobs according to their educational background to change their qualifications and thus to facilitate their integration into the labour market – young people aged from 16 to 29 are provided with a possibility to acquire practical skills at work upon signing voluntary practical training agreements or working skills acquisition agreement. Description of the Procedure of Voluntary Practical Training was drafted, which establishes the procedure of voluntary practical training. Practical skills can be acquired under working skills acquisition agreement by registering with territorial labour exchange offices. According to the statistics of the

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4 Law No. XII-999 on amendment of Articles 1, 2, 3, 13, 23, 24, 26, 29, 32 and supplement with Articles 261, 341 and annex to the Law on Support for Employment No. X-694 of the Republic of Lithuania.
Lithuanian Labour Exchange, 372 jobseekers were referred to the supported employment measure of working skills acquisition agreement in the course of 2015. Individuals willing to carry out voluntary practical training do not need to register themselves in territorial labour exchange offices (in 2015, 197 individuals registered in territorial labour exchange offices completed their voluntary practical training). Besides, persons on voluntary practical training are covered by health insurance and insurance against accidents at work and professional diseases from the state funds. 1,312 individuals, not registered with territorial labour exchange offices, completed voluntary practical training in 2015.

Implementing the measures of the project Development of Legal–Administrative Model of Labour Relations and State Social Insurance and the recommendations of conducted research studies for increasing employment, draft Employment Law of the Republic of Lithuania and draft Law on Unemployment Social Insurance of the Republic of Lithuania were completed in 2015 and submitted to the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania. The purpose of theDraft Employment Law of the Republic of Lithuania is to develop a new more effective model for application of active labour market policy measures which would help to solve problems of employment of beneficiaries of social allowance and to reduce long-term unemployment risks, to broaden possibilities of jobseekers’ training and practical training at workplace in pursuit of more effective integration of jobseekers into the labour market. The Draft Employment Law of the Republic of Lithuania suggests broadening of the scope of application of the Law on Support of Employment of the Republic of Lithuania, improving the system of employment support, classifying all forms of employment. It is also aimed at establishing responsibility for illegal, undeclared work and undeclared self-employment, violations of aliens’ employment procedure. In order to help the most vulnerable groups of unemployed, the priority application of active labour market policy measures is stipulated. Complex application of active labour market policy measures is also suggested when vocational training is combined with supported employment measures. New active labour market policy measures are stipulated, including: employment under apprenticeship agreement, when person’s practical training is organised at the workplace, while vocational training in vocational training establishment and internship for improvement or restoration of person’s working skills or professional qualification.

The purpose of the Draft Law on Unemployment Social Insurance of the Republic of Lithuania is to increase the number of insured entitled to unemployment social insurance benefits, to ensure adequate unemployment insurance benefits considering changes in jobseeker’s status, to specify the grounds for benefit suspension, cancellation. The Draft Law on Unemployment Social Insurance of the Republic of Lithuania suggests establishing unemployment insurance record to be 12 months during the last 24 months instead of current 18 months during the last 36 months. It is suggested to stop linking the period of unemployment insurance benefit with unemployment insurance record and to prolong it up to 9 months (the latter duration of payment of unemployment insurance benefits was applied only to those with the unemployment insurance record of 35 years). It is also suggested to correct the formula for calculating unemployment insurance benefit, by partly linking this benefit with the minimum monthly wage. Variable part of unemployment insurance benefit is suggested to be calculated in the manner which would motivate jobseekers to find new job without any delay – by paying 50 per cent of the jobseeker’s average monthly insured income, later reducing it to 40 and 30 per cent. Once the Draft Law on Unemployment Social Insurance is passed, the number of persons entitled to unemployment insurance benefits and the amount of unemployment insurance benefit will increase.

Following analysis of practical problems encountered in legal regulation of social enterprises, legal acts regulating activities of social enterprises were improved and amended:

1) By reducing the burden of supervising institutions on economic entities, amendments related with supervision of social enterprises were made. The clauses of the Law reduce the burden of inspections for social enterprises stipulating supervision of activities of social enterprises to be carried out by one control authority rather than two. In pursuit of more effective control and considering advanced supervising methods applied, controlling

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and consulting experience, the recommendation not to assign the functions of social enterprises supervision to the Lithuanian Labour Exchange under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour was approved. State Labour Inspectorate of the Republic of Lithuania was assigned to perform social enterprises supervision functions7.

2) With consideration of the clauses of the Commission’s regulation8, amendments to the Law on Social Enterprises were made 9 establishing the subsidy for employees of target persons’ group to be up to 60 per cent training expenses. This subsidy can be increased by 10 per cent if assistance is provided to medium, small and very small enterprises. In order to secure employer’s duty to contribute subsidiary by paying a part of salary to an employed person belonging to the target group or to contribute own funds when receiving other types of state assistance it was established that state assistance for the types of state assistance established in the Law on Social Enterprises of the Republic of Lithuania would be provided to social enterprises exclusively following the procedure established in the Law on Social Enterprises of the Republic of Lithuania. The clauses of the Law also specified the limitations of the state assistance, the list of target groups of persons employed by social enterprises stipulating support to employment of persons over 50 year old in social enterprises who are registered as unemployed in territorial labour exchange offices.

3) The list of types of activities of social enterprises not eligible to aid was specified10.

4) Implementing Paragraph 30 of the priority measures of implementation of the Programme 2012–2016 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania11 “To assess efficiency of state aid to social enterprises through employment of persons incapable of competing on equal rights on the labour market, and to implement measures increasing employment of such persons”, the draft law on amendment of the Law on Social Enterprises No. IX-2251 of the Republic of Lithuania and draft law on amendment of Article 5 of the Law on Corporate Income Tax of the Republic of Lithuania were drawn and submitted to the Government of the Republic of Lithuania for consideration on 23 March 2016. The purpose of both draft laws is to improve and specify legal regulation of social enterprises, securing efficiency and control of state aid to social enterprises, to create legal prerequisites for promoting employers to employ persons incapable of competing on equal rights on the labour market with other persons. The new measures of legal regulation are aimed to ensure that entities holding social enterprise status would not seek profit only but by employing persons of target groups would also promote their return to the labour market, their social integration and would reduce social exclusion. Draft laws were drawn with consideration of the State Control's recommendations 12 and conclusions made by the Special Investigation Service of the Republic of Lithuania13.

Lots of attention was focused on transposition of the clauses of the European Union’s directives14 regulating aliens’ right to work in a Member State. Considering the amendments made to the Law on Legal Status of Aliens


12 Reports of 15 July 2014 and of 22 July 2015 of the State Audit of the State Control of the Republic of Lithuania.

13 Letter No. 4-01-9292 of the Special Investigation Service of the Republic of Lithuania of 29 December 2015.

of the Republic of Lithuania, orders of the Minister of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania regulating the procedures of aliens’ employment were drafted and amended.

1) **Aliens, employees with high professional qualification.** From 1 January 2013, a new procedure regarding employment of highly professionally qualified aliens came into effect. An alien intending to take a job requiring high professional qualification must have higher education background, while during the period of his temporary residence permit in Lithuania his salary under the employment agreement may not be smaller than 2 average gross monthly salaries of the country published by Lithuania Statistics. Lithuanian Labour Exchange makes a decision regarding highly professionally qualified alien, if alien’s job satisfies needs of the labour market of the Republic of Lithuania and inform the Migration Department under the Ministry of the Interior. Decision on issue of a temporary residence permit to aliens is made by the Migration Department. In 2014, more favourable conditions for aliens to obtain a temporary residence permit were established, provided they arrive for work requiring high professional qualification – to issue a temporary residence permit that is valid up to two years (before it was 1 year). If an employer undertakes an obligation to pay monthly salary to such alien no smaller than the last three average monthly gross salaries published by Statistic Lithuania, the requirement to assess alien’s job compliance with the needs of the labour market of the Republic of Lithuania was revoked. It means that less administrative procedures apply to highly professionally qualified aliens. Alien’s job compliance with the needs of the Lithuanian labour market does not need to be assessed also when alien’s temporary residence permit issued for high professional qualification job is changed and two years of such alien’s legal work in the Republic of Lithuania have passed, control mechanism was also established – an employer must provide a territorial labour exchange office with a copy of the employment agreement signed with an alien intending to take job requiring high professional qualification for registration, in order to possess data about such aliens’ entry to the labour market. Should alien’s salary be reduced, alien’s compliance with the labour market needs to be assessed.

In early 2016, amendments were made simplifying the procedures of employment of highly professionally qualified aliens for employers: period of vacancy registration in a territorial labour exchange office was shortened (from 14 to 7 days), criteria for determining the labour market demand were specified, the number of documents to be submitted was reduced, it was established that instead of previously required decision of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC) a recommendation of SKVC regarding alien’s qualification assessment has to be submitted. In practice, this procedural requirement significantly (up to 1 month) shortened the time of issuing a temporary residence permit on the basis of EU blue card. Furthermore, a possibility was created for aliens who acquired higher education in the Republic of Lithuania and foreign specialists who already worked in Lithuania under employment agreement to apply for a decision.

2) **Alien specialists.** From the beginning of 2015, aliens are provided with a possibility to obtain temporary residence permit in the Republic of Lithuania because of employment, while staying in the Republic of Lithuania. Clauses of the Directive 2011/98/EU were transposed. Single procedure was established for issuing temporary residence permits to aliens who intent to work in the Republic of Lithuania – upon receipt of an application for temporary residence permit in the Republic of Lithuania, alien’s job compliance with the needs of the labour market of the Republic of Lithuania is assessed and alien’s compliance with other requirements established in the law for issuing temporary residence permit is assessed. Temporary residence permits for aliens are issued by the Migration Department. It was further established, that an application for a temporary residence permit for

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an alien coming for work can be submitted not only by the alien, but also by the employer committing himself/ herself to employ the alien.

3) **Alien students.** A possibility to obtain a work permit through simplified procedure for alien students studying in Lithuanian higher education establishments was created.

4) **Alien asylum seekers.** Upon transposition of the Directive No. 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 into the Law on Legal Status of Aliens of the Republic of Lithuania which lays down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection, it was stipulated that aliens who cannot be deported from the Republic of Lithuania or deportation of whom from the Republic of Lithuania is suspended are exempted from the duty to acquire work permit in order to enter the labour market. Accordingly, amendments were made to the Order No. A1-133 of the Minister of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania of 27 March 2013 “On the Approval of the Conditions and the Procedure of Issuance of Work Permits to Aliens”.

5) **Alien seasonal workers.** When transposing the clauses of the Directive No. 2014/36/EU into the national law, draft law on amendment of Articles 2, 12, 19, 44, 441, 57, 61, 62, 63, annex of the Law No. IX-2206 On Legal Status of Aliens of the Republic of Lithuania and supplement of the Law with Article 621 was drafted and in May 2016 submitted to the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. Conditions for aliens’ entry for the purposes of employment as seasonal workers were regulated in the draft law.

In pursuit of further economic development and employment growth, labour market needs must be better considered and human resources and capacities in enterprises must be better used. Considering the fact that ageing society, shortage of qualified workers, emigration reduce labour force potential of the country, all Lithuanian residents of working age need to be concentrated, their more active participation in economic activities, integration into the labour market and staying in it as long as possible need to be promoted. It is important to carry out effective structural unemployment prevention and to develop inclusive labour market, by removing obstacles for economic development this way.

**3.2. LABOUR RELATIONS AND REMUNERATION**

**3.2.1. LABOUR RELATIONS**

**3.2.1.1. COLLECTIVE LABOUR RELATIONS**

The key institution coordinating interests between social partners – trade unions and employers’ organisations – and state authorities in Lithuania is Tripartite Council of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter – Tripartite Council). At present, the Tripartite Council consists of the representatives of trade unions, employers and Government (21 member in total – 7 representatives of each party):

1) public administrations: Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Ministry of Economy and Office of the Government;

2) three central (national) organisations of trade unions: Lithuanian Trade Union Confederation, Lithuanian Labour Federation and Lithuanian Trade Union Solidarumas (Solidarity);

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The Tripartite Council has established itself in social life of Lithuania as an important institution coordinating partners’ interests, dealing and solving social and economic problems. In 2012–2016 (until April), 58 meetings of the Tripartite Council were held. Social and economic matters were discussed at the meetings: regarding amendments and supplements to the Labour Code; increase of minimum monthly wage; introduction of Euro in Lithuania; amendment and supplement to the Law on Support of Employment; introduction of the “Legal–Administrative Model of Labour Relations and State Social Insurance”, other matters.

At present, there are eight committees and commissions under the Tripartite Council, in which representatives of non-governmental organisations also participate (Labour Relations Commission; Bilateral Commission of Civil Servants; Education Committee; Consumers Right Monitoring Committee; Committee of Cooperation with the European Economic and Social Committee of the Tripartite Council; Energy Committee; Youth Entrepreneurship Development Committee; Committee of Culture).

To save state budget funds and to prevent overlapping of certain functions of the present secretariat and ministry, since 1 November 2014 the functions of the secretariat of the Tripartite Council are performed by the Social Partnership Division of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour.

The sixteenth Government in its programme 2012–2016 set the goal to improve social dialogue between employers, civil servants and employees, as well as to increase the impact of trade unions on decision -making and to promote signing of industry trade agreements by sectors.

The Government empowered the Ministry of Social Security and Labour to register collective agreements signed at national, industry-wide (production, services, professional) or territorial (municipal, county) levels, to which trade unions and employers organisations are parties. From 2003 until the end of 2012, two industry-wide collective agreements were registered in the Ministry. Implementing the measure Social Dialogue Promotion of the 1st priority Quality Employment and Social Inclusion of the Lithuanian Operational Programme for Human Resources Development 2007–2013, projects financed by the European Social Fund and state budget of the Republic of Lithuania were carried out. The outcome of the projects is more active signing of territorial and industry-wide collective agreements. In March 2016, 18 industry-wide and 27 territorial collective agreements (45 agreements, in total) were effective in Lithuania. Matters of wages, social partnership support, additional employment support and occupational health and safety are discussed in the agreements.

According to the effective provisions of the Labour Code, collective agreements of enterprises are not registered and no data on the exact number of collective agreements signed at this level is available. In 2015, the inspectors of the State Labour Inspectorate inspected 8 308 enterprises and their structural divisions (9 926 enterprises in 2012, 10 069 enterprises in 2013, 10 582 enterprises in 2014, respectively). It was established that 348 collective agreements of enterprises were signed in 2015 (204 in 2012, 239 collective agreements in 2013, and 295 in 2014, respectively).

As the data shows social partnership development and scopes of collective negotiations were decreasing until 2013. It was determined by prolonged economic recession, when trade unions were not founded. Unemployment resulted in decreased production, many companies went bankrupt, others were not able to observe their obligations agreed in collective agreements. It is encouraging to see the situation gradually improving and increasing number of collective agreements being signed.
According to the data presented by economic entities on the Electronic System of Services for Employers\(^9\), in 2015 employees in Lithuania were represented in 36 per cent of economic entities (3.5 per cent were represented by trade unions, functions of employees’ representation and defence were entrusted to industry-wide trade unions – 0.3 per cent; founded labour council – 4.3 per cent, functions of the labour council were performed by the elected employees’ representative – 27.9 per cent), collective agreements were signed in 8.7 per cent of economic entities.

In order to promote social dialogue, the Action Plan for Enhancement of Social Dialogue in Lithuania 2016–2020 was approved by the Order of the Minister of Social Security and Labour of 12 February 2016.\(^{20}\) Implementation of the measures of this action plan will be funded in 2014–2020 from the Operational Programme for EU Funds’ Investments. Financial support will be aimed at development of social dialogue between employers and employees’ representatives, public, private and non-governmental sectors (at national and local levels), by including training, culture institutions and local communities.

### 3.2.1.2. INDIVIDUAL LABOUR RELATIONS

In 2014, the provisions of the Labour Code\(^{21}\) regarding refusal of compulsory registration of employment agreements and refusal of employment certificate and simplification of the procedure of working time accounting journals and issue of salary slips reduced administrative burden on business; also a representative of employers (enterprises, institutions, organisations financed from the state, municipal budgets and State Social Insurance Fund budgets and other state-founded funds) was appointed in social partnership at the national, industry-wide, territorial level to ensure better representation of employers.

In 2014, the Labour Code\(^{22}\) was amended in order to discourage employers from illegal employment of persons and use of labour force avoiding payment of taxes, to promote fair competition, to ensure employees’ rights to fair remuneration for work and social guarantees. It is established in the Labour Code that if an individual was in illegal employment, the employer must pay the latter remuneration for agreed work, but no less than minimum monthly salary and no less than for three months (unless the employer or employee can prove that illegal work was of different duration). Law on Unemployment Social Insurance\(^{23}\) was also amended imposing obligation on unemployed to refund unemployment social insurance benefits provided that he worked illegally and received remuneration, unless he informed about his illegal work. It was also established that payment of unemployment insurance benefits is terminated for an unemployed who worked illegally, received remuneration, but did not inform any institutions performing illegal work control functions about it.

On 13 February 2014, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour signed a services provision agreement with Vilnius University, acting together with Public enterprise Mykolas Romeris University and Joint venture Lithuanian Social Research Centre on the package of services aimed at developing legal-administrative model of labour relations and state social insurance. When developing the legal-administrative model for Lithuania and drafting legislation, improving the legislation regulating labour relations, employment and state social insurance the pursued goal was to create objective prerequisites for attracting more investments and creating additional jobs, at the same time developing more sustainable, transparent state social insurance system guaranteeing

\(^9\) Data of the State Labour Inspectorate.


\(^{21}\) Law No. XII-919 Amending Articles 24, 99, 147, 175, 202, 212 and 256 of the Labour Code of the Republic of Lithuania.

\(^{22}\) Law No. XII-1435 Amending Articles 75-1, 98, 268, 287, 288, 293 and Repealing Article 301 of the Labour Code of the Republic of Lithuania.

\(^{23}\) Law No. XII-1436 Amending Article 11 and Supplementing with Article 111 to the Law No. IX-1904 on Unemployment Social Insurance of the Republic of Lithuania.
adequate benefits. To fulfil this goal, the service provider developed the legal-administrative model of labour relations and state social insurance and drafted the package of legal acts. One of the legal acts is a legal act regulating labour relations Draft Labour Code. The purpose of the provisions of the draft Labour Code is to simplify the procedure of recruitment and dismissal, to establish more flexible working time and more various work forms (fixed term, temporary work, job sharing, working to several employers, apprenticeship agreement) – all these measures would encourage creation of more new jobs. Furthermore, the new model offers more flexible system of labour relations and working schedule to working parents, enabling better compatibility of family, studies and work. The new Labour Code was adopted by the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania on 21st June 2016.

On 9 December 2013, during Lithuania’s presidency over the Council of European Union the common approach was reached (agreement between 28 ministers of Member States) on the European Commission’s suggestion regarding the directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Directive 96/71/EC concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services. This crucial agreement enabled Greece to start negotiations with the European Parliament. The Directive was adopted on 15 May 2014. In order to implement the latter Directive, compulsory provisions were incorporated into the new draft Labour Code, which is a component of the social model and also into the draft law on amendment of respective clauses of the Law on State Labour Inspectorate under consideration. The above-mentioned amendments are aimed at setting stricter standards when providing information about rights and duties for posted workers and companies, simplifying payment of fines when company breaches posting rules in one state and fine must be paid in a different Member State, improving possibilities for posted workers to defend their infringed rights.

In order to implement Article 8 of the Directive 2009/52/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 providing for minimum standards on sanctions and measures against employers of illegally staying third-country nationals and to reduce the scale of unemployment, amendments to the Law on State Labour Inspectorate and Labour Code were adopted on 16 April 2015.

The purpose of the amendments is to provide for subcontractor’s, who is employer, duty to give a written notice to contractor within three working days from the day of signing employment agreement with third-country national and to establish the contractor’s right to familiarise himself with information possessed by employer about third-country national (a copy of the valid residence permit in the Republic of Lithuania or other document entitling to stay or resident in the Republic of Lithuania). It is important that these amendments also establish that contractor, when subcontractor is employer, does not bear subsidiary responsibility for payment of wages and related contributions and taxes to third-country national and fines, provided that contractor exercised the right to familiarise himself with information held by employer about third-country national or employer failed to notify contractor about third-country national’s employment.

On 18 November 2015, amendment was made to the Resolution No. 301 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania “On the establishment of the list of competition offices in state and municipal enterprises, state and municipal institutions and public institutions financed from the state budget, municipal budget and state social insurance fund budget and other state founded funds, which are owned by the state and municipality, and approval of the description of the procedure of competition organisation for offices included into the list of competition offices”. The amendments are aimed at ensuring exclusively individuals of impeccable reputation participating at competitions and holding offices won at the competitions.

24 Law No. XII-1617 Amending Article 121 of the Law No. IX-1768 on State Labour Inspectorate of the Republic of Lithuania.
26 Resolution No. 1196 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of 15 November 2015 Amending the Resolution No. 301 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of 21 March 2007 „On the establishment of the list of competition offices in state and municipal enterprises, state and municipal institutions and public institutions financed from the state budget, municipal budget and state social insurance fund budget and other state founded funds, which are owned by the state and municipality, and approval of the description of the procedure of competition organisation for offices included into the list of competition offices“.
Paragraph 85 of the Government’s programme 2012–2016 establishes that with economy recovering wages, in public sector, budgetary institutions, minimum wage of the country will be consistently increased to make them reach 50 per cent of the average wages.

Considering the suggestions of the Tripartite Council of the Republic of Lithuania, the Government was consistently increasing MMW (Minimum Monthly Wage) and MHR (Minimum Hourly Rates):

1) from 1 January 2013, the MMW was increased\(^{27}\) up to LTL 1 000 (EUR 289.62) (17.65 per cent), the MHR up to LTL 6,06 (EUR 1,76);

2) from 1 October 2014, the MMW was increased\(^{28}\) up to LTL 1 035 (EUR 299.76) (3.5 per cent) and from 1 January 2015 up to EUR 300 (due to rounding, it increased by 0.1 per cent), MHR up to EUR 1.82;

3) from 1 July 2015, the MMW was increased\(^{29}\) up to EUR 325 (8.3 per cent), the MHR up to EUR 1.97;

4) from 1 January 2016, the MMW was increased\(^{30}\) up to EUR 350 (7.7 per cent), the MHR up to EUR 2.13.

5) from 1 July 2016, the MMW was increased\(^{31}\) up to EUR 380 (8.6 per cent), MHR up to EUR 2.32.

On 1 July 2016, once the MMW of EUR 380 came into effect, if compared with the MMW of EUR 246.17 (LTL 850) effective on 31 December 2012, the MMW increased by 54.4 per cent, while the MHR increased by 55.7 per cent during the same period.

According to the preliminary data, the average monthly gross wage in 2015, if compared with the average monthly gross wage effective in 2012, increased by 15.8 per cent (from EUR 615.1 up to EUR 712.1).

Implementing the Measure No. 29 “To develop single remuneration system for managers in public sector” of the Government’s Programme 2012–2016, on 18 January the Resolution\(^ {32}\) was passed by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania regulating remuneration for managers, deputy managers of state enterprises and state-controlled joint stock companies, private limited-liability companies. The Resolution directly applies to managers of state enterprises, it also established that enterprises’s incorporation documents must contain a clause providing for establishment of 10–20 per cent lower monthly salaries for deputy managers if compared with managers of enterprises. The clauses of this Resolution set forth the remuneration procedure for managers, which promotes managers to pursue the goals of the activity established for the enterprise, to achieve the set indicators and enables managers of state-controlled enterprises to fix competitive salary according to performance.

In order to ensure average wage for employees in the cases established by the laws, which would comply with the wage rates established by the laws, other legal regulations, the draft resolution of the Government was drawn and on 19 November 2014, the Resolution No. 1288 of the Government “On the Amendment to the “Approval of the Description of Average Wage Calculation Procedure for Employee, Civil Servant and Intelligence Officers” was adopted. The recast Resolution No. 650 establishes the single procedure of average wage calculation to be applied to all employees.

In order to reduce assignments from the state budget for wages, to stabilise the financial system of the country, to ensure more rational use of state funds and considering complicated situation of European and global
economies and financial markets, wages reduced in 2009 for state politicians, officers, judges, civil servants and employees of budgetary institutions working under employment agreements were effective until 30 September 2013. Basic rate of official wage (salary) and basic monthly wage of LTL 450 (EUR 130.5) fixed in the past remained in effect in 2013–2014.

In 2015, when introducing Euro, the Law on Basic Rate of Official Wage (Salary) for State Politicians, Judges, State Officers and Civil Servants Applicable in 2015 of the Republic of Lithuania was adopted, which established the basic rate of EUR 130.5 and the same rate remained in effect in 2016. Based on the assessment of the International Monetary Fund, with the existing debt level, which currently is around 40 per cent of the GDP in Lithuania, facing new financial and economic shocks in the future, if any, would be very difficult for Lithuania. Therefore, Lithuania is recommended to continue reducing deficit for the debt level to start showing evident decrease funds. Taking this into consideration, the same basic rate of EUR 130.5 of the official wage (salary) for state politicians, judges, state officers and civil servants is stipulated in the draft for 2017.

Considering the decision of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Lithuania of 1 July 2013, the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania adopted the law annulling from 1 October 2013 the provisions of the laws establishing reduced wages for civil servants and judges and from 1 October 2013 the reduced rates of official wage (salary) for civil servants and judges effective before the economic recession, rates of civil servants’ premiums for qualification classes, statutory civil servants’ premiums for qualification categories are effective and suggested the Government of the Republic of Lithuania by 1 May 2014 to develop a mechanism for compensation of losses incurred by persons to whom remuneration for work is paid from the state and municipal budgets at the result of disproportional reduction of their wages (salaries) due to economic recession.

Furthermore, from 1 January 2014, the rates of official wages (in coefficients) effective in 2009 were established for state politicians and state officers.

The official wages (salaries) of contractual employees of state and municipal budgetary institutions are calculated on the basis of the basic monthly wage fixed by Resolution No. 1021 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of 29 September 2014 “On the Approval of the Basic Monthly Wage and Basic Hourly Rate”. After litas was converted to euro on 1 January 2015, the basic monthly wage in the amount of EUR 35.5 and the basic hourly rate in the amount of EUR 0.22 were approved. Before introduction of the euro currency, the basic monthly wage in the amount of LTL 122 (EUR 35.33), which was approved in 2009, and the basic hourly rate in the amount of LTL 0.73 (EUR 0.21) were effective.
From 2009 until 31 December 2013, reduced rates of maximum official salary coefficients and bonuses and premiums for managers of budgetary institutions and organisations, managers of structural divisions and their deputies were applied.

From 1 January 2014, rates of the official wage coefficients that were effective in 2009 were fixed for managers of budgetary institutions and organisations, deputy managers, managers of structural divisions and their deputies.

Furthermore, from 1 January 2014, the rates of official wages (in coefficients) that were effective in 2009 were established for state politicians and state officers.

In accordance with provisions of Paragraph 85 of the Government’s Programme 2012–2016 of the Republic of Lithuania, which establishes that with economy recovering, wages of employees in public sector, budgetary institutions, minimum wage of the country will be consistently increased to make them reach 50 per cent of the average wage, through consistent increase of MMW, rates of official wages of lowest-paid employees in budgetary institutions and organisations were increased, and coefficients for employees working in the commissions of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, President of the Republic, European Parliament, Municipal Councils’ Election and Referendum were adjusted.

In accordance with provisions of the Law No. XIIP-1566 on Amendment of the Civil Code of the Republic of Lithuania establishing that every municipality must establish a Commission for Review of Conditions of Incapacitated Persons or have such commissions in operation, remuneration for members of such commissions is fixed by the Government, the Government passed a resolution establishing the remuneration procedure and hourly rate of EUR 5.5 per for commission members working the Commissions for Review of Conditions of Incapacitated Persons.

In 2014–2016, the draft Law on Remuneration for Employees of State and Municipal Institutions of the Republic of Lithuania was drawn and elaborated. The purpose of the Draft Law is to develop single remuneration system for employees of state and municipal institutions working under employment agreements. The Draft Law is aimed at harmonising remuneration conditions for persons in employment of same qualification and complexity, linking wage with the last year’s performance. In 2014, the guidelines of the Draft Law were approved by the Strategic Committee of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, and on 20 April 2016 the Strategic Committee of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania adopted and approved the Resolution No. 1185 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of 11 December 2013 Amending the Resolution No. 511 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of 8 July 1993 „On Improvement of Remuneration Procedure for Employees of Budgetary Institutions and Organisations“.


Committee of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania approved the draft law in essence. Following implementation of the provisions of the law, disproportions in wages in budgetary institutions in different activity fields would be reduced, competitive wage for employees of certain professions in demand on the labour market would be established. With rise in wages to lowest-paid specialists, their qualification, work complexity would be better appreciated, therefore, the state, as the employer, could compete on the labour market by recruiting better employees, prerequisites for reduction of specialists’ migration would be created, funds invested into specialists’ training would be used in more rational manner.

According to the data of Statistics Lithuania, in 2015 the average monthly gross wage in the country’s economy (including sole proprietorship companies) was EUR 714.1 and was 16.1 per cent higher than in 2012. The average monthly gross salary in state sector was EUR 750.3 and was 11.8 per cent higher than in 2012. The average monthly gross wage in private sector (including sole proprietorship companies) was EUR 696.1 and was 19.2 per cent higher than in 2012.

![Changes in wages in 2012–2015](Figure 3.2.2-1)

According to the data of Statistics Lithuania, in 2015 the average number of employees in the country’s economy (including sole proprietorship companies) was 1,239,900 and was 6.8 per cent higher than in 2012. The average number of employees in state sector was 387,800 and was 1.9 per cent lower than in 2012. The average number of employees in private sector (including sole proprietorship companies) was 852,100 and was 11.3 per cent higher than in 2012.
3.3. SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF COMPANIES

Successful corporate activities are obviously among the most important driving forces of economy and social welfare all over the world. Without them, neither market economy, nor competition or public employment nor even improvement of society can be imagined. Companies are inseparable part of the modern world affecting everyday life of all of us and contributing to its improvement.

Today’s company is also a socially-responsible company, i.e. a company with the activities exceeding the clauses of the legislation, voluntarily integrating social, environmental, communal and transparent business principles, closely cooperating with all persons concerned, ensuring benefits not only to its owners and(or) shareholders but also to the entire society.

State institutions, social partners, non-governmental organisations collaborate and encourage businesses to implement various social responsibility initiatives, as well as offer recognition, assessment.

In order to implement the Measure “Organising Annual Competition of National Responsible Business” of the plan of measures\(^{45}\) for implementing of the Programme for National Social Responsibility Development of Companies 2009–2013, to achieve the set goals, the Procedure for organising, assessment and selection of the national responsible business award competition in 2013, and for organising the jury’s work was approved by the Order\(^{46}\) of the Minister of Social Security and Labour.

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\(^{46}\) Order No. A1-227 of the Minister of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania of 3 June 2013 „On the approval of the Regulations of National Responsible Business Awards“.
On 6 November 2013, National responsible business awards for the activities in 2012 were granted to companies. Nine companies were awarded in three nominations: “Employer of the Year 2012”, “Most Communal Company of the Year 2012”, “Environmental Company of the Year 2012” and in three categories: very small, small and medium enterprise, large enterprises and international corporations or their affiliates/representative offices operating in Lithuania. One company received the top award “Socially Responsible Company 2012”, the same company was also awarded with additional certificates in all three nominations. Two companies with special attention focused on youth and young families were awarded with additional certificates. Certificates were granted also to two public enterprises participating in this contest.

In order to simplify application procedure for companies willing to take part in the National Responsible Business Award Competition, the Regulations of National Responsible Business Awards were specified. On 27 March 2014, the National Responsible Business Award Competition for companies’ progress achieved in social responsibility field in 2013 was published on the website of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. National responsible business awards were granted on 5 June 2014. Ten companies were awarded for social responsibility progress achieved in 2013. Eight companies were awarded in three nominations: “Employer of the Year 2013”, “Most Communal Company of the Year 2013”, “Environmental Company of the Year 2013” and in three categories: very small, small and medium enterprise, large enterprises and international corporations or their affiliates/representative offices operating in Lithuania. One company received the highest award – Socially Responsible Company 2013, and one company was awarded in the nomination “Healthiest Company 2013”. Besides, another eight companies were awarded additional certificates. On 1 December 2015, 16 companies that achieved greatest award in social responsibility field were awarded in the nominations: “Employer of the Year”, “Most Communal Company”, and “Environmental Company of The Year” for the eighth time. One company was awarded in additional nomination “Most Sporty Company of the Year”. The company with the highest number of votes was awarded in the nomination “Socially Responsible Company”.

In order to implement the Measure “Organising Open Discussions with Persons, Companies and Other Interested Entities about the Role and Possibilities of Socially Responsible Business in the 21st Century” of the plan of measures 2012–2013 for implementation of the National Programme of Social Responsibility Development of Companies in 2009–2013, in 2013 the Ministry of Social Security and Labour together with Lithuanian Responsible Business Association and “Ekonominės konsultacijos ir tyrimai” UAB (Economic Consulting and Surveys) organised two seminars for state-controlled companies and state institutions about implementation of social responsibility principles. State approach to social responsibility of companies, its importance and meaning were discussed during the seminars, as well as policies of the European Commission in this field, experience in social responsibility field and future plans. Methodical examples of implementation of social responsibility of companies were discussed, model plan of social responsibility application in state-controlled companies and guidelines for its implementation were introduced, good practice examples were discussed. Besides, methodical documents relevant for state institutions were prepared: Feasibility study of social responsibility implementation in state institutions, Model plan of implementation of social responsibility in state institutions, Draft guidelines for reporting on socially responsible activities of state institutions. Practical examples of socially responsible activities applied in state institutions were introduced. Both seminars were attended by 50 persons.

In 2013–2015, non-governmental organisations, social partners submitted suggestions to the Ministry of Social Security and Labour for promotion of social responsibility initiatives in 2014–2020. On 12 February 2016, following consideration of the received suggestions, the Action Plan for Promotion of Social Responsibility of Companies for 2016–2020 was approved by the Order of the Minister of Social Security and Labour.

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Labour market, Labour Relations, Safety and Health at Work

3.4. TOPICALITIES OF SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK

3.4.1. AMENDMENTS TO LEGAL REGULATIONS IN 2012–2016

In 2012– first half of 2015, in order to improve legal regulation of safety and health at work, to reduce administrative burden, to implement the European Union’s directives, the clauses of the Labour Code, Law on Safety and Health at Work were specified, and Governmental decrees (9 amendments) and Ministers’ orders (10 amendments) implementing the Labour Code and the Law on Safety and Health at Work were amended accordingly. Implementing the provisions of the Directive 2014/27/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council, Government’s decree and three orders of Ministers were amended. 29 training programmes on safety and health at work were revised and updated. In 2012, the Strategy of Safety and Health at Work 2009–2012 was implemented, by carrying out measures provided for in the plan of measures 2011–2012 for implementation of the latter strategy.

Priority field of the implementation of the Government’s programme 2012–2016 in the field of safety and health at work is “Improving Investigation and Accounting Procedures of Accidents at Work and Occupational Diseases in Order to Ensure Comprehensive Investigation and Prevention of All Events Causing Damage to Workers’ Health”. Implementing this measure, Regulations for Investigation and Registration of Accidents at Work and Regulations for Investigation and Registration of Occupational Diseases were amended in 2014. Through the amendments of the Regulations for Investigation and Registration of Accidents at Work, the terms and the procedure of notification about events at work which have caused damage to workers’ health (hereinafter – event at work), accidents on the way to/from work, the procedure of investigation, accounting, storage of investigation documents of events at work and accidents on the way to/from work, and the procedure of examination of investigation related appeals were elaborated and specified. The procedure of investigation of suspected occupational diseases, their causes, the procedure of identification, registration and accounting

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of occupational diseases were specified in the Regulations for Investigation and Registration of Occupational Diseases.

In second half of 2015 and first half of 2016, the legislation of safety and health at work were further improved. On 18 June 2015, the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania adopted the Law on amendment of Articles 41, 43 and 44 of the Law No. IX-1672 on Safety and Health at Work\(^{53}\) and the Law on amendment of Article 6, 9, 11 and 12 of the Law No. IX-1768 on State Labour Inspectorate\(^{54}\), which came into effect from 1 November 2016. The Laws were adopted in order to specify and harmonise the terms used in the Law on State Labour Inspectorate and the Law on Safety and Health at Work and legal regulation of investigation of accidents at work. Implementing the Law on amendment of Articles 6, 9, 11 and 12 of the Law No. IX-1768 on State Labour Inspectorate, the Regulations of the State Labour Inspectorate were adjusted\(^{55}\), by specifying functions of the State Labour Inspectorate regarding investigation of events at work causing damage to workers’ health and of accidents on the way to/from work, registration and storage of documents of investigation of accidents at work and occupational diseases, rights of state labour inspectors when investigating events at work.

The Regulations of Work with Asbestos\(^{56}\) were amended by specifying references to amended legal acts and completely harmonising the regulations with the Directive 2009/148/EC of the European Parliament of the Council\(^{57}\).

In order to implement the Directive 2013/35/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council\(^{58}\) and to establish the requirements on the protection of workers from the risks to workers’ health and safety, which arise or may arise at work due to exposure to electromagnetic fields at work, the Regulations on Protection of Workers from the Risks Related to Exposure to Electromagnetic Fields\(^{59}\) were approved and came into effect on 1 November 2015.

Qualification requirements for specialists in safety and health at work were specified\(^{60}\), taking into consideration the provisions of the Law on Safety and Health at Work and abolishing the requirement for specialists in safety and health at work to have educational background in the field of technology sciences. New requirements came into effect on 1 May 2016. According to these requirements, training programmes for specialists in safety and health at work were specified.

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\(^{53}\) No. XII-1806 of 18 June 2015.

\(^{54}\) No. XII-1805 of 18 June 2015.


\(^{59}\) Order No. A1-614 of the Minister of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania of 30 October 2015 „On Approval of Regulations on Protection of Workers from Risks Related with Exposure to Electromagnetic Fields‟.

\(^{60}\) Order No. A1-60 of the Minister of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania of 1 February 2016 „On Establishment of Qualification Requirements for Specialists in Safety and Health at Work, Specialists in Safety and Health at Work of Occupational Health and Safety Service, Specialists in Safety and Health at Work of Legal Entities or Natural Persons Performing All or Any Functions of Safety and Health at Work Service‟.
3.4.2. COMMISSION OF SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK

To harmonise interests of the state, workers and employers in the field of safety and health at work, the Commission of Safety and Health at Work of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter – Commission) has been in operation on the basis of social partners’ cooperation principle since 1994. The procedure of forming the Commission and its functions are established in the Regulation of the Commission of Safety and Health at Work of the Republic of Lithuania. The Commission considers drafts laws and other legal acts on safety and health at work, discusses the report on situation of safety at work and labour laws and analyses the state of workers’ safety and health, considers draft programmes and measures for improvement of safety and health at work, their implementation results and makes comments and suggestions on the considered matters to the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Ministry of Health, other state institutions and organisations.

In 2015, the Commission held five meetings at which 25 issues were discussed (draft legal acts under preparation, report on the situation of safety and health at work and implementation of labour laws in enterprises, institutions and organisations of the Republic of Lithuania in 2014, information about the state of safety and health at work and accidents at work in 2015), submitted opinions and suggestions on the matters considered.

3.4.3. SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK IN COMPANIES IN 2012–2015

According to the data held by the State Labour Inspectorate under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter – State Labour Inspectorate), in 2015 labour inspectors conducted 3700 inspections in the field of safety and health at work (5400 inspections in 2013, 4800 in 2014). During the inspections conducted in 2015, 13300 non-conformities to the requirements on safety and health at work were discovered (28100 non-conformities in 2013, 23200 in 2014). 1400 requirements for managers of enterprises to eliminate violations of legal acts on safety and health at work (1300 orders in 2013 and 2014, each) and 38 requirements to suspend work at 136 workplaces were issued, 32 work means were banned from using.

3.4.3.1. ACCIDENTS AT WORK

In 2015, 3504 accidents at work took place in economic entities of Lithuania, including 42 fatal, 145 major and 3317 minor.

293.2 accidents at work per 100 000 workers took place, including 3.5 fatal, 12.1 major accidents at work.

The total number of accidents at work in the period of 2012–2015 was growing from 2897 up to 3504, and the number of major accidents at work varied from 119 to 149. The number of fatal accidents at work in 2015 was smaller (42) if compared with 2012–2014 (59, each).

The number of major accidents at work in 2012–2015 per 100 000 workers varied from 9800 to 12600, the number of fatal accidents at work per 100 000 workers was decreasing from 5100 down to 3500 (Figure 3.4.3.1-1). The total number of accidents at work per 100 000 workers in 2012–2015 was growing from 260.1 to 293.2.

3. Labour market, Labour Relations, Safety and Health at Work

### 3.4.3.2. Morbidity of Occupational Diseases

In 2015, 437 cases of occupational diseases were registered in 2015 in the State Register of Occupational Diseases. 305 (70%) occupational diseases were diagnosed for men and 132 (30%) for women.

In 2012–2015, the number of occupational diseases varied from 393 (2012) to 474 (2014; Figure 3.4.3.2-1). In 2015, 5 per cent more occupational diseases were diagnosed to women if compared with 2012–2014.

In 2015, same as in 2012–2014, the most frequent occupational diseases registered were as follows:

- connective tissues and muscles and skeleton (280 cases of 64 per cent);
- ear and mastoid process (73 cases or 17 per cent);
- nervous system (59 cases of 14 per cent).

Data from the State Register of Occupational Diseases

Figure 3.4.3.2-1
3.4.4. TECHNICAL SAFETY

Significant attention was focused on equipment classified as potentially dangerous equipment due to energy accumulated in them and processes taking place in it. In order to ensure safe use of such equipment, requirements for organising inspection of technical condition and ongoing maintenance of such equipment were established in the Law on Maintenance of Potentially Dangerous Equipment62. All potentially dangerous equipment must be properly maintained in accordance with legislation and following the instructions of manufacturers of such equipment. Owners of equipment must ensure safe use of such equipment, its proper technical condition and ongoing maintenance.

Through analysis and improvement of the rules of use of potentially dangerous equipment, better maintenance and use of potentially dangerous equipment is sought. On 19 February 2015, the Minister of Social Security and Labour passed the order amending the Rules of Use of Hoisting Cranes63, after consideration of practice of application of these rules and thorough discussion of suggested amendments with interested parties (users of the rules).

By the Order of the Minister of 22 February 201564, vertical lifting platforms for disabled with machine gear was included into the List of Potentially Dangerous Equipment Subject to Supervision by Authorised Institutions and Registered in the State Register. Rules for the use and maintenance of such lifting platforms were developed and coordinated with social partners65. The purpose of the amendments is to ensure not only proper maintenance of the above-mentioned lifting platforms but also their proper operation to prevent accidents similar to two ones that took place in 2014 due to their improper operating.

In order to set clearer requirements for licensing process, the Rules of Licencing for Continuous Maintenance of Potentially Dangerous Equipment66 were amended. Implementing these rules, the List of Equipment, Devices and Means Needed for Continuous Maintenance of Potentially Dangerous Equipment 67 was approved.

Only enterprises holding a licence or required certificate issued by state institutions responsible for organising maintenance of individual categories of equipment can provide services of continuous maintenance of potentially dangerous equipment. Ministry of Social Security and Labour was appointed by the resolution of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania68 responsible for organising maintenance of storage tanks of dangerous substances and their equipment, lifts and their equipment, cableways, funiculars and their equipment, escalators and their equipment, hoisting equipment and entertainment devices and their equipment. During the period of 2012–2015 and first half of 2016, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour issued 14 licences (including: 12 licences for maintenance of hoisting equipment and 2 licences for maintenance of storage tanks of dangerous substances) and annulled four licences (including: 3 licences for maintenance of hoisting equipment and one licence for maintenance of lifts).

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Only independent certified institutions empowered by a state institution responsible for organising maintenance of certain categories of equipment have the right to carry out compulsory inspection of technical condition of potentially dangerous equipment. Since 2012, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour authorised two more certified institutions to carry out inspections of technical condition of potentially dangerous equipment. At present, six certified institutions are authorised by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour to carry out inspections of potentially dangerous equipment (Public institution Technikos priežiūros tarnyba, Public institution Kėlimo įrenginių priežiūros tarnyba, Lithuanian and German company Tušlita UAB, Inspecta UAB, BalticRailTest UAB, and RTS Group UAB). If an authorised institution determines technical condition of equipment to be improper, the owner of that equipment must stop using it and eliminate any defects discovered. The State Labour Inspectorate controls if owners of potentially dangerous equipment ensure timely inspections of technical condition. During 2012–2015, authorised institutions when inspecting technical condition of equipment every year identified decreased number of equipment not suitable for use, see Figure 3.4.4-1.

According to the State Register of Potentially Dangerous Equipment, during the period of 2012–2015 and first half of 2016, the number of such equipment in the country increased by over 31 per cent, from 28 600 up to 37 500, see Figure 3.4.4-2.
With the number of potentially dangerous equipment growing, increase in the number of accidents caused by operation of such equipment due to risks caused by such equipment can be predicted. However, analysis of accidents shows that number of accidents caused by improper technical condition of equipment has been declining recently. Accidents at work usually are caused by improper organisation of works, disregard of working discipline, haste or negligence. According to the data of the State Labour Inspectorate, in 2012–2015, 11 accidents at work occured while using potentially dangerous equipment, no fatal accident at work took place.

**Number of major and fatal accidents at work while using potentially dangerous equipment in 2012–2015**

Data of the State Labour Inspectorate
4. SOCIAL INSURANCE: GOALS AND REFORMS

In looking after the well-being of the country as well as each person, ambitious, long-term goals must be set in resolving issues related to fiscal sustainability. Efforts are thus being made to increase budget revenues rather than just balancing the budget by reducing public expenditure. The tax policy should be changed not by adopting individual decisions, but rather – by solving issues within the tax environment in a comprehensive manner. Therefore, a new and more sustainable Lithuanian social model covering the increase of employment, improvements in the regulation of labour relations and the sustainability of social insurance was developed in 2013-2015. European Union structural funds were also used to implement this model. The aim of the project was to create a more sustainable Lithuanian social model by introducing a new legal-administrative model that would ensure a balance between the state social security, labour relations and employment systems and would also promote positive changes in the state social security and pension system. This set of measures would help boost confidence in the social security system, and would make it more attractive for both the insured and the insurers. It is expected that after the lively debates on draft legislation for the new social model that took place in the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania in 2016, rational and effective social security policy decisions will be adopted and guidelines for reform of the state social insurance and pension system will be implemented.

It must be noted that the impact of the global crisis on the social security system is still being felt, since the State Social Insurance Fund Board (hereinafter – SODRA) operated with a budget deficit over that entire period. This means that a portion of pensions and other allowances are paid each year from borrowed funds. SODRA's financial burden consists of both short-term or long-term loans as well as the administrative costs thereof, i.e. interest and loan administration fees. Amendments to the laws that govern state social insurance were therefore adopted at the end of 2012 which stipulate that for loans taken out after 1 January 2014, interest shall be covered from the state budget in order to ensure that obligations to the insured are fulfilled. The rights and duties of the SODRA Board were also expanded by providing the opportunity to call upon independent specialists and

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69 The model was created under the Human Resources Development Operational Programme for 2007-2013, Priority 4 “Strengthening of Administrative Capacities and Increasing Efficiency of Public Administration”, implementation measure VP1-4.3-VRM-02-V “Promotion of Public Policy Reforms”.

experts in the relevant field when preparing conclusions for the Government of the Republic of Lithuania and the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania. A legal regulation was also established which stipulates that although health insurance remains as one of the types of social insurance, it shall be provided in accordance with the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Health Insurance, and, as of 1 January 2013, will no longer be included in SODRA’s accounts; it was also established that the contributions and expenses of SODRA budget shall be shown according to the different types of state social insurance.

In order to implement the provisions of the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Intelligence, officers of the State Security Department and officers of the Second Investigation Department under the Ministry of National Defence were included in the state social insurance system. This expanded the scope of the state social insurance system. This means that contributions are being paid into the SODRA budget for these individuals, and these individuals are consequently entitled to receive the benefits guaranteed by this insurance if an insured event occurs. Efforts continue to be made to include individuals not covered by compulsory social insurance in the state social insurance system in order to ensure that they have fairer social guarantees with respect to other insured individuals.

It should be noted that from 1 August 2010 to 31 July 2012, employers were given benefits for employing individuals with no prior experience, i.e. those who had entered the labour market for the first time. For persons who were employed for the first time under an employment contract, the social security contribution paid by the employer was reduced from 31 per cent to 7.7 per cent; employers were exempted from pension social insurance contributions, but were obligated to pay maternity, sickness, unemployment and accident at work contributions. However, this was not a very attractive measure for the employees (the insured), for whom this period did not count towards their pension social insurance. Therefore, as of 1 August 2012, a new form of support was offered to employers hiring young people for the first time – partial wage compensation. In this case, the employer paid all social insurance contributions for the employee, including pension insurance contributions, but was recompensed a fixed part of the employee’s salary. This kind of support system gave people the opportunity to accumulate years of employment that count towards pension insurance. Partial wage compensation for employers was provided by the European Social Fund “Support for the first job” measure.

On 5 March 2013, the decision of the Constitutional Court was announced regarding the conformity of certain articles of the Provisional Law of the Republic of Lithuania on the Recalculation and Payment of Social Benefits (hereinafter – the Provisional Law) – the validity of Provisional Law expired on 31 December 2011. The Constitutional Court ruled that the regulation of the Provisional Law, which created preconditions for the reduction of maternity (paternity) allowances by applying a lower government-approved amount of insured income for the current year (LTL 1 170.00/EUR 338.86, instead of LTL 1 488.00/EUR 430.95), are not in conflict with the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, nor is that fact that compensation for said reduced benefits is not established in the Provisional Law. However, the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Lithuania did note in the aforementioned ruling that the legal regulation which, as of 1 July 2010, created preconditions not only to reduce maternity (paternity) allowances by 10 per cent (from 100 per cent to 90 per cent until the child reaches one year of age, and from 85 per cent to 75 per cent for when the child is between the age of one and two), but also to additionally reduce the aforementioned allowances (which were already reduced by 10 per cent) which exceeded certain maximum amounts (the maximum amount for compensatory salary was reduced from five amounts of insured income to four), is in conflict with the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, since reduction of these allowances was not equal and some allowances were additionally reduced. This legal regulation thus did not comply with the requirements of proportionality that stem from the constitutional principle of a state under the rule of law.

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72 Provisional Law of the Republic of Lithuania on the Recalculation and Payment of Social Benefits.
In response to the ever-increasing level of development of an information society and the growing opportunities to use digital technologies and their availability, a new procedure\(^{73}\) has been in force since 1 May 2014 according to which insurers are required to submit data to SODRA (social security reports) about the insured – with some exception of self-employed individuals – electronically, via the E-Service System for Insurers (hereinafter – EDAS), signing them electronically. It should be noted that insurers who do not have a computerised workplace can submit their electronic social insurance reports at their local SODRA office, which is equipped with computerised workplaces for clients. The SODRA territorial offices also have designated employees who are available to provide consultation to insurers on how the EDAS works. At these computerised workplaces, insurers are familiarised with the EDAS, and insurers who have an electronic signature can sign and submit their social insurance reports with the help of a specialist. This saves a significant amount of time that insurers would otherwise have to spend going to their local SODRA office or waiting in a queue to submit their documents.

As of 1 January 2015, sickness allowances paid from SODRA resources were increased by approximately one third as a result of the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Sickness and Maternity Social Insurance being amended.\(^{74}\) According to Article 14(2) of this law, which was in effect until 31 December 2014, the sickness allowance covered by SODRA for the third to seventh day of sick leave was payable in the amount of 40 per cent of the beneficiary’s compensatory salary, and 80 per cent from the eighth day of sick leave. Given the fact that the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Lithuania has pointed out more than once that if the state’s economic and financial situation has fundamentally deteriorated, a temporary reduction of pensions, wages or legally established payments is justifiable only while a certain extreme situation exists; this can only be done temporarily, while the state’s economic and financial situation is grave. Once the grave economic and financial situation is over, the previously established amounts of pensions, wages or legally established payments must be reinstated; therefore, sickness allowances were increased from the beginning of 2015, i.e. from 40 per cent to 80 per cent of the beneficiary’s compensatory salary.

In an effort to eliminate obstacles for students and graduates under the age of 26 to become employed as well as to ensure social security for these individuals after graduation in cases where they do not have the required period of employment to qualify for sickness and maternity social insurance, the decision was made to abandon, as of 1 January 2015, the legal requirement to become insured within three months of completing studies, and to link the right of these individuals to receive the aforementioned sickness and maternity social insurance benefits with the insurable event (sick leave or maternity, paternity or maternity (paternity) leave) if said took place within six months of graduation (in the case of illness) or 12 months (in the case of maternity, paternity or maternity (paternity) leave).\(^{75}\) According the legal regulation that was valid until 31 December 2014, the right of insured persons under the age of 26 to receive sickness, maternity, paternity or maternity (paternity) social insurance allowances who did not have the required period of employment due to their studies was linked to the condition that they become insured (employed) within three months of graduating, so those who became employed earlier or later were not entitled to the aforementioned benefits if they did not have the required period of employment to qualify for sickness and maternity social insurance.

Provisions of the Law on Social Insurance of Accidents at Work and Occupational Diseases which are not in conflict with the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania came into force on 1 January 2015.\(^{76}\) According

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\(^{74}\) Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Amendment of Article 14 of Law No. IX-110 on Sickness and Maternity Social Insurance.

\(^{75}\) Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Amendment of Articles 8, 16, 181 and 19 of Law No. IX-110 on Sickness and Maternity Social Insurance.

\(^{76}\) Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Amendment of Article 25 of Law No. VIII-1509 on Social Insurance of Accidents at Work and Occupational Diseases.
to the legal regulation valid until 31 December 2014, in the event of the death of an insured individual, a lump-sum insurance benefit was awarded no sooner than three months after the day that the right to this benefit was confirmed; if none of the people who had the right to this benefit came forth during this period, the payment was awarded to the first person entitled to this benefit who applied, provided that said did so within three years of the death of the insured. The Constitutional Court ruled that the provision of Article 25(5) of the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Social Insurance of Accidents at Work and Occupational Diseases which stipulates that “when none of the persons entitled to such benefit applied for it within the specified time limit, this benefit shall be awarded to the person who submitted an application first and who is entitled to such benefit, provided that he applied within three years from the day of death of the insured” is in conflict with Article 29(1) and Article 52 of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania and the constitutional principle of the rule of law. The legal regulation which has been valid since 2015 establishes that in the event of the death of an insured individual, a lump-sum insurance benefit shall be awarded to the person(s) entitled to this payment who has (have) submitted an application(s) within three months of the occupational disease or accident at work or on the way to or from work being recognised as an insured event. In the event that an application is submitted after the death of an insured individual for the award of a lump-sum insurance benefit to a child of the individual who was born after the day of recognition of the occupational disease or accident at work or on the way to or from work as an insured event, the application must be submitted within three months of the child's birth.

In order to avoid the time-consuming twofold procedure for examining documents submitted by insurers for deferral of social insurance contribution debts (which was done by both the State Social Insurance Fund Board and the territorial offices of the State Social Insurance Fund Board) and correspondence between these bodies, a simplified procedure for deferment of social insurance contributions for insured persons was introduced on 1 January 2015 which is faster, more acceptable and more convenient. According to the provisions of the Law on State Social Insurance that came into force at the beginning of 2015, territorial offices of the State Social Insurance Fund Board have the right to grant insurers deferment on payment of social insurance contribution debts if said debt does not exceed EUR 30 000; i.e. in addition to deferring payments of social insurance contribution debts of up to EUR 30 000 for self-employed individuals, the territorial offices are now permitted to grant deferment of this amount to other insurers as well.

The purpose of the legal regulation that came into force on 1 January 2015 is to help owners of individual enterprises, members of small partnerships and general members of economic partnerships become more easily established in the market during their first year of operations. More favourable tax conditions are provided for young people (under the age of 29) as well as for persons receiving pension payments or who are already covered by state social insurance, and these individuals have the option of paying state social insurance contributions based on the amount drawn for personal expenses, which is declared to the State Tax Inspectorate as income related to labour relations or relations essentially equivalent to labour relations. As of 1 January 2015, said persons may refrain from paying social insurance contributions, but in this case, the period during which they do not pay will not be included in their years of insurable employment. In cases where the owner of an individual enterprise does not engage in any other economic activity and does not qualify as one of the abovementioned individuals, the obligation to pay social security contributions based on no less than the minimum monthly wage stands. This legal regulation ensures at least a minimum level of social security guarantees for persons who are not insured anywhere.

It should be noted that in recent years, more and more of the services provided to residents by SODRA are being moved to the Internet. As a result, the number of employees at SODRA's territorial offices is being reduced accordingly. It should not be forgotten that SODRA's administrative institutions underwent reorganisation in

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77 Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Amendment of Articles 4, 5, 9, 29 and 31 of Law No. I-1336 on State Social Insurance.
78 Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Amendment of Article 2 of Law No. XI-1792 on the Supplementation and Amendment of Articles 4, 7, 8, 16 and 19 of the Law on State Social Insurance.
2012, whereby the maximum permissible number of positions of employees working in these institutions was reduced by 435. In reforming SODRA’s administrative institutions, the number of State Social Insurance Fund Board territorial offices with legal entity status was cut from 47 to just 10. Attention should be called to the fact that accessibility of these territorial offices to SODRA clients did not suffer, since individuals are still able to visit the office that is closest to their place of residence. This reorganisation optimised SODRA’s administrative structure: general management functions were centralised, more effective use of SODRA budget funds and human resources was ensured, and the quality of services was improved.

SODRA’s e-services have been accessible via smart phone since 2012; it is also possible to arrange a meeting to discuss pensions at a territorial office by registering online at the www.sodra.lt website. In order to ensure quality telephone customer service and standardised communication with clients by telephone, the Telephone Consultation Department was established in October 2012 so that clients can use a short code – 1883 – to call from anywhere in Lithuania and receive information about state social insurance. The network for payment of social insurance contributions has also expanded: insurers can pay these contributions via banks, credit institutions, or even payment terminals; in order to improve customer service, a single SODRA account was opened. The most convenient way for individuals to submit requests is via the E-Service System for Residents (hereinafter – EGAS), which can be accessed online at www.gyventojai.sodra.lt, since this system generates request templates with the information it has. As of 2012, clients are also able to submit requests or complaints via both EGAS and EDAS.

SODRA has successfully completed implementation of the ADIS project for the “Development and introduction of an interactive electronic information and consultation service system for insured individuals, beneficiaries and insurers”. This project was developed over the past few years in an effort to create even more advanced personalised electronic services to ensure that insured individuals, beneficiaries and insurers are provided with proactive information and quality consultation, thus improving their awareness of changes in legislation, what services are available from SODRA, and what actions must be taken in light of certain events in their activities or life. ADIS uses voice recognition technology, the caller’s phone number, client identification code and other means to authenticate service recipients, manages the service process for insured individuals, beneficiaries and insurers, and monitors related indicators.

For the past few years, statistical data related to the SODRA budget has been published online at http://atvira.sodra.lt. The goal of this project was to conveniently provide all information of interest in a single website to help individuals find answers to their questions and better understand the activities and results of this system. The website provides detailed information about social insurance, how the SODRA budget is allocated, which pensions and benefits the most funds are spent on, which types of insurance create losses, and which insurers pay the most contributions. The website presents the data both graphically and in standard tables necessary for more comprehensive analysis. This website is expected to provide more transparency to the social security system and act as a useful tool for anyone who is interested, but most of all – public finance specialists, analysts, the academic community, politicians as well as journalists.

4.2. THE FINANCIAL CONDITION OF THE STATE SOCIAL INSURANCE FUND BUDGET

Attention should be drawn to the fact that over the past few years, the financial condition of the SODRA budget has improved because effective state social security policy-making measures were taken and SODRA’s budget deficit has gradually decreased.
It is a pleasure to report that according to preliminary data, more social security revenue was collected in January 2016 than in SODRA’s entire history, i.e. SODRA collected EUR 198.5 million, not including the compulsory health insurance contributions and state budget allocations that began being collected in 2016. The first months of 2008 and 2009 were exceptional in terms of state social insurance contributions collected: approximately EUR 187 million were collected in 2008 and approximately EUR 186 million were collected in 2009. Up to now, this was the most collected during the first month of the year. The subsequent global financial crisis reduced the amount of contributions to SODRA, thus setting off a period when considerably fewer contributions were collected. The situation began to improve in 2012, and in 2016, SODRA collected EUR 28.3 million, or 16.6 per cent more contributions than during the same period in 2015. Although SODRA’s budget expenditure was higher in January 2016 than in January 2015, this was offset by SODRA’s better and improving budget balance: according to operational data, SODRA’s budget deficit was EUR 86.3 million, which is EUR 12.6 million less than it was during the same period in 2015.

SODRA’s budget revenue in 2015 was EUR 3 285.7 million. This was planned according to the forecasts published by the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Lithuania, which provided for a wage growth of 6.6 per cent. The actual wage growth in 2015 was 7.3 per cent. Forecasted insurer and insured contributions calculated based on the part of disproportionately reduced remuneration compensation were included in SODRA’s 2015 budget revenue on an accrual basis. Compared with 2014, SODRA’s budget revenue increased by EUR 226.5 million, or 7.4 per cent.

The bulk of revenue – EUR 3 074.3 million, or 93.6 per cent – was made up of insurer and insured state social insurance contributions, which increased 7.6 per cent compared to 2014. Contributions paid by insurers amounted to EUR 2 779.6 million, while those paid by insured individuals amounted for EUR 294.7 million, of which contributions for royalties and fees accounted for EUR 6.6 million. State social insurance contributions for self-employed individuals were calculated at EUR 75.4 million, i.e. 29.0 per cent more than in 2014.

State voluntary social insurance contributions were calculated at just EUR 0.3 million. These contributions were 3.2 times less than in 2014, since new voluntary pension insurance rules were approved on 1 September 2014 which established more stringent conditions for those who want to insure themselves voluntarily in order to avoid cases of abuse in acquiring rights to the guarantees provided by pension social insurance.

Dedicated appropriations from the state budget of the Republic of Lithuania and other state monetary resources came to a total of EUR 123.2 million, i.e. EUR 120.6 million was calculated to compensate the state social insurance pensions that were reduced in 2010-2011 but compensations are paid in 2016-2018, EUR 1.3 million was calculated to pay compensatory payments of old-age and lost capacity for work (disability) and restore amortisation of the current period, and the remaining EUR 1.3 million was calculated to cover interest in 2015 on loans taken from commercial banks by the SODRA budget in 2014-2015.

SODRA budget expenditure in 2015 came to EUR 3 422.5 million (Figure 4.2-1). Compared with 2014, this is an increase of EUR 50.9 million, or 1.5 per cent. Pension social insurance expenditure was calculated at EUR 2 488.2 million, or 72.7 per cent of SODRA’s total budget expenditure. Pension social insurance expenditure was 1.9 per cent (EUR 46.7 million) higher than planned because compensation for reduced pensions to be paid in 2016-2018 to working old-age pension beneficiaries was calculated on an accrual basis in 2015 in the amount of EUR 120.6 million. Excluding the pension compensation for future periods that was calculated in 2014-2015

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79 Law of the Republic of Lithuania No. XII-1927 on the Reimbursement of the Part of Remuneration/Salary Disproportionately Reduced as a Result of the Economic Crisis to Persons who are Paid for their Work from the State or Municipal Budget.
80 Law No. XII-1923 of the Republic of Lithuania on the Compensation of State Social Insurance Old-Age Pensions and State Pensions Reduced Due to the Insured Having Income.
81 Law No. XII-1923 of the Republic of Lithuania on the Compensation of State Social Insurance Old-Age Pensions and State Pensions Reduced Due to the Insured Having Income.
The amount transferred to pension funds was calculated at EUR 140.3 million, i.e. EUR 11.8 million (9.2 per cent) more than in 2014. This is because the number of pension accumulation scheme participants increased by 4.3 per cent in 2015, and the average monthly salary – on the basis of which state social insurance contributions are calculated – of employed persons participating in the accumulation of pensions increased by 4.7 per cent. The amounts transferred to pension funds account for 4.1 per cent of SODRA’s total budget expenditure. In 2015, cumulative pension contributions were transferred to pension funds for 1 177 400 individuals, or 91.4 per cent of the total insured; however, 354 200 of these individuals (30.0 per cent) did not have insured income.

### Trends of SODRA’S budget revenue and expenditure

![Trends of SODRA’S budget revenue and expenditure](data:image/png;base64,iVBORw0KGgoAAAANSUhEUgAAA...)

Data of the State Social Insurance Fund Board

Sickness and maternity social insurance expenditure was calculated at EUR 436.7 million in 2015, or 12.8 per cent of total expenditure. This is 23.6 per cent – or EUR 83.3 million – more than in 2014. The number of paid sick days came to 1 696 600, which is 22.3 per cent more than in 2014. The total number of sickness allowances was calculated at EUR 205.5 million, which is EUR 15.3 million (8.1 per cent) more than in 2014. The growth of sickness allowances in 2015 was impacted by the fact that the size of sickness allowances was reinstated to 80 per cent of compensatory wage at the beginning of the year.

A total of 21 600 mothers received maternity allowances, which is 7.8 per cent more than in 2014. Maternity (paternity) allowances for children under one year old were paid to approximately 19 000 insured individuals per month, while allowances for children under two years old were paid to approximately 18 900 insured individuals, which comes to a total of 37 900 insured individuals, or 4.7 per cent more than in 2014. A total of EUR 165.5 million was paid in maternity (paternity) allowances. A total of 14 900 fathers received paternity social insurance
allowances, which is 10.8 per cent more than in 2014. A total of EUR 10.9 million was paid in paternity allowances, or 14.4 per cent more than in 2014.

Unemployment social insurance expenditure amounted to EUR 104.5 million in 2015, or 3.1 per cent of SODRA’s total expenditure. Unemployment social insurance allowances were calculated at EUR 76.0 million, which is EUR 26.8 million (26.0 per cent) less than planned, since the average number of unemployment allowance recipients per month was 2.6 per cent lower than planned. The average unemployment allowance in 2015 was EUR 178.81, and the average number of unemployment allowance recipients per month was 44,700. A total of EUR 28.5 million was spent on employment support measures, which is EUR 0.5 million (1.5 per cent) less than planned.

Social insurance expenses for accidents at work and occupational diseases amounted to EUR 16.8 million, or 0.5 per cent of SODRA’s total expenditure. Compared to 2014, EUR 0.2 million (1.2 per cent) more was used for this type of insurance in 2015. This increase in expenditure was conditioned by a growth in the number of recipients of sickness allowances due to accidents at work.

The 2015 result – expenditure exceeded revenue by EUR 136.8 million.

4.3. STATE SOCIAL INSURANCE PENSIONS AND PENSION ACCUMULATION

The Programme of the 16th Government for 2012–2016 notes that a full-fledged life of Lithuanian people will be ensured by productive work, while those unable to work will be supported by social protection based on the principles of social solidarity. One of the priorities of social protection for 2012–2016, as the economy recovers, is the consistent increasing of pensions, which was implemented by increasing state social insurance pensions in July 2015 and January 2016, i.e. the state social insurance basic pension and the insured income of the current year were increased twice. Another important priority measure was also implemented: a procedure for the compensation of pensions that had been reduced as a result of the economic downturn was established. In order to ensure a sustainable and adequate state social insurance pension system, a new draft of the Law on Social Insurance Pensions was drawn up.

4.3.1. BENEFICIARIES OF STATE SOCIAL INSURANCE PENSIONS

According to the data of the Statistics Department, at the beginning of 2015, the share of the population who reached the retirement age accounted for 22.3 per cent of all permanent residents of the country (in 2015, the pension age was 63 years and 2 months for men and 61 years and 4 months for women). The absolute number of people who have reached the retirement age has decreased alongside with a decrease in the total population in the country. It should be noted that around 90 per cent of people who have reached the retirement age are beneficiaries of state social insurance old-age pensions (hereinafter referred to as “old-age pensions”), while the rest are those who opted for receiving work incapacity (disability) pensions as well as people who have not become entitled to receive old-age pensions and others. People who were assigned old-age pensions for the first time accounted, on an average, for around 3 per cent of all beneficiaries of old-age pensions. It should be noted that beneficiaries of old-age pensions account for around 70 per cent of all beneficiaries of social insurance pensions.
Also, it should be noted that during the period 2012–2015, the number of beneficiaries of first time awarded old-age pensions slightly decreased year-on-year. It is related to the gradual increase of the retirement age that began in 2012.

It should be noted that the number of newly awarded old-age pensions was influenced by amendments to the Law on Social Insurance Pensions (hereinafter referred to as “the Law on Pensions”), which grant the right to receive state social insurance pension irrespective of the citizenship and residential place of the person if the person accumulated at least the minimum record of pension insurance to receive pension of the respective type when working in Lithuania (i.e. state social pension insurance contributions were paid to the State Social Insurance Fund Board under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (hereinafter referred to as “SODRA”). Before the entry into force of the amendments, state social insurance pensions were paid only to citizens of the Republic of Lithuania who live in those foreign states with which the Republic of Lithuania has concluded international agreements and in which provisions of the European Union regulations on the coordination of social security systems regarding the payment of pensions do not apply. In 2013, according to this amendment, state social insurance pensions were awarded to 1,362 individuals. A majority of state social insurance pensions for record of pension insurance accumulated in Lithuania was awarded and paid to individuals residing in Israel.

### 4.3.2. AMOUNTS OF STATE SOCIAL INSURANCE PENSIONS

From 1 January 2012, payment of old age, work incapacity (disability) and widow’s/widower’s and orphan’s pensions, which had been temporarily reduced in 2010–2011 in accordance with the Provisional Law of the Republic of Lithuania on the Recalculation and Payment of Social Benefits, was restored to the full amount, i.e. they were returned to the level of December 2009. Taking this into account, in January 2012, the average amount of old-age pension increased by around 9 per cent compared to January 2011. Other state social insurance pensions also increased respectively: work incapacity (disability) pension – by around 3 per cent; widow’s/widower’s pensions – by around 6 per cent; orphan’s pensions – by around 3 per cent; early old-age pension – by around 2 per cent. (Table 4.3.2-1).

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82 Law No. XI-2137 Amending and Supplementing Articles 1, 2, 8, 43, and 54 of the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on State Social Insurance Pensions and Supplementing the Law with Article 1-1 and an Annex.

83 Provisional Law No. XI-537 of the Republic of Lithuania on the Recalculation and Payment of Social Benefits.
The increase in the average old-age pension amount was influenced by the new method for the calculation of the supplementary part of state social insurance pension that entered into force on 1 January 2013. From this date, the supplementary part of pension for individuals who retire for the first time, as well as those who were awarded of pension anew, is calculated taking into account all insured income received after 1 January 1994 and whole record of pension insurance. Besides, if the individual requests so, the supplementary part of pension can also be calculated in accordance with the previous procedure, i.e. according to the insured income received by the individual in 1984–1994 and after 1994 until the month of the award of pension and the whole accumulated record of pension insurance. These amendments to the procedure for the calculation of the supplementary part of pension are aimed at simplifying the procedure for the award of pensions. As this amendment entered into force, the average old-age pension, having the obligatory record of pension insurance, increased by around EUR 3.9 (around 1.6 per cent).

It should be noted that the immediate priorities provided for in the Programme of the 16th Government for 2012–2016 include the reduction of SODRA debt and, as the economy recovers, a consistent increase in pensions and other social benefits. In both 2012 and in 2013, the amount of expenditure for state social insurance pensions exceeded the state social insurance pension revenue of that time. The situation changed only in 2014, when monetary revenue for pension social insurance was greater than expenditure for state social insurance pensions. As a result, state social insurance pensions were increased from 1 July 2015, when the basic amount of state social insurance pension was increased from EUR 105 to EUR 108 and the insured income of the current year was increased from EUR 431 to EUR 434. The average old-age pension, having the obligatory record of pension insurance, increased by around 2 per cent. From 1 January 2016, once again, the basic amount of state social insurance pension was increased to EUR 112 and the insured income of the current year was increased to EUR 445. Taking this into account, the average old-age pension, having the obligatory record of pension insurance, increased by around 3 per cent.

### Average amounts of state social insurance pensions in 2011–2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011 m. (January)</th>
<th>2012 m. (January)</th>
<th>2013 m. (January)</th>
<th>2014 m. (January)</th>
<th>2015 m. (January)</th>
<th>2015 m. (July)</th>
<th>2016 m. (January)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old-age pension</td>
<td>216.1</td>
<td>235.8</td>
<td>236.5</td>
<td>239.8</td>
<td>241.8</td>
<td>246.8</td>
<td>255.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early old-age pension</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>181.8</td>
<td>180.4</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>176.7</td>
<td>177.7</td>
<td>184.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability pension</td>
<td>204.3</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>210.8</td>
<td>210.4</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>215.1</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work incapacity pension</td>
<td>164.4</td>
<td>168.7</td>
<td>166.3</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>168.1</td>
<td>171.2</td>
<td>176.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow’s/widower’s and orphan’s pension</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss-of-breadwinner pension</td>
<td>140.4</td>
<td>144.3</td>
<td>147.4</td>
<td>150.1</td>
<td>153.9</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>165.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement pension</td>
<td>167.5</td>
<td>183.7</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>183.6</td>
<td>184.1</td>
<td>187.7</td>
<td>193.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensations for special working conditions</td>
<td>122.8</td>
<td>156.3</td>
<td>156.3</td>
<td>156.4</td>
<td>157.5</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the purpose of compensating the losses that occurred as a result of the reduction in state social insurance pensions applied during the downturn (2010–2011), the Law on Compensation of State Social Insurance Old-Age and Lost Working Capacity (Disability) Pensions (hereinafter referred to as “the Law on Compensation”)

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84 At the request of the individual, pension can be re-awarded upon accumulating at least one additional year of pension insurance record after the award of pension and in other cases provided for in Article 42 of the Law on State Social Insurance Pensions.

was adopted in 2014. In 2014, beneficiaries of pensions were paid 20 per cent of the calculated compensable amount, and in 2015 and 2016 – 40 per cent of the compensable amount each year, in equal portions in the last month of each quarter, respectively, i.e. 10 per cent each quarter. In accordance with the procedure established by the Law on Compensation, in 2014–2015, compensable amounts accrued due to the lower insured incomes of the current year applied in 2010–2011 were paid to around 500 thousand beneficiaries of pensions (around EUR 99 million).

In 2015, the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Compensation of State Social Insurance Old-Age and State Pensions Reduced due to the Fact of Receiving Insured Income was adopted, establishing the procedure for compensation of old-age pensions to working beneficiaries whose pension was reduced in 2010–2011 because they had insured income. The compensable amounts of old-age pensions are planned to be paid in portions in 2016–2018, i.e. 33 per cent of the compensable amount of old-age pension each time in June 2016 and March 2017, and 34 per cent of the compensable amount of old-age pension in March 2018. It is planned that compensation of old-age pensions will require around EUR 120.6 million, and they will be received by around 84.4 thousand beneficiaries of old-age pensions.

### 4.3.3. THE NEW VERSION OF THE LAW ON STATE SOCIAL INSURANCE PENSIONS

The ageing society in Lithuania, as in many developed countries, is a considerable challenge in seeking to ensure adequate and sustainable pensions. This requires reform in the pension system. Taking this into account, a draft of the new version of the Law on Social Insurance Pensions (hereinafter referred to as “the Draft Law”) was drawn up.

The proposed essential provisions of the new legal regulation in the Draft Law include the establishment of a new pension structure and pension funding sources. It is proposed to establish that pension consists of the general and individual pension parts. The general part of pension would replace the current basic pension part and bonus for length of record, while the individual part of pension, reflecting the portion of contributions paid by the individual to the social insurance system, would replace the current supplementary pension part. It is proposed to establish that the general part of pension would be funded from the state budget. SODRA budget funds are proposed to be used for funding the individual part of pension strictly related to contributions paid by the individual.

The Draft Law proposes to introduce a system of pension points for the calculation of the individual part of pension. Each insured would acquire a certain number of pension points for the amount of pension social insurance contributions paid in that year. If the amount of contribution paid during the year reaches the amount which the individual working under an employment contract should pay according to the established rate of the average wage of that year, one pension point would be acquired. If paying more or less, a proportionally greater or smaller number of pension points would be acquired. When the number of pension points accumulated during the whole working career and publicly announced value of one pension point are known, it would be easy to know the monetary expression of all accumulated pension points. Under the currently effective pension calculation procedure, it is difficult for an individual to evaluate his accumulated pension rights.

According to the proposed legal regulation, old-age pension would be equal to the sum of the general and individual parts. The general part of pension would be calculated as $\beta \times B$, where $\beta$ is the record of pension

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87 Law No. XII-1923 of the Republic of Lithuania on Compensation of State Social Insurance Old-Age and State Pensions Reduced due to the Fact of Receiving Insured Income.

insurance accumulated by the individual divided by the obligatory record of pension insurance as effective in the year of retirement and \( B \) is the basic amount of pension (amount in euros), while the individual part of pension would be equal to \( V \times p \), where \( V \) is the number of pension points accumulated by the individual and \( p \) is the value of a pension point in euros.

Another important proposal is to establish clear pension indexation rules. The implementation of this move was also recommended by the Council of the European Union\(^8\). It should be noted that currently the law does not provide for any pension indexation rules. State social insurance pensions are increased when the Government approves new rates of the basic amount of state social insurance pension and the insured income of the current year. The Draft Law envisages the indexation of pensions according to changes in the wage fund, with regard to changes of this indicator over the last three years, the indexation ratio calculation year, and three forecasting years. Linking indexation with the wage fund allows taking into account not only economic indicators (wage growth rates) but also changes in the number of contribution payers, i.e. the insured. Clear pension indexation rules would prevent increasing pensions in excess of the possibilities of SODRA and would not allow reducing them in case of a downturn.

Taking into account the fact that the retirement age is being gradually increased, the Draft Law provides for a gradual increase of the obligatory record of pension insurance from 30 years currently to 35 years. At present, the average pension insurance record for which old-age pension is awarded is already 37 years.

Also, taking into account the recommendation of the Council of the European Union on linking retirement age to average life expectancy, the Draft Law proposes to envisage that when the retirement age reaches 65 years in 2026, the retirement age should increase each time when the average life expectancy of people who have survived to the age of 65 and above increases for another half-year period or more. It should be noted that in this case, an increased retirement age would become effective only two years later.

Also, the Draft Law proposes a new procedure for the calculation of work incapacity pension according to pension point. It should be noted that it is proposed to establish a closer link between the amount of work incapacity pension and the lost working capacity degree of the person to be established with an increment of 5 per cent. According to the currently effective procedure for the calculation of work incapacity pension, the amount of pension depends on the working capacity established for a person according to three degrees, i.e. in the case of loss of 45–55 per cent, 60–70 per cent, and 75–100 per cent of working capacity.

It is recommended to regulate the award and payment of early old-age pensions in the Law on Social Insurance Pensions. The conditions for the award and payment of early old-age pensions do not undergo any substantial changes; however, it is proposed to establish that the right to receive early old-age pension could be acquired by an individual when the time to reach the established retirement age does not exceed 3 years (currently – not more than 5 years). This proposal implements the recommendations of the Council of the European Union to Lithuania (to tighten early retirement conditions).

### 4.3.4. PENSION ACCUMULATION IN SECOND-PILLAR PENSION FUNDS

At the beginning of 2016, the pension accumulation system, which has been effective since 2004, involved on average 1 123 thousand persons participating in second-pillar pension accumulation. They could accumulate funds for their future pensions in 21 second-pillar pension funds managed by six pension accumulation companies (five management companies and one life insurance company).

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\(^8\) The Council Recommendation of 8 July 2014 on the National Reform Programme 2014 of Lithuania and delivering a Council opinion on the Convergence Programme of Lithuania, 2014.
Participants accumulate cumulative pension contributions in selected pension funds. The accumulative pension contribution rate was 1.5 per cent in 2012 and 2.5 per cent in 2013. However, such a low accumulative pension contribution rate is not sufficient for participants to accumulate more significant amounts for their future pensions even over a long period of participation in accumulation. In order to prevent opposition between different generations (current and future pensioners) and reduce the amount of collected state social insurance contributions, from which pensions of current pensioners are funded, to be allocated to pension accumulation, while enabling working people to accumulate sufficient amounts in pension funds to ensure their pensions and receive a certain incentive to participate in the pension accumulation system, it was decided to change the procedure of funding the pension accumulation system (second pillar). Therefore, at the end of 2012, amendments to the Law on Reform of the Pension System were adopted\(^90\) and it was established that the cumulative pension contribution shall consist of a portion of the state social pension insurance contribution, supplementary pension contribution paid from the funds of the participant, and supplementary pension contribution paid from the funds of the state budget for the participant. The new procedure for the funding of the pension accumulation system has been in effect since 2014 and applies to all participants who signed their pension accumulation agreements after 1 January 2013. The portion of the state social pension insurance contribution and supplementary pension contribution paid from the funds of the participant shall be calculated as the percentage of the income of the participant established in the Law on Reform of the Pension System. The supplementary pension contribution paid from the funds of the state budget for the participant (otherwise referred to as the incentive contribution) amounts to the percentage of the gross average monthly wage of workers in the country’s economy for four quarters of the year before last year published by the Lithuanian Department of Statistics (Table 4.3.4-2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>State social pension insurance contribution</th>
<th>Supplementary pension contribution paid from the funds of the participant</th>
<th>Supplementary pension contribution paid from the funds of the state budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014–2015</td>
<td>2 %</td>
<td>1 %</td>
<td>1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016–2019</td>
<td>2 %</td>
<td>2 %</td>
<td>2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuo 2020</td>
<td>3.5 %</td>
<td>2 %</td>
<td>2 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{90}\) Law No. XI-2418 Amending Articles 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, and 8 of the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Reform of the Pension System.

Taking into account the fact that the terms and condition of participation in the pension accumulation system were changed, current pension accumulation participants (who concluded their agreements before 1 January 2013) had to decide on further participation in pension accumulation during the period from 1 April 2013 to 30 November 2013. These pension accumulation participants could either submit requests regarding the suspension of transfer of a portion of the state social pension insurance contribution to pension funds, i.e. remain only within the state social insurance system, provide their consent on payment of an supplementary pension contribution from their funds, and accumulate in a pension fund from three different sources, or continue their participation in the pension accumulation system when only a portion of the state social pension insurance contribution is transferred. It should be noted that only 2 per cent of pension accumulation participants chose to suspend transfer of contributions to pension funds and remain only within the social insurance system.

The number of new pension accumulation system participants is influenced not only by the economic situation in the country, but also by the stability of the legal regulation of the pension accumulation system. It should be noted that a drastic drop in the number of pension accumulation system participants was recorded in
The number of new pension accumulation agreements signed during the year was twice as low as that in 2010. However, after amendments regarding the funding of the cumulative pension contribution were adopted at the end of 2012, the number of newly concluded pension accumulation agreements increased almost 3 times in 2013 compared to the previous year.

Owing to the amendments adopted at the end of 2012, the pension accumulation system became more flexible for participants. From 2013, the time of entry into force of new pension accumulation agreements decreased. Individuals who have not reached the retirement age and have insured income, from which state social insurance contributions are calculated for receiving the main and supplementary parts of pension, may at any time sign a pension accumulation agreement, which comes into effect on the first day of the third month to be counted from the month of registration of the Register of Pension Accumulation Agreements. Before 2013, newly signed agreements entered into effect only from the beginning of the following calendar year. In addition, a participant is granted more freedom in transferring from one pension accumulation company to another when at least one cumulative pension contribution has been transferred in his name to the pension fund (previously, changing a company was allowed only three years after the conclusion of the pension accumulation agreement). During the period 2012–2015, around 3 per cent of pension accumulation participants on an average changed a pension accumulation company, and around 1 per cent of participants changed only a pension fund within the same pension accumulation company.

As the cumulative contribution rate, number of pension accumulation participants, and average wage in the country increase, the amount of cumulative pension contributions transferred to pension funds has been growing every year since 2012 (Table 4.3.4-3).

### Amounts of transferred pension contributions in 2012–2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative pension contribution rate, per cent</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>(1+1+2)</td>
<td>(1+1+2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant contribution, million EUR</td>
<td>22.76</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional contribution from the state budget, million EUR</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State social insurance contribution, million EUR</td>
<td>87.06</td>
<td>137.34</td>
<td>131.8</td>
<td>137.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total amount of contributions transferred for accumulation, million EUR</strong></td>
<td>87.06</td>
<td>137.34</td>
<td>181.96</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: SODRA data (Table 4.3.4-3)*

In 2015, the amount of state social insurance pension contribution was around 5 per cent higher than that in 2014 and accounted for around 67 per cent of the amount of contributions transferred for accumulation that year. The participant contribution and additional contribution accounted for around 15 per cent and 18 per cent, respectively, of the total amount transferred for accumulation in 2015. It should be noted that in 2014, the additional incentive contribution from the state budget at a rate of 1 per cent was EUR 6.30 and in 2015 it was EUR 6.61, and in 2016, the additional incentive contribution from the state budget at a rate of 2 per cent was EUR 13.82.

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91 Law No. XI-2418 Amending Articles 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, and 8 of the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Reform of the Pension System.
4.4. STATE PENSIONS, STATE SOCIAL ASSISTANCE BENEFITS AND SUPPORT TO RESISTANCE PARTICIPANTS AND VICTIMS OF THE OCCUPATIONS OF 1940–1990

4.4.1. STATE PENSIONS AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE BENEFITS

In order to improve the legal regulation of state pensions, state social assistance benefits, and other benefits of pension nature paid from the state budget, the following amendments were adopted.

From 1 January 2014, conditions were simplified for receiving state pension of civil and military officers for persons who were dismissed from service through their own fault. Now, state pension is awarded to such persons if they have served for 25 or more years and 3 years have passed from the day of dismissal from service, or if they have served for 25 or more years and have reached the age of the statutory transfer to the reserve (when such age is not established, then the age of entitlement to old-age pension). Previously, such persons would acquire the right to receive state pension only upon reaching the age of transfer to the reserve or the age of entitlement to old-age pension.

From 1 January 2014, the right to receive the state pension of the second degree of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter referred to as “the state pension of the second degree”) was acquired by mothers who have given birth to (adopted), brought up to the age of 8, and properly educated 5 and more children (hereinafter referred to as “mothers with many children”). Previously, such pensions were awarded only for 7 and more children. The amount of the state pension of the second degree is the double basic amount of the state pension (currently, EUR 116). They are awarded to mothers with many children upon reaching the age of entitlement to old-age pension or in case of loss of 60% and more of working capacity and are paid together with state social insurance old-age pensions or lost working capacity (disability) pensions. State pensions of the second degree are awarded, upon recommendation of municipality administrations, by the Commission for Awarding State Pensions of the First and Second Degree of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter referred to as “the Commission”). Since 2014, the Commission awarded state pensions of the second degree to 9,676 mothers with many children.

On 1 January 2014, an amendment to the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on State Pensions entered into force, which establishes the right to receive state pension of the first degree of the Republic of Lithuania for persons who have been awarded the Lithuanian National Prize for Culture and Arts in accordance with the procedure established by regulatory acts. Since 2014, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania awarded state pensions to 50 recipients of the Lithuanian National Prize for Culture and Arts.

As 1 July 2014, compensation allowances to former creative staff of theatre and concert establishments were increased from 4 to 6 basic social benefits. Compensation allowances paid to persons involved in creative work on a professional stage of Lithuania, including ballet performers and dancers, musicians playing the wind instruments, solo vocalists, and choir performers.

As of 1 July 2014, saviours of Jews during the Holocaust were acknowledged as freedom fighters and granted the legal status thereof. In addition, saviours of Jews became entitled to state pension of the second degree of a

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84 Law No. XII-635 Supplementing Article 4 of the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on State Pensions.
85 Law No. XII-897 Amending Article 13 of the Law on Theatre and Concert Establishments of the Republic of Lithuania.
86 Law No. XII-954 Amending the Preamble and Article 5 of Law No. VIII-97 of Republic of Lithuania on the Legal Status of Participants of Resistance to the Occupations of 1940–1990.
double basic amount of the state pension (EUR 116). From 1 July 2014, upon the recommendation of the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania, the Commission has granted state pensions of the second degree to 110 persons who saved Jews during the Holocaust.

As of 1 January 2015, an amendment to the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on State Social Assistance Benefits came into force, providing for entitlement to an allowance compensation to parents (adoptive parents) who, before 1 January 1995, for at least eight years took care at home of children with disability or children acknowledged as having a disability of the first or second group from their childhood or who had became people with disability of the first or second group up to the age of eighteen. An allowance compensation is awarded when reaching the age 5 years below the age of entitlement to old-age pension or in case of loss of 60% and more of working capacity and is paid until the individual becomes entitled to receive state social insurance pension, state pension, or another benefit of pension nature. Previously entitlement to this benefit was granted only to parents who took care of children with disability for at least ten years before 1 January 1995.

As of 01 January 2016, the length of service for civil and military officers for entitlement to state pension was extended from 20 to 25 years. This is aimed at keeping statutory officers in service for as long as possible because, in accordance with the previously effective provisions of the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on State Pensions of Civil and Military Officers, officers, having reached the age of 40–43 and served for 20 years, retired and began to receive state pensions of civil and military officers. In addition, the statutes establish a significantly higher maximum age of service in statutory duties, upon reaching which officers are dismissed from service.

In 2015, a law was adopted, establishing, among other provisions, the procedure for compensation of state pensions that had been reduced during the downturn because of the availability of insured income, according to which compensable amounts shall be paid in 2016–2018.

### Expenditure for state pensions and government annuities in 2012–2015

![Expenditure for state pensions and government annuities in 2012–2015](Figure 4.4.1-1)

Figure 4.4.1-1 shows that in 2012–2015, the expenditure of the state budget for paying state pensions and annuities increased by around 30%. In 2014, a significant increase in the expenditure was particularly contributed by the restoration, as of 1 January 2014, of state pensions and annuities, which were paid at a reduced rate during the downturn (2010–2013). The increase in expenditure was also caused by the number of beneficiaries of benefits with relatively greater amounts (pensions of civil and military officers and state pensions of the first and

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97 Law No. XII-906 Amending Article 15 of Law No. I-675 of the Republic of Lithuania on State Social Assistance Benefits.

98 Law No. XII-1923 of the Republic of Lithuania on Compensation of State Social Insurance Old-Age and State Pensions Reduced due to Availability of Insured Income.
second degree), although the number of beneficiaries of smaller benefits (state pensions of victims) decreased due to mortality.

In implementing the Plan of Measures for the Implementation of the Guidelines for the Reform of the State Social Insurance and Pension System\textsuperscript{99}, payment of state pensions of civil and military officers to former prosecutors and officers of the Customs Department under the Ministry of Finance and the Prison Department under the Ministry of Justice as well as payment of compensation allowances to former creative staff of theatre and concert establishments and annuities to former athletes was transferred to the State Social Insurance Fund Board under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour as of 1 January 2013. From 1 January 2015, the State Social Insurance Fund Board also pays state pensions to former officers of the system of the Ministry of the Interior, and from 1 January 2016 – to former officers of the national defence system, the State Security Department, and the Special Investigation Service and awards state pensions to former officers of the system of the Ministry of the Interior.

4.4.2. SUPPORT TO RESISTANCE PARTICIPANTS AND VICTIMS OF THE OCCUPATIONS OF 1940–1990

An amount of EUR 0.52 million was spent on compensations to independence defender who suffered from the aggression of the USSR on 11–13 January 1991 and thereafter and to their family members in 2012–2015. Compensations were paid to cover housing heating, hot water, drinking water supply and waste water removal, gas, solid and liquid fuel, electricity, fixed telephone-line subscription fee and other expenses. Beneficiaries of compensations are families of the fallen, independence defenders recognised as incapable or partially capable of work (before 1 July 2005, persons with disability) as a result of the aggression of the USSR on 11–13 January 1991 and thereafter and their family members as well as independence defenders who suffered serious or moderate injuries. According to the statistics provided by municipal administrations, during the period 2012–2015, this kind of state support was provided to 340 persons (families) per year on an average.

In 2012–2016, 252 compensations were paid to persons who participated in the mitigation of the consequences of the disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant (servicemen of the reserve and mandatory military who had been sent to temporarily work in the area of 30 kilometres around the focus of the disaster or to construct the town of Slavutych in Ukraine) if their health was affected. The amount spent was EUR 0.41 million and the average allowance amounted to EUR 1,627.

As of 1 January 2015, entitlement to lump-sum compensations was also established\textsuperscript{100} for participants in the mitigation of the consequences of the disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant sent to work other than from Lithuania, provided that currently the are citizens of the Republic of Lithuania. Prior to this amendment, entitlement to lump-sum compensation was enjoyed only by participants temporarily sent from Lithuania.

As of 1 July 2015, entitlement to lump-sum compensations was granted to persons who, by a decision of military doctors, were acknowledged as unfit for military service due to injuries or diseases related to military service or military training\textsuperscript{101}. These persons are awarded lump-sum compensations of EUR 835. In 2015–2016, lump-sum compensations were paid to 384 persons, including 369 (i.e. 96 per cent of the total number of these


\textsuperscript{101} Law No. XII-1627 Amending Articles 2 and 6 of Law No. I-576 of the Republic of Lithuania on Social Support to Persons Injured in Mandatory Military Service in the Soviet Army and to Families of the Fallen in the Soviet Army (from 22 July 1945 until 31 December 1991).
benefits) those acknowledged as unfit for military service due to injuries or diseases related to military service or military training. The amount of funds used amounts to EUR 0.35 million. Before the amendment entered into force, from 2012 to 1 July 2015, ten lump-sum compensations were paid, for which EUR 0.02 million was used.

Lump sum benefits are also awarded to the family members of the participants of resistance to 1940–1990 occupations who died fighting for the freedom and independence of Lithuania, during imprisonment, including exile following the imprisonment\textsuperscript{102}. Funeral costs of volunteer soldiers are covered from the national budget (a benefit of 20 basic social assistance benefits (EUR 760) is awarded). In 2012–2016, municipal administrations awarded 257 benefits for volunteer soldiers who died or were killed. In 2012–2016, an amount of EUR 0.625 million was allocated to grant this kind of state support. The amount of benefit is associated with the death circumstances of the participant in resistance to the occupations. This regulatory act also establishes that the amounts of lump sum benefits shall be indexed on a yearly basis in compliance with the procedure established by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, taking into account the inflation rate of the year before the last (for example, in 2016 the amounts of lump sum benefits are indexed with regard to the fact that in 2014, the average inflation rate was 0.1\%). Therefore, the amounts of such benefits grew correspondingly. From the time of the entry into force of the law, i.e. from 1998, to 2016 the amounts of these benefits increased by 48.1%.

\textsuperscript{102} Law No. VIII-871 of the Republic of Lithuania on State Support to Families of the Fallen during Resistance to the Occupations of 1940–1990; Law No. VIII-541 of the Republic of Lithuania on State Support to Participants of Armed Resistance.
5. Cash Social Assistance, Social Scope

5.1. CASH SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

The state is obliged to guarantee that every person receives assistance from respective public services which a person needs in order to avoid, eliminate or mitigate deprivation.

The creation and development of the cash social assistance system is aimed at guaranteeing minimal income to meet the basic needs of the most vulnerable social groups, protecting persons from poverty and social exclusion, avoiding long-term dependency on the social assistance system, and ensuring that poor residents of working age, capable of work, retain incentives to actively participate in the labour market.

This chapter covers the changes and tendencies of the system of cash social assistance provided for families with children and poor residents, which occurred in 2012–2015 and the first half of 2016. It presents statistics on benefits for children, cash social assistance for poor residents, social assistance for pupils, and assistance in the case of death.

5.1.1. BENEFITS FOR FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

In 2012–2015, pursuant to the Republic of Lithuania Law on Benefits for Children 103, the following benefits were granted to persons raising children and/or guardians of children from the state budget of the Republic of Lithuania: a lump-sum child benefit (for a newborn child or for an adopted child), a child benefit, a lump-sum benefit for a pregnant woman, a benefit for a child of a serviceman in mandatory initial military service, a guardianship (curatorship) benefit, a targeted guardianship (curatorship) benefit supplement, a lump-sum settlement benefit.

During the abovementioned period, a child benefit was paid with regard to family income: a monthly benefit in the amount of 0.75 base social benefits (BSB) (EUR 28.24; EUR 28.5 as of 1 January 2015) is granted and paid to children from birth to 2 years of age; a child benefit in the amount of 0.4 BSB (EUR 15.06; EUR 15.2 as of 1 January 2015) is paid to children from 2 to 7 years of age, and until 18 years of age in large families, if the average monthly income per one of the persons living together does not exceed 1.5 amounts of state supported income (SSI) (EUR 152.05; EUR 153 as of 1 January 2015).

On 8 May 2014, the Law Amending the Republic of Lithuania Law on Benefits for Children\(^\text{104}\) was adopted. It transposed the provisions of Directive 2011/98/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on a single application procedure for a single permit for third-country nationals to reside and work in the territory of a Member State and on a common set of rights for third-country workers legally residing in a Member State, according to which Member States must guarantee to third-country nationals the rights equal to those of citizens of a Member State to be granted benefits for children.

With a view to improving the payment of a benefit for a child of a serviceman in mandatory initial military service, the legal basis for receiving a benefit in the case of both father and mother being in mandatory initial military service has been established as of 1 July 2014.

While implementing the recommendation regarding payment of a common guardianship (curatorship) benefit for all children under guardianship (curatorship) presented in the National Audit Report by the National Audit Office of the Republic of Lithuania\(^\text{105}\), the amended Republic of Lithuania Law on Benefits for Children of 1 December 2011\(^\text{106}\) established a guardianship (curatorship) benefit in the amount of 4 BSB (EUR 150.6; EUR 152 as of 1 January 2015) paid to a child under guardianship (curatorship), regardless of the established form of guardianship, and a targeted guardianship (curatorship) benefit supplement in the amount of 4 BSB (EUR 150.6; EUR 152 as of 1 January 2015) paid for a child who has been established guardianship (curatorship) in a social family in order to ensure guardianship (curatorship) of a child by a social family, as of 1 January 2012.

Seeking to support families which take care of children, the Law Amending the Republic of Lithuania Law on Benefits for Children\(^\text{107}\) was adopted on 15 December 2015. Pursuant to it, a guardian (curator) of a child is paid a targeted guardianship (curatorship) benefit supplement in the amount of 1 BSB (EUR 38) for each child under guardianship (curatorship) in a family as of 1 January 2016 (4 BSB (EUR 152) as of 1 January 2017).

Increasing a child benefit paid from the state budget, which has been reduced during the crisis, remains one of the priority measures. It should be noted that measure 89 of Priority Measures Implementing the Programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania 2012–2016, approved by Resolution No. 228 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of 13 March 2013 “On the Approval of Priority Measures Implementing the Programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania 2012–2016”, lays down the following: “Having regard to the financial resources of the state, to submit proposals regarding the improvement of payment of a child benefit.” As the country’s economic situation stabilises, effective measures that enable reaching the abovementioned goal in the most efficient and economic way have been sought.

### 5.1.2. Cash Social Assistance for Poor Residents

The provision of cash social assistance for poor residents is regulated by the Republic of Lithuania Law on Cash Social Assistance for Poor Residents\(^\text{108}\). Pursuant to this legal act, poor residents shall be paid social benefit and compensations for heating, hot and drinking water expenses (hereinafter referred to as the “compensations”). Cash social assistance is provided taking into consideration not only the received income, but also owned

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\(^{104}\) Law Amending Articles 1, 3, 7, 12, and 13, the Title of Section II and the Annex of the Republic of Lithuania Law on Benefits for Children No. I-621.

\(^{105}\) National Audit Report No. VA-P-10-1-5 “Social Assistance System” of the National Audit Office of the Republic of Lithuania of 9 May 2011.

\(^{106}\) Law Amending and Supplementing Articles 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, Amending and Supplementing the Titles of Sections III and VI and Repealing Article 21 of the Republic of Lithuania Law on Benefits for Children No. I-621.

\(^{107}\) Law Amending Article 8 of the Republic of Lithuania Law on Benefits for Children No. I-621.

\(^{108}\) Republic of Lithuania Law on Cash Social Assistance for Poor Residents No. IX-1675.
property. Social benefits and compensations are granted to poor residents, if the value of their property does not exceed the average property value set for their residential area\textsuperscript{109}.

Seeking accurateness and efficiency of provided cash social assistance as well as a more rational use of the state budget funds, reorganisation of the cash social assistance system commenced in 2012. Its purpose was to boost motivation of people of working age to integrate in the labour market, reduce long-term dependency on social assistance, the risk of poverty trap as well as possibilities of abuse of cash social assistance.

The amendments to the Republic of Lithuania Law on Cash Social Assistance for Poor Residents\textsuperscript{110}, which became effective as of 1 January 2012, established a legal basis to provide cash social assistance for poor residents through two models: by fulfilling a state function (assigned by the state to municipalities) and by fulfilling an independent municipal function in five pilot municipalities of Akmenė, Panevėžys, Radviliškis, Raseiniai and Šilalė districts.

Taking into consideration the best practice of reorganisation of the cash social assistance system and its results in pilot municipalities, following the amendments to the Republic of Lithuania Law on Cash Social Assistance for Poor Residents\textsuperscript{111} adopted on 26 November 2013, the provision of social benefit has been assigned as an independent municipal function to other 55 municipalities as of 1 January 2014.

After the mentioned amendments to the law came into force, in five pilot municipalities the provision of cash social assistance (social benefit and compensations) has remained unchanged, i.e. from 1 January 2012 until 31 December 2014 a pilot project was implemented (assistance was provided when implementing the independent municipal function financed from municipal budget funds), the rest 55 municipalities have been providing social benefit as of 1 January 2014 when fulfilling the independent municipal function financed from municipal budget funds, and compensations – when fulfilling the state function (assigned by the state to municipalities) financed with the special target grants allocated from the state budget to municipal budgets.

On 2 December 2014, continuing the reorganisation of the cash social assistance system commenced in 2012, the Law Amending the Republic of Lithuania Law on Cash Social Assistance for Poor Residents was adopted\textsuperscript{112}. Pursuant to the Law, municipalities provide cash social assistance for poor residents (social benefit and compensations) as of 1 January 2015 by fulfilling their independent municipal function financed from the municipal budget funds.

Starting with 2015, after the amendments of the abovementioned law became effective, all municipalities provide cash social assistance for poor residents under equal conditions, renouncing the grounds to grant, not to grant, reduce, etc. social benefit and compensations in accordance with the procedure established by municipal councils. This discretion has been allowed for municipalities only in those situations when social assistance is granted in other non-established cases (a lump-sum benefit is granted, the housing debt is paid, etc.). It also establishes that municipal budget funds allocated for calculating and paying cash social assistance which are not used shall, where necessary, be primarily used to finance other social assistance in accordance with the procedure established by the municipal council.

While promoting motivation of cash social assistance beneficiaries of working age, who are capable of work, to integrate in the labour market, reducing the risk of illegal work and long-term dependency of poor residents

\textsuperscript{109} The value of a person’s owned property should not exceed the average property value set for their residential area. The standard value of an area unit of real property of every type is established by the State Enterprise Centre of Registers and posted on its website according to the average values of real property as of 1 January every year in Lithuanian cities, municipality centres and other municipal territories.

\textsuperscript{110} Law Amending the Republic of Lithuania Law on Cash Social Assistance for Poor Families and Single Residents.

\textsuperscript{111} Law Amending and Supplementing Articles 4 and 23 of the Republic of Lithuania Law on Cash Social Assistance for Poor Residents No. XII-621.

\textsuperscript{112} Law Amending Articles 4, 8, 10, 12, 17, 21 and 23 of the Republic of Lithuania Law on Cash Social Assistance for Poor Residents No. IX-1675.
on social assistance as well as the possibilities of abuse of this assistance, the following measures have been implemented with regard to reorganisation of the cash social assistance system:

1. a model on granting cash social assistance based on the principle of economies of scale (related to the number of family members) has been established;

2. granting of an additional part of social benefit to long-term beneficiaries of social assistance who find employment has been established;

3. municipalities have been conferred the right to grant social benefits also in cases when a person’s (family’s) income exceeds the amount of state supported income (the limit of earned income has been increased from 20 per cent to 50 per cent of state supported income (EUR 51) as of 2015);

4. a proportionate reduction of the amount of a social benefit has been laid down with regard to unemployed long-term beneficiaries of social benefits of working age, who are capable of work (except for cases of unemployment due to objective reasons);

5. the limits of discretion of municipal administrations have been expanded in order to create conditions to receive assistance when a person is mostly in need of it.

Interinstitutional cooperation has improved during reorganisation. Seeking to integrate beneficiaries of social benefits in the labour market, the possibilities of information systems have been expanded in order to ensure cooperation between territorial labour exchange offices and municipalities. Municipalities have been actively cooperating with the territorial offices of the State Tax Inspectorate and the State Labour Inspectorate as well as other institutions in order to prevent abuse of assistance by those who have illegal income, illegal employment, sell smuggled goods, etc.

Local community members have become actively involved in the process of provision of cash social assistance. They have been more often providing information to municipal social assistance divisions about the necessity to help those in a complicated financial situation and about cases of potential abuse of social assistance. Social Assistance Commissions (Councils) have been set up and effectively functioning in municipalities. Their members are social workers, elders, sub-elders, representatives of communities, non-governmental organisations and other active representatives of society.

The turnover of assistance beneficiaries and changes in their number shows that assistance is efficient and the cash social assistance system corresponds to its main purpose – to help people when they are mostly in need of assistance, boost motivation of assistance beneficiaries to integrate in the labour market, reduce long-term dependency on the social assistance system.

It should also be noted that in order to reduce the scope of illegal work and cases of non-accounted wages in the area of agriculture and to create more favourable conditions for increasing the amount of receivable income at own effort ensuring that these persons do not lose their right to cash social assistance, when granting cash social assistance, the part of income received in provision of agriculture and forestry services according to the receipt of agriculture and forestry services exceeding the amount of EUR 1 750 during the current calendar year has been included in the income after the Republic of Lithuania Law on Provision of Agriculture and Forestry Services according to the Services Receipt113 and the amendment to the Law on Cash Social Assistance for Poor Residents114 became effective on 1 April 2013.

Having regard to monitoring of the implementation of the Law on Cash Social Assistance for Poor Residents and in implementing the recommendation of the Council of the European Union for Lithuania of 13 May 2015 regarding the National Reform Programme 2015 of Lithuania together with the Council opinion

113 Republic of Lithuania Law on Provision of Agriculture and Forestry Services according to the Services Receipt.
114 Law Amending and Supplementing Article 17 of the Republic of Lithuania Law on Cash Social Assistance for Poor Residents.
regarding the Stability Programme of Lithuania for 2015, which recommend increasing the scope and adequacy of unemployment benefits and cash social assistance and create better conditions for job-seekers to become employed, a draft amendment to the abovementioned law has been prepared and currently deliberated at the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania. This amendment aims to improve legal regulation of cash social assistance for poor residents related to the application of the scheme of proportionate reduction of a social benefit and granting of an additional part of social benefit when a person finds employment.

The draft law proposes establishing that proportionate reduction of a social benefit is applied only with regard to unemployed persons of working age, who are capable of work (as well as to persons who are not self-employed); expanding the list of circumstances under which the scheme of proportionate reduction of a social benefit is not applied; creating more favourable conditions to receive an additional part of social benefit having become employed, etc.

After the proposals are approved of, more favourable conditions will be created for poor residents to receive cash social assistance, adequacy of cash social assistance will be ensured and motivation of persons of working age, who are capable of work, to integrate in the labour market will be boosted.

5.1.3. SOCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR PUPILS

The conditions of provision of social assistance for pupils (free meals for pupils and assistance for the acquisition of school supplies) established by the state have remained unchanged in 2012–2015. Pursuant to the Republic of Lithuania Law on Social Assistance for Pupils115, having evaluated the income of persons living together or a single resident, pupils shall be entitled to free meals and assistance for the acquisition of school supplies at the beginning of a school year. The founders of the school have the right to decide on the type(s) of free meals – lunch, meals in summer day camps organised in schools, breakfast or afternoon meals – to be provided to pupils in their founded schools116. Municipalities have been entitled to grant free meals, including breakfast and afternoon meal, in exceptional cases in accordance with the procedure established by the municipal council. Up to 2 per cent of the funds allocated for social assistance from the state budget may be used for this purpose.

In order to ensure efficient use of funds from the state and municipal budgets and seeking that child nutrition complies with physiological standards, minimum and maximum recommended daily amounts of funds allocated per pupil for the acquisition of products (including value added tax on purchase) have been established117.

The amounts of funds allocated per pupil for free meals (breakfast, lunch, afternoon meal) per day have been increased by about 10 per cent as of 1 January 2014117. The amount of 1.3 to 7.7 per cent of BSB (from EUR 0.49 to 2.90; from EUR 0.49 to 2.93 as of 1 January 2015) is allocated for the purchase of food products.

On 19 February 2014, the Description of the Procedure for the Provision of Free Meals to Pupils at School was amended118 by specifying the amounts of funds allocated for the purchase of food products according to each recommended type of free meals. The amount of 2.8 to 4 per cent of BSB (from EUR 1.05 to 1.51; from EUR 1.06 to 1.52 as of 1 January 2015) is allocated for lunch per day per pupil; the amount of 6.6 to 7.7 per cent of BSB (from EUR 2.48 to 2.90; from EUR 2.51 to 2.93 as of 1 January 2015) – for meals in summer camps organised in

115 Republic of Lithuania Law on Social Assistance for Pupils No. X-686.
117 Law Amending Articles 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 10 and 14 of the Republic of Lithuania Law on Social Assistance for Pupils No. XII-742.
schools; the amount of 1.3 to 2.2 per cent of BSB (from EUR 0.49 to 0.83; from EUR 0.49 to 0.84 as of 1 January 2015) – for breakfast or afternoon meals.

Assistance for the acquisition of school supplies is provided in cash, except cases where a pupil is at social risk. The amount of 120 per cent of BSB (EUR 45.18; EUR 45.6 as of 1 January 2015) was allocated for assistance for the acquisition of school supplies per pupil per calendar year in 2012–2015.

Seeking to support poor families raising school-age children, amendments to the Republic of Lithuania Law on Social Assistance for Pupils\textsuperscript{119} were adopted on 15 December 2015. Pursuant to these amendments, the amount of funds allocated for the acquisition of school supplies has been increased from 1.2 to 1.5 BSB (from EUR 45.6 to 57) as of 2016. If the family situation is difficult, the founders of the school are entitled to grant up to 4 per cent of state budget funds, targeted at the expenses for products and school supplies and their administration, for free meals of pupils in exceptional cases in accordance with the procedure established by municipalities.

5.1.4. ASSISTANCE IN THE CASE OF DEATH

The Republic of Lithuania Law on Assistance in the Case of Death\textsuperscript{120} regulates the categories of persons entitled to the funeral allowance, the amount of funeral allowance, and the procedure of payment and financing of funeral allowance.

The amount of funeral allowance set by the state did not change in the period of 2012–2015. A funeral allowance in the amount of 8 BSB (EUR 301.2; EUR 304 as of 1 January 2015) is paid regardless of the income and owned property of person in charge of funeral arrangements.

Legal regulation with regard to payment of a funeral allowance has been improved and on 1 July 2014, after the amendments to the Republic of Lithuania Law on Assistance in the Case of Death\textsuperscript{121} became effective, the legal basis was established to grant a funeral allowance in the case when the child is born alive yet dies within three months and his place of residence has not been declared in the Republic of Lithuania in the manner prescribed by legal acts; moreover, the legal basis was established to grant a funeral allowance from the municipal budget in the manner prescribed by the municipal council in those cases when the place of residence of the deceased person has not been declared in the Republic of Lithuania in the manner prescribed by legal acts. In order to ensure proper conformity of the legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania to the requirements of the European Union legislation, the provisions of Directive 2011/98/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on a single application procedure for a single permit for third-country nationals to reside and work in the territory of a Member State and on a common set of rights for third-country workers legally residing in a Member State, according to which Member States must guarantee to third-country nationals the rights equal to those of citizens of a Member State to be provided with assistance in the case of death, have been transposed in the national legislation.

According to the current legal regulation, the Republic of Lithuania Law on Assistance in the Case of Death lays down one type of assistance in the case of death, i.e. a funeral allowance. Having regard to the fact that the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Lithuania has many times highlighted in its decisions that individual types of social assistance, persons who are granted social assistance, grounds for granting and payment of social assistance, conditions and amounts can be established only by law, the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania has prepared and deliberated a draft Law Amending the Republic of Lithuania Law on Assistance in the Case of

\textsuperscript{119} Law Amending Articles 8, 10, 11, 12 and 14 of the Republic of Lithuania Law on Social Assistance for Pupils No. X-686.

\textsuperscript{120} Republic of Lithuania Law on Assistance in the Case of Death No. I-348.

\textsuperscript{121} Law Amending Articles 3, 5, and 6 and the Annex of the Republic of Lithuania Law on Assistance in the Case of Death No. I-348.
Death which proposes establishing a new type of assistance in the case of death, i.e. assistance for repatriation of the bodies of citizens of the Republic of Lithuania who have died abroad to the Republic of Lithuania, on a statutory level, and laying down the grounds for granting and payment of this assistance, as well as conditions and amounts. Currently this type of assistance is regulated by the Rules of Provision of State Financial Support for Repatriation of the Bodies of Citizens of the Republic of Lithuania Who Have Died Abroad to the Republic of Lithuania approved by a resolution of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania.

5.1.5. CHANGES IN THE SCOPE OF FINANCING CASH SOCIAL ASSISTANCE AND THE NUMBER OF ITS BENEFICIARIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Benefits to persons raising and/or fostering children, including:</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Lump-sum child benefit</td>
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<td>32.4</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>32.95</td>
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<td>Lump-sum benefit for a pregnant woman</td>
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<td>7.4</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>6.5</td>
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<td>99.1</td>
<td>88.0</td>
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<td>1.4</td>
<td>Benefit for a child of a serviceman in mandatory initial military service</td>
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<td>0.007</td>
<td>0.012</td>
<td>0.011</td>
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<td>1.5</td>
<td>Guardianship (curatorship) benefit</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>Lump-sum settlement benefit</td>
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<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>Targeted guardianship (curatorship) benefit supplement</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Benefits and other types of assistance for poor residents, including:</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Social benefit</td>
<td>221.9</td>
<td>190.0</td>
<td>140.1</td>
<td>110.7</td>
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<td>2.2</td>
<td>Compensations for heating of a dwelling, hot and drinking water expenses</td>
<td>198.8</td>
<td>204.9</td>
<td>188.5</td>
<td>144.6</td>
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<td>2.3</td>
<td>Payment of the credit, taken for renovation (modernisation) of a multi-apartment building, and interest thereof for persons entitled to compensation for heating of the dwelling expenses</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Free meals for pupils</td>
<td>128.5</td>
<td>109.0</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td>75.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Assistance for the acquisition of school supplies</td>
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<td>97.3</td>
<td>80.4</td>
<td>67.6</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Assistance for independence defenders aggrieved during the events of 11–13 January 1991 and the following aggression of the USSR, and their families</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Funeral allowance</td>
<td>40.2</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>41.3</td>
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</table>

Data of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour

Table 5.1.5-1

### Expenses of cash social assistance in 2012–2015 (EUR million)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Benefits to persons raising and/or fostering children, including:</td>
<td>61.7</td>
<td>59.0</td>
<td>55.1</td>
<td>51.4</td>
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<td>1.1.</td>
<td>Lump-sum child benefit</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>13.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2.</td>
<td>Lump-sum benefit for a pregnant woman</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
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<td>1.3.</td>
<td>Child benefit</td>
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<td>23.0</td>
<td>20.2</td>
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<td>1.4.</td>
<td>Benefit for a child of a serviceman in mandatory initial military service</td>
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<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>0.003</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.5.</td>
<td>Guardianship (curatorship) benefit</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>16.3</td>
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<td>1.6.</td>
<td>Lump-sum settlement benefit</td>
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<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7.</td>
<td>Targeted guardianship (curatorship) benefit supplement</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Benefits and other types of assistance for poor residents, including:</td>
<td>255.7</td>
<td>219.4</td>
<td>161.0</td>
<td>123.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.1.</td>
<td>Social benefit</td>
<td>173.6</td>
<td>147.2</td>
<td>103.8</td>
<td>77.3</td>
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<td>2.2.</td>
<td>Compensations for heating of a dwelling, hot and drinking water expenses</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
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<td>2.3.</td>
<td>Payment of the credit, taken for renovation (modernisation) of a multi-apartment building, and interest thereof for persons entitled to compensation for heating of the dwelling expenses</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.7</td>
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<td>2.4.</td>
<td>Free meals for pupils</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>17.0</td>
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<td>2.5.</td>
<td>Assistance for the acquisition of school supplies</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
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<td>2.6.</td>
<td>Cash social assistance from municipal budgets granted on the decision of a municipality</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Assistance for independence defenders aggrieved during the events of 11–13 January 1991 and the following aggression of the USSR, and their families</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Funeral allowance</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total (1+2+3+4)</strong></td>
<td><strong>329.6</strong></td>
<td><strong>291.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>228.1</strong></td>
<td><strong>187.1</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour*  
Table 5.1.5-2

In the first quarter of 2016, expenses for the provision of cash social assistance for persons raising children, poor residents and in the case of death of a resident amounted to EUR 49.32 million and, as compared with 2015, decreased by 12.5 per cent (from EUR 56.39 million to EUR 49.32 million).

Figure 1 presents data on the distribution of expenses for cash social assistance, except for expenses for administration of cash social assistance, in the first quarter of 2016.
In the first quarter of 2016, the major share of expenses for cash social assistance (59.7 per cent) consisted of expenses for social benefit, compensations for heating of the dwelling and hot and drinking water expenses, payment of the credit, taken for renovation (modernisation) of a multi-apartment building, and interest thereof for persons entitled to a compensation for heating of the dwelling expenses, which are granted having evaluated family income and property. Benefits to persons raising and/or fostering children accounted for 24.74 per cent of all funds allocated for cash social assistance.

In the first quarter of 2016, expenses for the provision of benefit and other cash social assistance for poor residents decreased by 15 per cent, as compared with the first quarter of 2015 (from EUR 34.63 million to EUR 29.44 million).

On average, during the first quarter of 2016, 103 990 persons (3.6 per cent of the whole population of Lithuania) received social benefit on a monthly basis. As compared with the first quarter of 2015, the average number of persons receiving social benefit on a monthly basis decreased by 16.9 per cent (from 125 120 to 103 990 persons), and expenses for payment of social benefit decreased by 19.6 per cent (from EUR 22.18 million to EUR 17.83 million).

During the first quarter of 2016, 12.6 per cent less funds were spent on compensations for heating of the dwelling and hot and drinking water expenses than in the same period in 2015; expenses decreased from EUR 11.5 million to EUR 10.5 million.

Within one heating season month of the first quarter of 2016, on average 129 500 persons (4.5 per cent of the whole population of Lithuania) received compensations for heating of the dwelling expenses. During one heating season month of the first quarter of 2016, as compared with the same period in 2015, the average number of persons who received compensations for heating of the dwelling expenses per month decreased by 10.1 per cent (from 144 040 to 129 500 persons).

Within one heating season month of the first quarter of 2016, on average 38 800 persons received compensations for drinking water expenses. As compared with the first quarter of 2015, the number of persons receiving compensations for drinking water expenses decreased by 6.7 per cent (from 41 600 to 38 800 persons). Within one month of the first quarter of 2016, on average 61 600 persons received compensations for hot water expenses. As compared with the first quarter of 2015, the number of persons receiving compensations for hot water expenses decreased by 18.5 per cent (from 75 600 to 61 600 persons).
In the first quarter of 2016, expenses for funeral allowances paid in the case of death amounted to EUR 3.3 million (7.3 per cent of all expenses for cash social assistance) (in the first quarter of 2015 – EUR 3.4 million). Funeral allowances were paid to 10,900 persons (in the first quarter of 2015 – 11,200 persons).

In the first quarter of 2016, the amount of EUR 0.03 million (0.07 per cent of all expenses for cash social assistance) was spent on assistance to freedom fighters who suffered from the aggression of the USSR on 11–13 January 1991 and subsequent events, and their family members. Assistance was paid to averagely 442 persons per month.

During the first quarter of 2016, as compared with the same period in 2015, the number of pupils who received free meals per month decreased by 14.8 per cent (from 82,200 to 70,000 pupils). With regard to the decreased number of pupils who received free meals and the number of days of provision of meals to pupils, and ignoring the fact that the amount of funds allocated for the purchase of food products per pupil per day grew (in QI 2016, EUR 1.42 were allocated for lunch; in QI 2015 – EUR 1.39), expenses for free meals of pupils (food products) decreased by 24.9 per cent (from EUR 5.79 million to EUR 4.35 million) in the first quarter of 2016, as compared with the same period in 2015.

The most important task remains the protection of residents, in particular socially vulnerable groups, from the negative factors of economic changes in order to reduce the risk of poverty and social exclusion.

### 5.2. SOCIAL SERVICES

One of the activity directions for 2012–2016, laid down in the Programme of the Sixteenth Government, is to improve accessibility and quality of social services, as well as the working conditions of social workers. In 2012–2016, social services were developed seeking to ensure timely and adequate provision of social services for a person with social problems, who has terminated active professional activity, has disabilities, cannot take care of his/her personal or family life, by providing this person with the opportunity to avoid social exclusion, feel a full-fledged citizen of the state, meet his/her personal and family needs, participate in social life, and return to the labour market. Aiming at quality of social services, the conditions for the development of competences and skills of workers who provide them as well as improvement of working conditions have been created.

#### 5.2.1. REFORM OF INSTITUTIONAL SOCIAL CARE

Having ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Its Optional Protocol in 2010, Lithuania acknowledged equal rights of all people with disabilities to live in a community and choose and also undertook efficient measures to create the conditions for people with disabilities to fulfil their rights fully and solve the issues of the institutional care system for children deprived of parental care as well as people with disabilities.

Therefore, in late 2012, the Guidelines for Deinstitutionalisation of the Social Care Homes of Disabled Children, Children Deprived of Parental Care and Adult Disabled Persons were approved. They envisaged the directions of transition from institutional social care to community-based services to children and families until

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2030. The purpose of deinstitutionalisation is to form a consistent and coordinated system of assistance and services which will create opportunities for each disabled child, child deprived of parental care and a disabled person to receive individual services and necessary assistance according to their needs, become involved in the community life and participate in it without experiencing social exclusion; also to create conditions for every disabled child, child deprived of parental care to grow up in a safe and development-conducive environment in a biological (or alternatively – guardians’) family, in special cases by creating conditions as close to family conditions as possible.

In cooperation with non-governmental organisations representing the disabled, associations of managers of care institutions and other organisations, the Action Plan on Transition from Institutional Care to Family and Community-Based Services for People with Disabilities and Children Deprived of Parental Care 2014–2020\(^{124}\) (hereinafter referred to as the “Reform Action Plan”) was drafted and approved in 2014. The Plan stipulates consistent actions of the reform of institutional care.

An Interinstitutional Monitoring Group\(^{125}\) has been set up for the monitoring of the implementation of the Reform Action Plan, with the principal task being continuous implementation of the reform process.

While carrying out the measures envisaged in the Reform Action Plan, pilot projects are planned to be implemented in individual regions. 27 institutional social care establishments and homes and institutions for infants with developmental disorders (of which 16 state institutions, 10 municipal institutions and institutions for infants with developmental disorders, 1 home for infants with developmental disorders of the Ministry of Health and the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences) were selected for reorganisation\(^{126}\).

The Reform Action Plan and its implementing measures have been widely presented to municipalities, social care institutions, non-governmental organisations; the best solutions concerning the transition from institutional care to community-based services have been discussed with the representatives from the European Commission and experts from Greece, Bulgaria and other European countries. Seeking a closer interinstitutional cooperation, a national agreement between the Ministers of Health, the Interior, and Education and Science, the President of the Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania and the President of the Council of Non-Governmental Organisations was signed on 23 March 2015. In order to improve the legal situation of children deprived of parental care, a cooperation agreement with the Judicial Council was signed on 14 May 2015. Meetings with the heads and employees of institutions carrying out the reforms were organised; the plans of transition from institutional care to family and community-based services were presented; meetings and discussions with representatives from municipal administrations and from higher schools that train social workers according to social work study programmes were held with respect to the provision of knowledge and skills seeking sustainable transition from institutional care to family and community-based services for people with disabilities and children deprived of parental care.

In 2015, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania, the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour together with its partners the Department for the Affairs of the Disabled under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and the European Social Fund Agency signed the agreement “Creation of conditions for sustainable transition from institutional care to the family and community-based services system in Lithuania”. After this agreement was signed, the specific activities of the Reform Action Plan, financed from the European Union funds, were launched.

\(^{124}\) Order No. A1-83 of the Minister of Social Security and Labour of 14 February 2014 “On the Approval of the Action Plan on Transition from Institutional Care to Family and Community-Based Services for People with Disabilities and Children Deprived of Parental Care 2014–2020”.


Seeking a better accessibility of services in all regions of the country, the Action Plan for the Modernisation and Development of Infrastructure of Social Services Institutions\(^{127}\) has been envisaged for the development of infrastructure of social services for social groups that are not covered by the Reform Action Plan (elderly persons, people at social risk, persons with disabilities and their families). The plan has been drafted while implementing the interinstitutional action plan of the horizontal priority “Regional Development” of the National Progress Programme 2014–2020. It aims at modernising successfully functioning institutions or establishing new innovative institutions. This action plan is to be implemented in 2016–2020, using the EU funds and national funds. The total amount allocated is EUR 20.2 million.

### 5.2.2. INTEGRAL ASSISTANCE DEVELOPMENT

With society ageing and the human lifespan becoming longer, the need for community-based social services, which enable persons to receive assistance at home and help family members who take care of these persons to remain in the labour market, has been growing. Thus, the Integral Assistance Development Programme\(^{128}\) was launched in 2013. It is financed from the European Social Fund and aims at quality integral assistance (nursing and social services) for the disabled and elderly people, as well as consultations to their family members who take care of these persons. In 2013–2015, 21 pilot projects were implemented under this programme in 21 municipalities: mobile teams were set up for provision of nursing and social services at home and also offering consultations to family members, etc. During the programme implementation period (2013–2015), integral assistance was provided to over 1,500 disabled and elderly people; consultations were provided to about 1,400 family members.

Beneficiaries and municipalities have evaluated integral assistance very favourably; therefore, the new Action Plan for Integral Assistance Development 2016–2019\(^{129}\) was approved. Pursuant to this plan, integral assistance will be provided in all country’s municipalities (except for Neringa) as of 2016. A total of EUR 16.4 million are planned to be allocated for the implementation of the new action plan from the European Union funds.

### 5.2.3. WORK WITH SOCIAL RISK FAMILIES

Seeking to ensure that children grow up in a family and are cared for by a local community instead of being placed under institutional care, and socially excluded families are enabled to take care of their children and family life, social work with social risk families has been strengthened. The funds for special target grants from the state budget, allocated to municipal budgets, have been constantly increased with a view to ensuring social assistance of social risk families. The funds allocated in 2016 increased by 60 per cent, as compared with 2012. These funds are used to finance wages and social insurance contributions of social workers who work with social risk families. In the period from 2012 to 2016 funds were allocated to establish additional 135.5 positions of a social worker. Additional funds for the special target grants from the state budget for supervision of these workers and partly for their professional development have been envisaged as of 1 March 2016.


In 2013–2015, trainings for social workers or persons equated to workers in the field of social services, working with social risk families, of all municipalities were organised according to the Methodology of Social Work with Social Risk Families developed in 2012 by expert of social work Lies Gualtherie van Weezel together with Lithuanian specialists from various fields. About 240 persons participated in training.

**5.2.4. PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE AND WAGES OF WORKERS IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

Seeking to develop professional competences of workers in the field of social services, the Programme for the Development of Competences of Employees of Social Services Institutions was approved in 2012. Apart from the typical forms of training, programme implementers tried new methods of competence development (training was held for the teams of an institution: from a social worker assistant to the executive, including specialists of other fields) and conducted supervisions. Around 4 500 employees of social services institutions participated in training. It was financed with the funds of the European Social Fund for the period 2013–2015 (EUR 1.5 million).

The overview of experience of training in 2012–2013 leads to the conclusion that employees lack skills of teamwork, constructive interinstitutional and interdepartmental cooperation with regard to provision of assistance to families. Therefore, training on cooperation while providing assistance to families was organised in 2015. It was targeted at groups comprised of specialists from various fields in several different municipalities, who directly or indirectly organise or provide assistance to families (social workers, specialists from child rights protection offices and social assistance divisions, representatives from non-governmental organisations, etc.). Training was held in three Lithuanian regions: Marijampolė, Telšiai and Anykščiai. Around 60 specialists participated in training.

Wages of workers in the field of social services, who work in budgetary institutions and elderships, have been increased by averagely 15 per cent (i.e. averagely EUR 70 per month) as of 1 January 2016. Around EUR 6.5 million in total were allocated from the state budget for this increase of wages.

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5.2.5. EMOTIONAL TELEPHONE SUPPORT

The Ministry of Social Security and Labour has been paying for the calls of residents to the services providing emotional (psychological) assistance and partly covering administration expenses of these services. Emotional telephone support has been provided by 10 services which function through 5 helplines: youth helpline, child helpline, helpline “Hope”, helpline for women and helpline “Linija doverija”. All services work from the Call Centre managed under the right of trust by the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service. EUR 1.26 million were allocated for emotional telephone support services in 2012–2016.

Accessibility and financing of emotional assistance services has been increased each year. The funds allocated for administration expenses of services and payment for calls in 2016 almost doubled (88.6 per cent), as compared with 2012. The services answer about 250 000 calls a year.
5.2.6. SOCIAL ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

While implementing the programmes of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour has been providing financial support to the projects of non-governmental organisations, aimed at provision of social assistance to victims of trafficking in human beings and their integration in society and the labour market (hereinafter referred to as the “projects”), since 2002. In 2012–2015, the projects selected by tender were financed from the state budget – EUR 43 300 were allocated each year to five non-governmental organisation projects. Project implementers provided integrated social assistance to about 550 victims or potential victims of trafficking in human beings.

In 2016, a new tender for project selection was called and five non-governmental organisation (NGO) projects were selected. The corresponding financing of these projects has almost doubled in 2016, as compared with the previous years, – EUR 80 000 have been allocated. Organisations that implement projects in 2016 will have the possibility to extend project funding agreements for 2017–2018 without a tender. Thus, uninterrupted financing will be guaranteed during this period.

In order to strengthen coordination of joint actions between municipalities and NGOs concerning provision of assistance to victims of trafficking in human beings, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour together with Lithuanian Caritas have developed a Representative Model of Coordination of Assistance to Victims or Potential Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings in Municipalities. In 2015, this model was presented to municipalities as a recommendation which proposes setting up assistance coordination groups. Training was also organised in 6 municipalities (of large cities), which were attended by over 100 specialists from various fields.

In 2015, in cooperation with other institutions and NGOs, the Guidelines for Identification of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings, Pre-Trial Investigation and Interinstitutional Cooperation were drafted and approved by a joint order of the Prosecutor General of the Republic of Lithuania, the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Social Security and Labour. These guidelines will help coordinate the efforts of various institutions, agencies and organisations with regard to timely identification of a victim of trafficking in human beings, provision or organisation of quality integrated assistance, guaranteeing child rights, assisting in disclosing perpetrators of trafficking in human beings.

5.2.7. LICENSING OF SOCIAL CARE INSTITUTIONS

Licensing of social care institutions commenced in 2013. As of 1 January 2015, only those social care providers who have licences for the provision of social care (hereinafter referred to as “licences”) are entitled to render such services. Licensing of social care institutions falls within the responsibility of the Department of Supervision of Social Services under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (hereinafter referred to as the “Department”). According to the data of the Department of 1 May 2016, 419 social care institutions had 654 valid licences. The majority of licences (42 per cent) entitle their holders to provide institutional social (long-term, short-term) care for adults with disabilities and elderly people.
Licences for the provision of social care as of 1 May 2016, by type

- Institutional social care for children with disabilities, adults with disabilities, elderly people; 114; 17%
- Institutional social care for children deprived of parental care in a social care institution, except for a social family; 117; 18%
- Institutional social care for adults with disabilities, elderly people; 277; 42%
- Institutional social care for children deprived of parental care in a social family; 56; 9%
- Social care for children with disabilities, adults with disabilities, elderly people at home; 74; 11%
- Institutional social care for children at social risk deprived of parental care in a social care institution, except for a social family; 16; 3%

Data of the Department of Supervision of Social Services

Assessment of conformity to licensing conditions has been performed by the Department since 2015. The Department continues assessing conformity to social care norms at institutions that provide social care.

### 5.2.8. LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

On 10 July 2014, the amendments to the Republic of Lithuania Law on Social Services\(^\text{131}\) (hereinafter referred to as the “Law”) were adopted. These amendments redefine social care and social services institutions, creating the conditions to provide social services to legal entities of all legal forms; specifies the definition of ‘social work’ according to international practice, providing that social work shall be done only by social workers; sets requirements for the heads of social care institutions and social workers; in order to reduce administrative burden for social care institutions and social families, simplifies licensing conditions and provides for fewer licence types; improves the procedure of payment for social services by persons, providing for 100 per cent use of target compensations for nursing or care (assistance) expenses, received in accordance with the Republic of Lithuania Law on State Social Assistance Benefits, for payment for long-term (short-term) social care; stipulates inclusion of social benefits in the personal income of a person at social risk who receives social services in a lodging-house or any other type of temporary accommodation; etc. After the Law was adopted, resolutions of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, orders of the Minister of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania and orders of the Director of the Department of Supervision of Social Services, which regulate the abovementioned amendments, have been specified accordingly.

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\(^{131}\) Law No. XII-1014 Amending Articles 2, 11, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 26, 29, 30, 31, 32 and 38 of the Republic of Lithuania Law on Social Services No. X-493 and Supplementing the Law with Articles 141 and 241.
5.3. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Equal opportunities are one of the most important values and principles of modern society. The Constitution and many laws of the Republic of Lithuania governing various social relations stipulate the constitutional principle of equality before the law. Every member of society must have equal opportunities to seek education, career, personal development, act in all areas of political and social life, as well as freely move in the European Union.

5.3.1. NON-DISCRIMINATION

In 2012–2014, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour coordinated the Interinstitutional Action Plan for Promotion of Non-discrimination 2012–2014, approved by Resolution No. 1281 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of 2 November 2011. The purpose of this Plan was to ensure the implementation of educational measures of non-discrimination promotion and equal opportunities, raise legal consciousness, increase mutual understanding and tolerance on the grounds of gender, race, nationality, language, origin, social status, faith, convictions or views, age, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity and religion, raise public awareness of manifestations of discrimination in Lithuania and its negative impact on opportunities for certain groups of society to actively participate in social activities under equal conditions. Having regard to the versatile nature of non-discrimination promotion policy, other institutions (the Ministry of the Interior, the National Court Administration Training Centre, the Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson, and the Prosecutor General's Office) also participate in the implementation of the Plan. A total of 29 educational measures were implemented. In 2012–2014, a tender for the selection of activity projects of non-governmental organisations working in the area of equal opportunities and non-discrimination promotion was organised. At the end of 2014, the Survey of the Change of Public Attitudes and Discrimination Causes as well as the analysis of results were performed.

Seeking to ensure continuity of the measures of promotion of equal opportunities and non-discrimination, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania approved the Interinstitutional Action Plan for Promotion of Non-discrimination by Resolution No. 46 of 28 January 2015. The purpose of the Plan is to reduce discrimination on the grounds established in the Republic of Lithuania Law on Equal Opportunities, raising public awareness and developing respect for a human. This Plan is coordinated by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. The Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson, the Ministry of Justice, the Department of National Minorities under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, the Department of Youth Affairs under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the Lithuanian Labour Exchange under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the Department of Supervision of Social Services are involved in the implementation of measures under this Plan.

5.3.2. SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF THE DISABLED

Employment of disabled persons is one of the key indicators of social integration of the disabled. The right precondition for the solution of problems related to employment of the disabled is continuous, active and integral activities by all concerned state and municipal institutions and agencies as well as non-governmental organisations.

Disabled persons constitute about 9 per cent of Lithuania's population. Due to physical or mental disorders a disabled person cannot take care of his/her personal and social life and enjoy his/her rights. Integration of the disabled in the labour market is a significant problem, because work is a necessity for a disabled person. Nevertheless, integration of these persons in the labour market is complicated.
5.3.2.1. KEY DISABILITY INDICATORS

At the beginning of 2016, work incapacity pensions were paid to 249 000 residents of Lithuania; compared to 2015, this number slightly decreased. About 48 per cent of men and about 52 per cent of women receive disability pensions. The number of disabled children, compared to 2015, fell and reached 14 800. The dynamics of the number of disabled persons by the level of capacity for work (disability group) and the level of disability in 2012–2015 is presented in Figure 5.3.2.1-1.

Dynamics of the number of disabled persons by the level of capacity for work (disability group) and the level of disability from 2012 to 2015

Data of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour

In 2012–2015, the number of the disabled was falling in all counties, except for Telšiai County (in 2015, the share of the disabled increased by 2 per cent). Likewise, the number of disabled persons who have not declared their place of residence in any county increased. Detailed information on the number of the disabled in counties and their decrease in 2012–2015 is provided in Table 5.3.2.1-1.

Number of the disabled in 2012–2015 by county

Data of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour
In 2009, the number of disabled persons who were recognised as disabled for the first time started decreasing, i.e. in 2008, the number of these persons was 27 200; in 2009 – 22 800; in 2012 – 14 300; in 2013 and 2014 – 13 800 each year; in 2015 – 12 900.

Most often persons of working age are recognised as disabled due to malignant tumours, diseases of blood circulation system, connective tissue and skeletomuscular system diseases. The most severe disability is most frequently caused by tumours, diseases of the blood circulation system and mental and behavioural disorders.

Mental and behavioural disorders, congenital developmental diseases, deformations, anomalies in chromosomes and diseases of the nervous system are the main causes of disability of children.

During the period of 2012–2016, the number of persons receiving compensations for attendance (assistance) stabilised (in 2012 – 58 300; in 2013 – 56 800; in 2014 – 56 000; in 2015 – 56 400; in the first quarter of 2016 – 51 800). The number of the disabled who were granted compensations for nursing expenses increased during the same period; however, it should be noted that this number has currently stabilised: in 2012, compensations were received by 39 600 persons; in 2013 – 39 200; in 2014 – 39 900; in 2015 – 41 500; in the first quarter of 2016 – 39 000. In 2015 and the first quarter of 2016, 1 000 children received compensations for nursing expenses; 8 100 children received compensations for attendance (assistance) expenses.

5.3.2.2. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Each state which has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities must regularly submit to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities reports on measures undertaken in order to fulfill obligations under this Convention and on the progress achieved.

On 9 July 2012, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania approved of the initial Report on the Implementation of the Convention and subsequently, in September 2012, it was submitted to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

On 6–7 April 2016, a deliberation of the first Lithuania’s Report on the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was held in the 15th session of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Geneva (Switzerland).

Having analysed our country’s report and additional information, as well as having evaluated the responses of Lithuanian representatives during the defence, members of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities indicated potential drawbacks of the implementation of the Convention and provided recommendations to Lithuania on 20 April 2016.

These recommendations will help Lithuania to further improve the legal and institutional framework and political measures, while ensuring a better legal protection and social integration of persons with disabilities as well as the implementation of one of the key international human rights protection documents – the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

5.3.2.3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME FOR SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF THE DISABLED

Social integration of disabled people is organised by applying the principles of equal rights, equal opportunities, discrimination prevention, of guaranteeing self-sufficiency and freedom of choice, accessibility, compensation for disability, decentralisation and destigmatisation.
Social integration of the disabled and the quality of their life in society are ensured through measures such as adaptation of housing, payment of target compensations, support for disabled students, provision of technical aids, and promotion of tolerance. The projects of social rehabilitation services in the community and support of association activities, targeted at the integration of the disabled, are financed. When implementing the projects, accessibility of services to the disabled is developed, self-sufficiency of the disabled is enhanced, and the role of the non-governmental sector is strengthened.

The provisions of this Convention are implemented through the National Programme for Social Integration of the Disabled 2013–2019 and the plans of implementing measures.

### State budget funds for the implementation of programmes and measures

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<tr>
<td>Programme “Social Integration of the Disabled”</td>
<td>72 46.3</td>
<td>72 41.1</td>
<td>73 82.73</td>
<td>79 38.8</td>
<td>9 151</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Developing accessibility of services for the disabled, enhancing self-sufficiency and promoting their employment opportunities</td>
<td>56 64.3</td>
<td>5 686.5</td>
<td>5 537.2</td>
<td>5 815.4</td>
<td>5 631</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Improving information environment for the disabled</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>186.1</td>
<td>447.2</td>
<td>441.7</td>
<td>336</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Improving accessibility to public environment and adapting housing and surroundings thereof for persons with disabilities</td>
<td>945.5</td>
<td>835.4</td>
<td>860.5</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>1 168.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Providing financial support to the disabled studying in higher schools</td>
<td>496.3</td>
<td>514.4</td>
<td>536.6</td>
<td>507.8</td>
<td>523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Paying benefits amounting to 20 per cent of BSB to the disabled who raise children for payment of public utilities, electricity or telephone bills or purchase of fuel</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.7</td>
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Data of the Department of Disabled Affairs under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour

In 2012, when implementing the programme measure “Developing accessibility of services for the disabled, enhancing self-sufficiency and promoting their employment opportunities”, 408 projects selected by tender were financed; in 2013, the respective number of financed projects was 420; in 2014 – 413; in 2015 – 428; in 2016, 359 projects are financed. Each year, 60 municipalities finance projects of social rehabilitation services for the disabled in the community. These projects are implemented by organisations working in the field of social integration of the disabled. Moreover, the projects of supporting the activities of associations of the disabled and projects for the development of mobility and self-sufficient living skills of people with physical disabilities selected by tender and implemented by umbrella associations of the disabled were financed. In 2012, when implementing social integration projects financed by tender, over 45 000 persons with disabilities, including 17 per cent of persons with severe forms of disability, received various services (benefits); in 2013 – over 41 000, including 16 per cent of persons with severe forms of disability; in 2014–2015 – over 37 000, including 15 per cent of persons with severe forms of disability. The decrease in beneficiaries in 2014–2015 could be observed due to a stricter control of project results, regulated recommendations how to register projects of the recipients of services, thus the implementing organisations planned and implemented projects with a smaller number of disabled persons.
When implementing measure “Improving information environment for the disabled”, the services of the Lithuanian sign language interpreters were provided. In 2012, these services were provided to 1,842 deaf people; in 2013 – 954; in 2014 – 759; in 2015 – 808.

In 2013, 10 projects of financing the publishing and circulation of periodical publications for the disabled were selected by tender and financed; in 2014 and 2015 – 8 projects were financed each year. The projects of financing the publishing and circulation of periodical publications for the disabled were implemented by associations of the disabled and public institutions.

When implementing the measure “Adapting housing for persons with disabilities”, housing was adapted for the disabled, buildings that were relevant to the disabled were discussed in the information system “Infostatyba” and approved in construction accomplishment commissions.

When implementing measure “Improving accessibility to public environment and adapting housing and surroundings thereof for persons with disabilities”, projects of housing adaptation were implemented in accordance with the Description of the Procedure for Financing Housing Adaptation for People with Disabilities 2013–2015. As of 1 January 2016 the new version of the Description of the Procedure for Housing Adaptation for People with Disabilities 2016–2018 has become effective. When implementing the measure, works of adaptation of housing for the disabled are carried out, information on housing adaptation is collected, accumulated and disseminated, and associations of the disabled are involved in the control and supervision of the implementation of housing adaptation.

Housing adaptation expenses are covered from state and municipal budgets in parts: not more than 70 per cent (not more than 60 per cent as of 1 January 2017) from the state budget and at least 30 per cent (at least 40 per cent as of 1 January 2017) from the municipal budget for persons with very severe and severe movement and self-service dysfunctions; not more than 50 per cent from the state budget and at least 50 per cent from the municipal budget for persons with moderate movement and self-service dysfunctions. In 2012, 251 units of housing were adapted for the needs of the disabled; in 2013 – 224 units of housing; in 2014 – 236 units of housing; in 2015 – 310 units of housing; in 2016, 350 units of housing are planned to be adapted.

When implementing the measure “Providing financial aids to disabled students”, financial support was further provided to disabled students in 2016. Following the Description of the Procedure for the Provision of Financial Aids to the Disabled Studying in Higher Schools, the funds are allocated for meeting special needs of the disabled studying in higher schools (a monthly benefit in the amount of 0.5 basic social insurance pensions) and partially reimbursing for studies (a benefit in the amount of 3.2 basic social benefit once in a semester).

In 2012, financial support was provided to 1,033 disabled students of higher schools; in 2013, support was provided to 1,080 disabled students; in 2014 – 1,021; in 2015 – 1,006; in 2016, support has been provided to 930 disabled students.

### 5.3.2.4. PROVISION OF TECHNICAL AIDS FOR RESIDENTS

The measure “Acquisition and provision of technical aids for disabled people” of the Programme for Social Integration of the Disabled is implemented each year. The purpose of the measure is to develop the system of...
provision of country’s residents with technical aids (TA) and to meet the needs of provision with TA. Disabled people are provided with TA in four ways: provided free of charge from ten territorial units of the Centre of Technical Aid for Disabled People under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (hereinafter referred to as the “Centre”) (in Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Šiauliai, Panevėžys, Alytus, Utena, Telšiai, Marijampolė and Tauragė) or from municipal institutions; provided with TA bought by the Centre having paid additionally; acquire TA with their own funds and receive partial reimbursement for acquisition expenses; provided with TA through companies with which the Centre has concluded agreements under which companies receive compensations.

**Indicators of provision of the disabled with TA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Overall TA provision level (per cent)</th>
<th>TA for adults with paid compensations (per cent)</th>
<th>TA for children with paid compensations (per cent)</th>
<th>Total number of TA recipients</th>
<th>Funds allocated, EUR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>94.1</td>
<td>90.7</td>
<td>97.7</td>
<td>34 473</td>
<td>2 038.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>75.4</td>
<td>77.4</td>
<td>74.3</td>
<td>32 716</td>
<td>2 038.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>75.1</td>
<td>73.4</td>
<td>84.3</td>
<td>34 123</td>
<td>2 294.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>83.4</td>
<td>86.2</td>
<td>74.2</td>
<td>34 966</td>
<td>2 141.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016*</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>36 500</td>
<td>2 220.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* (planned)

**Data of the Centre of Technical Aid for Disabled People under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour**

The Centre and its units constantly provide information to society, collect feedback on TA, and consult on various ways of TA provision. The Centre regularly updates information about TA provision on its website and carries out publicity works (disseminates booklets, publishes articles in regional press). While improving accessibility to information about the provision of people with TA, meetings with medical specialists from personal health care institutions and municipality employees have been organised.

### 5.3.2.5. VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAMME

Seeking to restore or increase the capacity for work level of the disabled and their professional competence and ability to participate in the labour market, the Vocational Rehabilitation Programme is implemented and vocational rehabilitation services are provided.

Seeking that disabled persons who complete the Vocational Rehabilitation Programme and become employed retain their employment as long as possible and in order to grant more responsibility for persons who have completed the Vocational Rehabilitation Programme to institutions providing vocational rehabilitation services, the Vocational Rehabilitation Programme (covering the following services: evaluation of professional competences, vocational guidance and counselling, restoration of professional competences or development of new competences, assistance when finding employment) was supplemented with a new service in 2014 – support at the workplace. It is the provision of assistance to the employed disabled person, by solving the problems of the lack of person’s social skills, adaptation at the workplace, and motivation for work, intermediation between the person and the employer as well as counselling by solving problems related to employment relations or...
conditions, and other assistance seeking more efficient and long-term integration in the labour market. The objective is continuous employment of the person for at least 6 months – in this case an institution providing vocational rehabilitation services will be paid for the service of support at the workplace.

Moreover, seeking to thoroughly regulate the requirements for the content of the cycle of vocational rehabilitation services, provision of services, specialists who provide these services, and having regard to the nature of disability of persons participating in the Programme, on 6 January 2016, the Minister of Social Security and Labour approved Order No. A1-3, whereby the following were approved:

- The methodology of provision of vocational rehabilitation services to persons who have visual, hearing, intellectual, mental and physical disabilities;
- General requirements for specialists who provide vocational rehabilitation services to the disabled.

Persons participating in the Vocational Rehabilitation Programme are granted and paid the vocational rehabilitation benefit, irrespective of other income.

### Statistics of the Vocational Rehabilitation Programme 2012–2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Funds used for vocational</td>
<td>EUR 2,922.7 thous.</td>
<td>EUR 2,418.9 thous.</td>
<td>EUR 1,419.1 thous.</td>
<td>EUR 1,633.4 thous.</td>
<td>EUR 2,433.0 thous.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rehabilitation services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funds used for vocational</td>
<td>EUR 680.6 thous.</td>
<td>EUR 606.7 thous.</td>
<td>EUR 438.6 thous.</td>
<td>EUR 884.2 thous.</td>
<td>EUR 938 thous.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rehabilitation benefits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of persons who</td>
<td>9020</td>
<td>896</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>711</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participated in the Programme</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of persons who</td>
<td>597</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>completed the Programme</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The employment rate within 6</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>65.7</td>
<td>57.09</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>months after completion of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Programme (percentage)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data of the Lithuanian Labour Exchange under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour

On 1 March 2015, the Lithuanian Labour Exchange launched a new three-year project “Assistance for the Disabled”, co-funded from the European Union Structural Funds and the state budget of the Republic of Lithuania. The project aims at increasing the employment rate of the disabled through the provision of vocational rehabilitation services. The services are planned to be provided to 2,000 disabled persons. The project value amounts to EUR 7,588,166.13.

### 5.3.3. ACTION PLAN FOR THE RETURN OF POLITICAL PRISONERS AND EXILES AS WELL AS THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS TO LITHUANIA

Seeking to further provide state support to political prisoners and exiles as well as their family members returning to Lithuania (hereinafter referred to as the “returning persons”), the Action Plan for the Return of

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Political Prisoners and Exiles as well as Their Family Members to Lithuania 2015–2017 (hereinafter referred to as the “Action Plan”) has been implemented. The Action Plan provides for the social integration measures of the continuous Programme for the Return of Political Prisoners and Exiles as well as Their Family Members to Lithuania 2008–2012.

The Action Plan aims to ensure that all returning persons are provided with possibilities to acquire housing in Lithuania and integrate in the country’s life. This is achieved through granting state support for relocation and social integration to the returning persons. While implementing social integration measures, relocation expenses are reimbursed, lump sum settlement benefits are granted, the Lithuanian language courses are financed, transportation of returning lonely persons of dignified old age to Lithuania is organised, social assistance is provided to the socially supported citizens of the Republic of Lithuania permanently residing in other countries and willing to return to Lithuania, financial support is granted for the summer holiday camps of school-aged children of the returning persons who attend Vilnius High School Lithuanians’ House by improving the domestic conditions of this high school and organising cultural events, financial support is granted for organisations of exiles in Lithuania and Lithuanian communities functioning in the former USSR territory and maintenance expenses of the Temporary Accommodation Facility for Returning Exiles.

### Indicators of the provision of state support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Funds used for social integration, EUR</th>
<th>Number of persons who received support</th>
<th>Funds used for flats, EUR</th>
<th>Number of families who received flats</th>
<th>Total funds used, EUR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>168 558</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>290 860</td>
<td>7 (Vilnius and Klaipėda municipalities)</td>
<td>459 046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>121 640</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>121 640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>130 039</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>376 505</td>
<td>4 (Vilnius and Klaipėda municipalities)</td>
<td>506 544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>131 009</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>523 440</td>
<td>11 (Vilnius and Klaipėda municipalities)</td>
<td>654 449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016*</td>
<td>131 000</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>301 000</td>
<td>5 (Vilnius and Panevėžys municipalities)</td>
<td>432 000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* (planned)

Data of the Department of Supervision of Social Services under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour

Table 5.3.3-1

Seeking to ensure state support for the acquisition of flats by families of exiles returning to permanently reside in Lithuania, a decision to abolish the Temporary Accommodation Facility for Returning Exiles (hereinafter referred to as the “Facility”) as of 1 January 2015 was adopted. Pursuant to the decision, the flats belonging to this Facility will be taken over by Vilnius City Municipality which will conclude residential premises lease agreements with the returning persons residing at the Facility and waiting in the queue for flats in Vilnius City Municipality without the necessity to queue up. This decision has resulted in a considerable decrease of queues for the acquisition of flats by returning persons in Vilnius City Municipality. In 2015, 63 families of exiles returning to permanently reside in Lithuania were provided with flats on the loan-for-use basis (in Vilnius, Klaipėda, Kaunas,
Širvintos and Kėdainiai municipalities). In 2016, 219 returning persons have been waiting for flats in Vilnius City Municipality, Klaipėda City Municipality, Palanga City Municipality, Panevėžys City Municipality, Lazdijai District Municipality and Varėna District Municipality.

5.3.4. SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF FOREIGNERS GRANTED ASYLUM

More than 450 foreigners granted asylum, the majority of whom are women and children, have been currently residing in Lithuania. Integration of foreigners who have been granted asylum into the local community remains one of the most sensitive elements of the Lithuanian asylum system. Refugees’ psychological problems and insufficient knowledge of the community into which persons are integrated still constitute major obstacles to successful integration.

Lithuania creates the following conditions to foreigners who have been granted asylum: provides temporary accommodation, organises education and employment, ensures social and health protection, raises public awareness of foreigners who have been granted asylum in order to prevent their isolation and social xenophobia and to promote tolerance.

Support for the integration of foreigners who have been granted asylum is started to be provided at the Refugees Reception Centre (for up to 3 months). They are intensively taught the Lithuanian language and Lithuanian culture in order to be properly prepared to integrate in Lithuania’s society and the labour market. Foreigners residing at the Refugees Reception Centre are paid monthly allowances for food and minor expenses. After the period of support for integration at the Refugees Reception Centre is over, support for integration is continued in the territory of a municipality (for up to 12 months). Currently there are two non-governmental organisations which have won a public procurement tender for the provision of support for integration to foreigners who have been granted asylum in the territory of a municipality: Caritas of Vilnius Archdiocese and the Lithuanian Red Cross Organisation. Non-governmental organisations provide mentoring services. Mentors help foreigners acquire basic necessities, rent a flat; they pay cash allowances, organise kindergarten services and assist with any other issues. During the period of state support for the integration in the territory of a municipality, a foreigner who has been granted asylum is paid a monthly cash allowance for basic necessities (housing rental, public utilities, food, transportation, etc.).

In 2012, support for integration was provided to 166 foreigners who had been granted asylum (mainly from Russia, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Belarus, Vietnam, Georgia, Eritrea). Seeking to ensure the principle of solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility among the EU Member States and having regard to the proposal of the European Commission and the Republic of Malta to join the European Refugee Fund (ERF) co-funded project, organised by Malta, concerning the relocation of third-country nationals in need of international protection from Malta to other EU Member States, in December 2012 Lithuania relocated four asylum seekers from the Republic of Malta to the Republic of Lithuania and granted asylum to them.

In 2013, support for integration was provided to 94 foreigners who had been granted asylum: mainly from Russia, Afghanistan, Belarus, Kirgizistan, Iraq, Eritrea and Ukraine.

In 2014, support for integration was provided to 175 foreigners who had been granted asylum: mainly from Russia, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Syria and Vietnam.

In 2015, support for integration was provided to 161 foreigners who had been granted asylum: mainly from Russia, Afghanistan, Belarus, Syria, Vietnam and Iraq.

In the first quarter of 2016, support for integration was provided to 31 foreigners who had been granted asylum: mainly from Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Azerbaijan.
Each year, seminars are organised for employees of state, municipal and non-governmental organisations, other institutions and agencies working in the field of social integration of foreigners granted asylum; various cultural events to encourage the knowledge of other cultures are also held.

Furthermore, in 2015, seeking to help its fellow countrymen residing in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, the city of Sevastopol, the regions of Donetsk and Luhansk in Ukraine, Lithuania relocated 83 persons to the Republic of Lithuania; in the first quarter of 2016, 14 citizens of the Republic of Lithuania, persons of Lithuanian origin and their family members residing in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, the city of Sevastopol, and the regions of Donetsk and Luhansk in Ukraine were relocated to the Republic of Lithuania. These persons are provided with state support for integration.

5.3.5. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MIGRATION POLICY

In 2012–2016, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour implemented measures aimed at improving re-emigration conditions and helping third-country nationals who come to live in Lithuania, integrate in our country and social life.

Since 2012, while implementing measures within the framework of the programme “Creation of Global Lithuania 2011–2019”, coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which invites Lithuanians living abroad to get involved in the state’s life, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour has been:

- publishing the electronic publication “Gyvenimas ir darbas Lietuvoje” (Life and Work in Lithuania) which provides systematised information on work, starting of business, taxes, social guarantees, health protection, subsidised housing, education and other issues relevant to the nationals who emigrated from Lithuania and are planning or at least considering the possibility to return to Lithuania. The publication is updated annually and is made available on the website of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour at www.socmin.lt.

- organising the provision of online psychological consultations to persons who emigrated from Lithuania. Starting with 2016, psychological consultations have been provided to emigrants who returned or plan to return to Lithuania. This measure aims at ensuring that persons who emigrated from Lithuania have a possibility to receive free anonymous online psychological assistance (mainly through free application Skype and by e-mail). The consultations rendered by professional psychologists to emigrants facing different social or psychological problems, arising due to aggravated adaptation having returned to or emigrated from Lithuania, help to avoid more serious mental disorders and enhance their emotional state. People seek psychologists’ assistance due to various reasons (relations with family members (both those who live together and those staying in Lithuania), nostalgia, difficult adaptation to the environment, alcohol, loneliness, etc.). Emigrants usually do not address the psychologists in their country of residence due to language barriers and rather expensive psychological consultation services. This measure not only helps to preserve contacts with emigrants, but also helps emigrants to receive psychological assistance which is hardly accessible when living abroad. In 2012, psychological services were provided to 100 persons; in 2013–2015, psychological assistance was provided to 150 different persons each year. LTL 30 000 (EUR 8 689 as of 2015) have been allocated each year for the implementation of this measure.

On 22 January 2014, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania assigned136 the formation of foreigners’ integration policy to the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. Previously, there had been no specific institution

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responsible for this issue (the Ministry of Social Security and Labour was responsible for the formation of integration policy of persons who have been granted asylum rather than third-country nationals).

The order of the Minister of Social Security and Labour of 31 December 2014\(^\text{137}\) approved the Action Plan for the Implementation of Foreigners’ Integration Policy 2015–2017. The measures of the plan are co-financed from the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and the state budget of the Republic of Lithuania. While implementing the Action Plan for the Implementation of Foreigners’ Integration Policy 2015–2017, the following actions have been envisaged:

- provision of support to Migrant Counselling and Integration Centres (in Vilnius, Kaunas and Klaipėda), in which migrants may attend the courses of the Lithuanian language and the basics of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, receive psychological, legal, representation, etc. services, as well as participate in training that facilitates their opportunities to find employment;
- preparation and dissemination of information on accessibility of integration services to foreigners in various institutions;
- improvement of foreigners’ education measures, as well as legislation governing recognition of professional qualifications of foreigners;
- carrying out of information campaigns about foreigners’ integration and organisation of various trainings and educational events;
- organisation of specialist training and promotion of interinstitutional cooperation;
- establishment of a consultative integration forum aimed at inviting representatives of foreigners’ organisations, migration experts, representatives of non-governmental organisations and public bodies working in the field of migration to discuss foreigners’ integration issues;
- monitoring of the implementation of foreigners’ integration processes and policy.

5.4. STATE SUPPORT FOR THE ACQUISITION OR RENTAL OF HOUSING

As of 1 January 2012, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania assigned the Ministry of Social Security and Labour to shape the policy of state support for the acquisition or rental of housing, organise, coordinate and control its implementation. Previously, state support for the acquisition of housing was organised and coordinated by the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Lithuania, whereas state support for the rental of housing – by the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania.

Before 31 December 2014, state support for the acquisition or rental of housing was provided in accordance with the Law on State Support for the Acquisition or Rental of Housing and Renovation (Modernisation) of Multi-Apartment Buildings. The Law established that support for the acquisition of housing shall be provided by paying housing loan insurance premiums or part thereof from the state budget funds or by subsidising part of the housing loan, whereas support for the rental of housing shall be provided from the target state budget appropriations by financing the development of municipal social housing stock so that individuals and families entitled to support for the rental of housing could rent municipal social housing.

Having analysed the functioning of the system of support for the acquisition or rental of housing and having evaluated obligations, established for the parties in the European Social Charter, to promote access to

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housing of an adequate standard, prevent and reduce homelessness, make the price of housing accessible to those without adequate resources, as well as obligations, established in Clause 146 of the Programme of the Sixteenth Government 2012–2016, to create more favourable conditions for families to acquire or rent housing by providing state supported housing loans and supporting the development of municipal social housing stock, it was ascertained that the effective legal regulation concerning support for the acquisition or rental of housing does not ensure adequately efficient exercise of a person’s right to housing.

With regard to the above, on 9 October 2014, the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania adopted the Law on Support for the Acquisition or Rental of Housing138 (hereinafter referred to as the “Law”), which became effective on 1 January 2015.

The Law provides for the following forms of support for individuals and families entitled to support for the acquisition or rental of housing:

- **support for the acquisition of housing is provided** through subsidising part of the housing loan (paying the amount of up to 20 per cent of the housing loan or loan balance), covering the housing loan interest. Provision of support for the acquisition of housing aims at ensuring that families and individuals meeting the requirements set out in legislation (whose income and property do not exceed the maximum amounts of income and property established in the Law) could acquire a dwelling in the market by themselves;

- **support for the rental of housing is provided** through renting municipal social housing to low-income families and individuals or payment of a compensation for part of housing rental or lease payment. Provision of state support for the rental of housing aims at ensuring that low-income individuals who have no dwelling and have no possibility to acquire own dwelling could rent housing.

A very small number of individuals and families used support for the acquisition of housing (through partially compensated housing loans) in the period 2012–2014; therefore, in order to create more favourable conditions for individuals and families entitled to support for the acquisition of housing to exercise this right, the following new provisions have been established in the Law and secondary legislation:

- individuals and families may choose the bank or credit institution selected to grant housing loans partially compensated by the state, because a bigger number of banks or credit institutions, selected for the period of three years, will be able to grant housing loans partially compensated by the state;

- banks or other credit institutions that grant housing loans partially compensated by the state shall be paid an administration fee, which cannot exceed EUR 30 per year for one granted housing loan partially compensated by the state, for the performance of obligations set out in the agreements regarding the granting of compensated housing loans (subsidy financing) concluded with the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. The aim is to encourage more banks or other credit institutions to participate in the selection procedure regarding the granting of these loans;

- individuals and families may use a subsidy for paying part of the housing loan partially compensated by the state for the down-payment of the housing loan partially compensated by the state (or part thereof).

According to the statistical data presented by Statistics Lithuania regarding the consumer price index which was 111.9 in December 2013, as compared with October 2008 (the amounts of evaluated income and property have been established), the amounts of evaluated individuals’ and family’s income and property established in the Law have been increased by 11.9 per cent, and the above amounts have been related to state supported income (SSI). This means that after the SSI amount changes, the annual amounts of evaluated individuals’ and family’s income and property, used to determine an individual’s or family’s right to acquire or rent housing, will change.

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138 Republic of Lithuania Law on Support for the Acquisition or Rental of Housing No. XII-1215.
In 2015, after the new provisions of the Law came into force, 220 individuals and families were granted housing loans partly compensated by the state (3.2 times more than in 2014). A person whose wage is 28 per cent bigger than the average wage (the average monthly net wage in QIV 2015 was EUR 584.8) may apply for support for the acquisition of housing.

Figure 5.4-1 presents data on state support for the acquisition of housing in 2012–2015.

Data of Statistics Lithuania and the Ministry of Social Security and Labour

In 2015, the highest number of individuals and families who were granted housing loans partially compensated by the state was recorded in Vilnius (18 per cent), Kaunas (15 per cent) and Klaipėda (13 per cent) municipalities.

According to the data of Statistics Lithuania, in 2012–2014, the number of individuals and families entitled to subsidised housing and included in the lists drawn up in municipalities increased each year. Seeking to ensure that support is used only by those individuals and families whose income and property is insufficient to be able to provide themselves with housing, the Law stipulates that in order to receive support for the rental of housing, individuals and families must declare their property and income each year in accordance with the procedure prescribed by the Republic of Lithuania Law on Declaration of Residents’ Property. Regular submission of declarations of individuals’ and families’ property and income for every year and annual revision of the right to support for the rental of housing preconditioned a more accurate identification of beneficiaries and drawing-up of the lists of individuals and families entitled to this type of support and waiting for it. In early 2012, 31 584 individual and families were included in the lists of those entitled to support for the rental of housing, drawn up in municipalities. In accordance with the provisions of the Law, after the declarations of property and income of persons queued up for the rental of subsidised housing were checked, the number of those entitled to support for the rental of housing and queued up for this support decreased to 23 202 individuals and families in late 2015, and reached 17 173 individuals and families by 1 May 2016.
In 2016, the highest number of individuals and families willing to rent municipal social housing has been recorded in Kaunas (18.6 per cent), Vilnius (13.5 per cent) and Klaipėda (8 per cent) municipalities.

In 2012, EUR 3.8 million from the state budget were invested in the development of municipal social housing stock; in 2013 – EUR 5.4 million (EUR 1.6 million more than in 2012); in 2014 – EUR 8.6 million (EUR 3.2 million more than in 2013). These funds were used to add 855 units of housing to the municipal social housing stock, and they have been rented out to individuals and families entitled to the rental of social housing in accordance with the effective legislation. About 65 per cent of target appropriations from the state budget for the development of municipal social housing stock were used by municipalities for the purchase of housing. The remaining funds were used for the building of new residential houses or reconstruction of available unused buildings and adaptation thereof to the purpose of social housing. However, regardless of increased financing of the development of municipal social housing stock, the number of individuals and families entitled to support for the rental of housing and included in the waiting lists drawn up in municipalities is still big.

It should be noted that significantly reduced financing of the development of municipal subsidised housing stock from the state budget funds due to the crisis (from EUR 20 million in 2008 to EUR 8.6 million in 2014) has not been restored to the pre-crisis level.

Thus, limited possibilities of the state budget of the Republic of Lithuania to finance the development of social housing stock promote the search for alternative financing sources. In 2015, the Action Plan for the Development of Municipal Subsidised Housing Stock 2015–2020 was approved. EUR 49.9 million have been envisaged for the implementation of the Action Plan from the European Regional Development Fund. These funds are planned to be used to acquire or equip 1 150 units of social housing. The implementation of Measure No. 08.1.2-CPVA-R-408 “Development of Social Housing Stock” of Priority 8 “Increasing Social Inclusion and Combatting Poverty” of the Operational Programme for European Union Structural Funds Investments 2014–2020 commenced in 2016.

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Seeking to reduce the number of families and individuals who are evicted from the dwellings rented from municipalities by force and create conditions for a more rational management and use of municipal housing and disposal thereof, the Law provides the following:

- a possibility for individuals and families who rent social housing to continue renting the same housing for market prices after they are deprived of the right to social housing due to higher income;
- a possibility for individuals and families who rent municipal housing under conditions other than social housing to acquire it for market prices, having evaluated the tenant’s investment that changed the value of the sold object. The funds received shall be used for the development of municipal social housing stock;
- a possibility to reduce the number of families and individuals who are evicted from the social housing by force and create conditions for a more rational management and use of municipal housing and disposal thereof. Individuals and families are deprived of the right to support for the rental of social housing only in those cases when their declared property or income exceeds the income or property amounts established in the Law by more than 20 per cent.

Having evaluated insufficient financial resources to develop social housing stock in municipalities, the Law lays down the new form of provision of support for the rental of housing, i.e. compensation for part of housing rental or lease payment, establishing that families and individuals entitled to social housing and renting housing from natural or legal persons under market conditions shall become entitled to a compensation for part of rental or lease payments. Compensation for part of rental payment should increase the possibilities for providing families and individuals with housing, as well as create a possibility to rent a dwelling meeting their needs.

In 2015, 90 persons in 16 municipalities used this type of support. The main reasons why individuals and families did not use compensations for part of rental or lease payment were the following:

- municipalities did not approve of the compensation procedure or approved it only in the third or fourth quarter of 2015, thus municipalities could not pay the compensations;
- individuals and families entitled to support for the rental of housing could not use this type of support, because they did not have agreements registered in the State Enterprise Centre of Registers, even in those municipalities which had approved of this procedure;
- the analysis of housing rental market data showed that the amount of a compensation for part of rental or lease payment per person is insufficient; therefore, the conversion coefficient of the basic amount of compensation for part of rental or lease payment \( K_{\text{up}} \) has been increased from 1 to 1.6 as of 1 November 2015.

In the first quarter of 2016, 129 persons in 17 municipalities were granted compensations for part of rental or lease payment.

Seeking to improve legal regulation of support for the acquisition or rental of housing and create the conditions for a bigger number of individuals and families to use the abovementioned forms of support, the draft Amending Law\(^{140}\) was submitted to the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania for deliberation in April 2016. The draft provides that target purpose income aimed at meeting the specific basic needs of an individual or family, instead of provision of housing, should not influence the determination of the right of individuals to support for the acquisition or rental of housing and should not constitute an obstacle for low-income residents to use this type of support. Moreover, having regard to the fact that both the granting of subsidies for paying part of the housing loan partially compensated by the state and payment of a compensation for part of lease payment promote the acquisition of own housing, plans have been made to harmonise legal regulation and equate the compensation for part of lease payment to support for the acquisition of housing.

\(^{140}\) Draft Law Amending Articles 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 22, 24 and 26 of the Republic of Lithuania Law on Support for the Acquisition or Rental of Housing No. XII-1215.
6. Community, Child, Youth and Family Affairs

6.1. DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITIES AND THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL SECTOR

While implementing the objectives of Aim 2 “Enhancing the Role of Communities and Non-governmental Organisations” of Priority 2 “Active and Solidary Society” of the National Progress Programme 2014–2020 and in accordance with the provisions of the Republic of Lithuania Law on Development of Non-governmental Organisations No. XII-717, adopted on 19 December 2013, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour is one of the institutions responsible for the organisation of the formation, coordination and implementation of policy on the development of non-governmental organisations (NGO).

Seeking to implement the activity goals set in the area of policy on the development of community and non-governmental organisations, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour analyses the activities and formation processes of communities, promotes active establishment of communities, provides methodological support to communities, analyses the activities of non-governmental organisations, develops and implements measures to enhance non-governmental organisations (including community organisations).

6.1.1. COOPERATION BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL SECTORS

The Law on Development of Non-governmental Organisations (hereinafter referred to as the “Law”) regulates the conditions of the activities of non-governmental organisations that promote the development of these organisations. It is important to note that the Law defines a non-governmental organisation as “a public legal entity, independent from state and municipal institutions and agencies, which acts on a voluntary basis for the benefit of society or its group, and which does not have the aim to seek political power or purely religious goals”. The legal act also gives definitions of public and mutual benefit non-governmental organisations and sets out the principles of cooperation between the public sector and NGOs.

In early 2014, while implementing the provisions of the Law, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour drafted a resolution of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania “On the Approval of the Formation and Regulations of the Council of Non-governmental Organisations”. The draft was approved by Resolution No. 641
Pursuant to the above resolution, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour organised the process of putting up candidates to the Council of Non-governmental Organisations (hereinafter referred to as the “Council”). Although formulating the procedure for the selection of members was a challenge, the personal composition of the Council was approved by Order No. A1-658 of the Minister of Social Security and Labour of 19 December 2014. The term of office of the members of the Council is two years. It consists of representatives from nine state institutions – the Office of the President of the Republic of Lithuania, the Office of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, the Ministry of National Defence, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Agriculture – and the Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania, and ten non-governmental organisations, who were delegated to the Council by consensus by national umbrella NGO associations.

The Council of Non-governmental Organisations started its activities in 2014 and discussed issues relevant to the non-governmental sector during its meetings. The Council elected its chairman and deputy chairman, drafted and approved the Declaration of Impartiality and the Action Plan 2015–2016, initiated working groups for individual issues relevant to the non-governmental sector: Law, the European Union Investment Programming and Surveillance 2014–2020, the Formation of Registers and NGO Database, the Creation of the NGO Fund and Supervision of National Programmes, the Platform of Interaction of Governmental Institutions and NGOs. The Law Working Group, set up on the initiative of the Council, drafted proposals regarding the draft Law Amending the Law on Development of Non-governmental Organisations and submitted them to the Council of Non-governmental Organisations for deliberation.

Seeking constructive cooperation between the non-governmental and public sectors, the Council initiated meetings with representatives of public institutions, also submitted proposals and consulted on relevant issues in writing, e.g. with a view to implementing the principle of partnership of the European Union, it proposed to involve representatives of the non-governmental sector, appointed by the Council, in the activities of the ministerial working groups on the European Union Support Programming in the stages of implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The Council also addressed public institutions with a request to notify it of the deliberation of issues related to the regulation and financing of non-governmental organisations.

It should be noted that NGOs undertook the initiative to translate Recommendation CM/Rec (2007)14 of the Committee of Ministers of 10 October 2007 to member states on the legal status of non-governmental organisations in Europe into Lithuanian.

6.1.2. FINANCIAL MEASURES FOR NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

The Action Plan of Development of Non-governmental Organisations and Communities 2014–2016 was approved by the order of the Minister of Social Security and Labour of 2 April 2014. The aim of the Action Plan is to create the conditions for long-term NGO development by enhancing NGO institutional capacities and developing innovative measures and services that best meet society’s needs. The following objectives have been defined to reach the aim:

- to monitor, collect, evaluate and systematise data on the situation of the non-governmental sector and to submit recommendations to public authorities and the non-governmental sector;
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The Action Plan of Development of Non-governmental Organisations and Communities aims at increasing the number of non-governmental organisations, actively involved in public policy, provision of services and representing their target groups and members, which could assume bigger responsibility when searching for more diverse sources of financing in order to more effectively achieve set goals and establish financial independence. Institutional support for the non-governmental sector is really necessary due to several important reasons: this support will ensure continuity and efficiency of the activities of these organisations until they reach the pre-crisis level, i.e. prepare a new activity strategy and create a niche for pursuing their economic activities, or until the state budget funds and other funds in business enterprises become available for support programmes. The development of voluntary activities aims at increasing the number of residents involved in the activities of non-governmental organisations and at strengthening the traditions to spare time or money for various public activities in different agencies or organisations. Institutionally enhanced non-governmental organisations will more professionally represent their members, more efficiently participate in public policy, more successfully involve society in cooperation with public authorities, and more actively take part in decision-making on behalf of their members or concerned groups. A more effective participation of NGOs in international activities and a more professional work of NGOs that provide services should also be mentioned. The measures of the Action Plan aim at implementing the policy of development of non-governmental organisations and communities by conducting continuous monitoring of the situation of the non-governmental sector, financing the projects for the institutional enhancement of NGOs and their networks, strengthening of NGO capacities, developing voluntary activities, social partnerships and social entrepreneurship. The Action Plan is implemented by:

- co-funding projects of NGO institutional enhancement selected by way of tender (including community organisations);
- analysing the situation of the non-governmental sector in Lithuania and the legal environment regulating non-governmental organisation activities, conducting NGO sector research, maintaining and improving the NGO database, organising thematic trainings, forums, target group discussions in municipalities regarding NGO involvement in the development of possibilities for the provision of public services, and developing a Model of the National Civil Society Fund.

6.1.3. COMMUNITIES

In 2011, seeking to strengthen civil society, reduce social exclusion and increase citizens’ influence in self-government, encourage local communities to actively participate in making decisions on the use of funds in order to meet the public needs of local communities, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour drafted the Programme for Self-Government of Local Communities142 (hereinafter referred to as the “Programme”). The Programme was implemented in 2012–2015. EUR 2.3 million were allocated from the state budget for Programme implementation each year, except for 2015, when Programme financing was increased to EUR 2.6 million.

The funds were distributed among municipalities according to the data submitted by the State Tax Inspectorate on the number of employed persons who pay personal income tax in municipalities.

In implementing the Programme in their territories, municipalities followed the Description of Implementation of the Programme for Self-Government of Local Communities\textsuperscript{143} approved by the order of the Minister of Social Security and Labour. The Description provides that municipal councils draft and approve Descriptions of the Procedure for Allocation and Use of Funds to Implement Decisions of Local Community Councils (LCC) which indicate the criteria for distribution of funds to communities and the localities in which LCC will be set up for the implementation of decisions. They also set forth the functions of municipal administrations and elderships in implementing this Programme as well as the principles of the formation and activities of LCC.

During Programme implementation period (2012–2015), the agreements implementing the Programme for Self-Government of Local Communities were signed with all 60 municipalities, and all elderships (550) participated in the implementation of the Programme. Programme funds were allocated for financing different activities targeted at the most vulnerable community members, child and youth occupation, cultural and educational events, improvement of public spaces and environment quality, sports and health promotion, organisation of community activities as well as other initiatives which improve the life quality of local communities.

The Description of the Implementation of the Programme and the descriptions of the procedure approved by municipal councils on the basis of the said Description provide that LCC, which pass decisions on the use of funds, shall be composed of residents from territories of elderships or other residential areas, their representatives (sub-elders), and representatives from community organisations, religious communities and societies as well as other NGOs functioning in these territories.

When implementing the Programme, the majority of decisions concerned activities related to the improvement of the quality of public spaces and environment, organisation of cultural and educational events, increase of opportunities for occupying children and youth.

Seeking to highlight the importance of local communities when boosting civil activeness of residents and enhancing participation in self-government, form the community development-conducive environment and improve public opinion about local communities and their activities, the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania announced 2016 the Year of Local Communities\textsuperscript{144}. A Commission for the Year of Local Communities\textsuperscript{145} was set up by the order of the Minister of Social Security and Labour. It was comprised of representatives from the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, ministries, the Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania, and associations uniting community organisations, and drafted Plan of 2016 – the Year of Local Communities\textsuperscript{146}, which was approved by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. The Plan envisages events, surveys and conferences related to the Year of Local Communities.

Seeking long-term development of communitarianism, greater activeness of residents and their greater involvement in organised activities when addressing the issues relevant to local communities, more attention should be paid to community organisations as established and managed by community members, making decisions independently and implementing activities that meet the needs of local communities. A decision was made in 2016 to direct measures that promote communitarianism on the national level to the strengthening (both financially and institutionally) of community organisations, providing them with the opportunity to prepare and implement projects. Having regard to the fact that the Programme for Self-Government of Local Communities has been renounced as of 2016 and the funds for strengthening community activities have been included in the Action Plan of Development of Non-governmental Organisations and Communities 2014–2016 by stipulating a measure to finance projects that strengthen community activities selected by way of tender, targeted at promoting


\textsuperscript{144} Resolution No. XII-1647 of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania of 23 April 2015 “On Announcing 2016 the Year of Local Communities”.


\textsuperscript{146} Resolution No. 1277 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of 9 December 2015 “On the Approval of the Plan of the Year of Local Communities”.

solidarity among community members, strengthening the regional and local identity of the community, carrying out social activities, reinforcing community cohesion, promoting residents’ occupation and self-education, improving the quality of public spaces and environment, creating an environment conducive to community activities while cooperating with the public and private sectors, and strengthening the institutional aspect of communities. The Minister of Social Security and Labour passed an order, whereby the Minister approved the Regulations for Organisation of the Tender for the Selection of Financing Projects of Strengthening Community Activities in 2016147, envisaging EUR 2.67 million for the selected projects.

6.2. TOPICALITIES OF CHILD RIGHTS PROTECTION

Implementation of the directions of the Programme of the Sixteenth Government 2012–2016, approved by Resolution No. XII-51 of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania of 13 December 2012, which are related to child rights, is aimed at providing every child with the opportunity to grow up in a family by developing accessibility of preventive and integrated services to children and families, and creating adequate guardianship (foster care) or adoption conditions for children deprived of parental care, which meet the best interests of the child, so that the child has a possibility to grow in a family.

The Action Plan of Integrated Services to Family 2016–2020 has been launched in Lithuania in 2016. It stipulates a coordinated provision of education, social, health care and legal services to the child and family, seeking to enable and/or help the family deal with crisis situations, raise children, improve child socialisation processes, reduce social exclusion, by ensuring the quality and accessibility of services as close to the child’s/family’s place of residence as possible. Services to the child and family are co-financed from the state budget and European structural funds.

It should be noted that when addressing the issues of child rights protection, there are plans to align the system to the Action Plan on Transition from Institutional Care to Family and Community-Based Services for People with Disabilities and Children Deprived of Parental Care 2014–2020 which is currently implemented. Pursuant to the Plan, the long-term focus is shifted on strengthening preventive work with a family, which ensures child rights protection.

The new package of the Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child has been currently under deliberation in the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania. However, it should be noted that the Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography has been already transposed in the national legislation and is being implemented.

6.2.1. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN ON TRANSITION FROM INSTITUTIONAL CARE TO FAMILY AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND CHILDREN DEPRIVED OF PARENTAL CARE 2014–2020

In 2014, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour together with social partners, heads of organisations uniting care institutions, representatives from education institutions and ministries drafted and approved the Action Plan on Transition from Institutional Care to Family and Community-Based Services for People with


Pursuant to this Plan, the system of provision of integrated services in the community will be established with a view to creating opportunities for every child and disabled person or their family (guardians, foster parents) to receive individual services meeting their needs and necessary assistance in the community and for every child deprived of parental care to grow in a safe and development-conducive environment in a biological (or alternatively – adoptive parents’ or guardians’) family. The Plan is implemented together with the Operational Programme for European Union Structural Funds Investments 2014–2020 which establishes institutional care reorganisation as one of its measures. This measure provides for the development of services to the disabled and children deprived of parental care in a family and community.

Community-based services are high quality social, health care, educational, cultural and other services of various forms and types, provided in a community. They guarantee a possibility for a person to live in a community and receive specialised assistance meeting individual or family needs and for a child – to grow up in a family environment. Community-based services also promote beneficiaries’ independence, full involvement in a community and social inclusion. A care institution cannot offer this.

Community-based services include a family type community-based child care targeted at children deprived of parental care; supporting care for young persons aged 16–18 or students who have grown up in child care institutions and/or families facing various risk factors; case management for children with intellectual or mental disabilities and their families; temporary respite services that provide an opportunity to family members who take care of the disabled to have a temporary rest from care; day centres and other educational, psychological and legal aid services to a family. 100 social carers will be trained while implementing the project and provision of their services will be ensured across Lithuania.

Currently, transition from institutional care is implemented by carrying out pilot projects in separate regions. It will be gradual transition to the model with developed community-based services to children and the disabled, whereas institutional services will only be provided in cases of necessity of specialised services.

Reorganisation of institutional care covers all 10 Lithuanian regions (counties). Institutional care will be replaced by various quality community-based services and there are plans to reorganise 26 care institutions by 2020. It is particularly important that infants and children under 3 years of age are not placed under institutional care; therefore, reorganisation will also cover all five infant homes operating in the country. Overall, 95 child care homes operate in Lithuania, and 16 of them are planned to be reorganised by 2020.

Reorganisation of four care homes has been started in accordance with the Action Plan on Transition from Institutional Care to Family and Community-Based Services. On 31 August 2015, Marijampolė child care home “Putinas” was closed; right before the new year children from Pabradė child care home were relocated to the community. 19 children from “Putinas” moved to three community-based care homes in Marijampolė. 19 children from Pabradė child care home have been living in apartments and houses in Pabradė, 4–7 persons each, under all necessary adult supervision.

In December 2015, reorganisation of A. Bandza’s infant and child care home in Panevėžys and Skalvija child care home (former Viešvilė) was commenced. In December 2015, 12 persons from A. Bandza’s infant and child care home in Panevėžys were relocated to an apartment and a house. There are plans to gradually relocate all persons from Skalvija child care home to the community in 2016. The first social family was moved from Skalvija child care home to community in late January 2016.

The first stage of institutional care reorganisation is currently being implemented. It covers preparation for reorganisation (2015–2017) and is financed with EUR 7 million from the EU Structural Funds. The funds are used to finance assessment of individual needs of residents of pilot care institutions as well as competence and motivation of employees of these institutions, the development of professional competence of employees who
provide social services to target groups and employees who administer these services, to promote child care, adoption, provision of social services to children deprived of parental care, those at social risk, the disabled, as well as voluntary work in this area, etc.

In 2017–2020, two reorganisation stages – regional development of services infrastructure and provision of new forms of services to target groups – will be carried out simultaneously. A total of EUR 77.4 million (of which EUR 64.09 million from the EU Structural Funds) will be allocated for all three stages.

In 2016, a draft Law Amending the Republic of Lithuania Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child No. 1-1234 has been prepared. Its purpose is to ensure every child's rights in the state and not to reiterate the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which are the provisions of direct effect, and to take into consideration the specific child's situation in a family and society, which covers the principles meeting the general and special child's interests and needs, which create an impression of dealing with abstract issues. It should be noted that the draft law proposes establishing that every report on potential violation of child’s rights shall be investigated (currently, there is no such statutory requirement). Such a report will have to be investigated in accordance with the procedure established by this law. The first step will be verification of report validity. Upon the slightest suspicion of danger to the child’s health, safety or life, the child shall be immediately taken from the unsafe environment and moved to the house of social guardians, relatives, families that take care of children or social families, or placed under institutional care if the above options are unavailable. After the child is taken, a municipal child rights protection office (CRPO) shall, within three days, organise revision of the child’s case stipulated in the draft law (currently, there is no such procedure). The Minister of Social Security and Labour will pass an order on the approval of the description of the procedure of taking a child from statutory family members or any other environment that is unsafe for the child, the description of the procedure of the organisation and execution of revision of the child’s case, recommendations for making a plan of assistance to the child and family, as well as revision organisation and provision of services (together with the annex to these recommendations – a typical form of the plan of assistance to the child and family). CRPO shall invite employees and specialists indicated in the draft law to the revision of the child’s case, and the participants of the revision of the child’s case shall examine all available information and material on the child and family in detail.

Overall, the draft law proposes a common procedure (applicable in all municipalities) of examination of a potential violation of the child’s rights (as well as the register of these reports, which currently does not exist), a common procedure of organisation of preventive and social work and addressing the court, whereas preventive measures shall be applied for definitive period of time (no longer than a year) and the child’s temporary guardianship (foster care) shall last only a year, instead of several or more years. The proposed procedure will better meet the needs and interests of the child as well as families’ expectations to raise their children.

6.2.2. CHILD GUARDIANSHIP

Article 3.252(2) of the Civil Code of the Republic of Lithuania regulates three forms of guardianship (foster care): in a family, in a social family, in an institution. It should be noted that pursuant to the provision of the Law Amending Articles 3.249, 3.253 and 3.261 of the Civil Code of the Republic of Lithuania, which will take effect as of 1 January 2017, temporary child’s guardianship (foster care) shall not last longer than twelve months; guardianship of a child under three years of age in a child care institution may be established in accordance with the procedure prescribed by legislation only in exceptional cases and shall not last longer than three months, except for cases where an institution authorised by the Government approves of a longer institutional child care upon the objective reasons stipulated in Article 3.261(2) of the Civil Code of the Republic of Lithuania. Having regard to the aims of reorganisation of institutional care, established by Order No. A1-83 of the Minister of
Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania of 14 February 2014 “On the Approval of the Action Plan on Transition from Institutional Care to Family and Community-Based Services for People with Disabilities and Children Deprived of Parental Care 2014–2020”, as well as to the abovementioned amendments to the Civil Code of the Republic of Lithuania, which will become effective as of 1 January 2017, and seeking to ensure the best interests of the child as well as the right to living conditions corresponding to the child’s physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development, the aim is to raise a child deprived of parental care in a family environment and place the child under institutional care only as a last resort. However, although the number of children placed under institutional guardianship (foster care) has been declining each year, a considerable number of children still live in institutions.

In late 2015, 9 220 children (4 682 boys and 4 538 girls) were deprived of parental care, which is 464 children less than in 2014 and 1 322 children less than in 2012. This number has been decreasing each year: in late 2013, it was 10 146, in 2014 – 9 684. This tendency could be associated with the annually decreasing number of all children residing in Lithuania.

In 2015, 59.6 per cent (5 493 children) of all children placed under guardianship (foster care) were raised in the families of guardians (foster parents), 4.9 per cent (452 children) – in social families, 35.5 per cent (3 275 children) – in institutions. In late 2014, the share of children placed under institutional guardianship (foster care) constituted 36.8 per cent of all children deprived of parental care; in late 2013 – 37.7 per cent; in 2012 – 38.3 per cent.

In 2015, 1 837 children were deprived of parental care. The majority of children deprived of parental care (727) were raised in their biological families by one of the parents (when one of the parents is incapable of caring for the child due to various reasons) before the establishment of guardianship, of whom 82 per cent were raised only by their mothers before the establishment of guardianship. Among the main reasons for deprivation of parental care, neglect by parents or the only parent, indifference to the child, non-supervision, improper bringing up, physical or psychological abuse (69 per cent of all cases of children deprived of parental care) could be mentioned.

The majority of children placed under guardianship (foster care) are older than 10 years (72.3 per cent); however, in 2015, like in the previous years, guardianship (foster care) was mainly established for children under 3 years of age (29.3 per cent of children who were placed under guardianship in 2015). In 2015, 65.2 per cent of children under 3 years of age were placed under institutional guardianship (foster care) (in 2014 – over 60 per cent; in 2013 – almost 66 per cent).

In 2015, like in the previous years, the most frequent reason for the termination of temporary guardianship (foster care) is the return of the child to his/her biological family (84.7 per cent of temporary guardianship (foster care) cases); for the termination of permanent guardianship (foster care) – full age or emancipation (81.6 per cent of permanent guardianship (foster care) cases).

In late 2015, 2 431 cases of permanent institutional guardianship (foster care) and 844 cases of temporary institutional guardianship (foster care) were recorded. In 2015, the number of children who were changed the form of guardianship (foster care) in an institution to family guardianship (foster care) increased (in 2015 – 210 children; in 2014 – 138 children); however, the number of children who were changed the form of guardianship (foster care) in an institution to social family guardianship (foster care) decreased (in 2015 – 9 children; in 2014 – 36 children). In 2015, the majority, i.e. 1 817 of 3 275 children placed under institutional guardianship (foster care) live in municipal child care homes, and the smallest share, i.e. 25 of 3 275 children live in other institutions (e.g. crisis centres, social services centres, etc.).

It should be noted that the number of cases of temporary guardianship (foster care) at parents’ request has been falling. In 2015, temporary guardianship (foster care) at parents’ request was established for 1 415 children; in 2014 – 1 497 children; in 2013 – 1 727 children.
6.2.3. SEARCH AND TRAINING OF GUARDIANS (FOSTER PARENTS) AND ADOPTIVE PARENTS

In 2012–2015, 21 institutions implementing the certified programme of Training and Consultation of Guardians (Foster Parents) and Adoptive Parents by Social Workers (GIMK) carried out projects targeted at the provision of services of the search, training, selection, consultation and assistance to guardians (foster parents) and adoptive parents.

In 2015, orientation training according to the GIMK programme was provided to 53 groups. Orientation training was attended by 599 persons (391 families), of whom 400 persons (287 families) wishing to become guardians (foster parents) and 199 persons (104 families) wishing to adopt. In the period from 2012 to the first quarter of 2016, 3,005 persons wishing to become guardians (foster parents) or adoptive parents were trained. In 2012–2016, state budget appropriations in the amount of EUR 812,000 were allocated for the provision of GIMK services.

Continuous training has been provided to current guardian or adoptive families and mutual assistance groups have been organised since 2012. In the period from 2012 to 2015, 3,317 guardians (foster parents) and adoptive parents attended continuous training and mutual assistance group activities. In 2015, these services were provided to 1,262 persons; in 2014 – 799 persons; in 2013 – 709 persons. Thus, in 2015, continuous training and mutual assistance groups were attended by 463 persons more than in 2014, and by 553 persons more than in 2013. Continuous training was provided to 115 groups of current guardians (foster parents) and adoptive parents, whereas mutual assistance groups were organised to 159 groups of current guardians (foster parents) and adoptive parents. As compared with 2013 and 2014, the number of continuous training and mutual assistance groups has increased (in 2013 – 125 groups; in 2014 – 100 groups; in 2015 – 274 groups).

On 15 December 2015, the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania adopted the Law Amending Article 18 of the Republic of Lithuania Law on Social Services No. X-493 (hereinafter referred to as the “Law”). The Law establishes that assistance of certified social workers and other specialists shall be constantly provided to families taking care of children, guardians (foster parents), adoptive parents and participants of social families or persons intending to become ones in every municipality as of 1 January 2016, aimed at ensuring comprehensive development and education of children under their supervision, guardianship (foster care) or adoption. While implementing the adopted Law, every municipality shall ensure accessibility of services, provision of quality services and qualified assistance (hereinafter referred to as the “GIMK services”). In 2016, EUR 19,000 have been allocated to each municipality for the provision of GIMK services, carried out as an independent municipal function. Two certified social workers who have a certification issued by the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (hereinafter referred to as the “Service”) may provide these services according to the GIMK method in a municipality. In 2015, in order to have at least two certified social workers in all municipalities, the Service organised training for specialists wishing to become certified social workers and provide GIMK services. In 2015, GIMK services were provided by 62 certified social workers; their number was 122 in the first quarter of 2016.

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148 Following the Description of the Procedure of Certification of Persons Who Seek to Acquire the Right to Conduct Examination of Preparation of Persons for Child Guardianship (Foster Care) or Adoption, approved by Order No. BV-30 of the Director of the Service of 5 June 2013 “On the Approval of the Description of the Procedure of Certification of Persons Who Seek to Acquire the Right to Conduct Examination of Preparation of Persons for Child Guardianship (Foster Care) or Adoption”.

6.2.3. ADOPTION

In the period from 2012 to 2016, families have adopted about 100 children deprived of parental care each year. In 2015, 92 families (89 married couples and 3 single persons), permanently residing in the Republic of Lithuania, adopted 99 children deprived of parental care. In 2012, 92 married couples and 6 single persons (women), permanently residing in the Republic of Lithuania, adopted 112 children deprived of parental care (mainly children under 3 years of age). In 2013, 107 children were adopted; in 2014, 88 children were adopted. Thus, in 2015, as compared with 2014, the number of adopted children increased, because more children under 3 years of age, who are mainly adopted by citizens of the Republic of Lithuania, were included in the register in 2015.

GIMK programme training contributes to the fact that families become more open, have more courage and responsibility to take the steps related to children, their own needs and goals. Families that adopt for the second and third time become certain that the needs of the child deprived of parental care are the same as those of all children, i.e. to have a family and live happily in this family.

The major share of children included in the Register of Children Subject to Adoption are elder children aged 10–17, and most of them have various health disorders.

On 31 December 2015, 1 654 children were included in the Register of Children Subject to Adoption. Like in the previous years, the majority of them (59 per cent) were boys (978), and 41 per cent were girls (676). On 31 December 2014, the Register of Children Subject to Adoption included 95 children more, and on 31 December 2013 – 149 children more, as compared with the data of the end of the year 2015. On 31 December 2012, 1 878 children were included in the Register of Children Subject to Adoption. In the first quarter of 2016, 104 children were included in this register.

Around 100 families were included in the Register of Citizens of the Republic of Lithuania in the period from 2012 to 2015. In 2015, 100 families (persons) were included in the Register of Citizens of the Republic of Lithuania, which is 6 per cent less than in 2014 and 2 per cent more than in 2013. On 31 December 2015, the Register of Citizens of the Republic of Lithuania included 74 families (individuals) wishing to adopt. Mainly married couples, aged 29 and elder, are included in this register. As compared with the previous years, a tendency could be observed that the majority of families included in the Register of Citizens of the Republic of Lithuania in 2013–2015 wished to adopt a child with minor or treatable and recoverable health disorders. As few as 6 per cent of families (individuals) out of 100 families (individuals) included in the register in 2015 wished to adopt healthy children. In the first quarter of 2016, 39 families were included in the Register of Citizens of the Republic of Lithuania wishing to adopt children. It should be noted that in 2013–2014, as compared with 2015, the expectations of potential adoptive parents with regard to adopted children's social background, the lifestyle of their biological parents (addictions, bad habits) and/or children's mental health disorders as well as intellectual capacity, were more flexible. This may often determine a quicker receipt of an offer to adopt a child.

6.2.4. OVERVIEW OF THE SITUATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

In 2012–2016, according to the data of CRPO, 6 341 cases when 6 007 children most likely suffered were recorded. In 2012, 1 261 children most likely suffered from violence; in 2013 – 1 362 children; in 2014 – 1 192 children; in 2015 – 1 578 children; in the first quarter of 2016 – 611 children. CRPO specialists have been more actively and successfully identifying cases of violence and undertaking respective measures to stop it and initiate provision of assistance to children.


We should note a tendency that has lasted for more than a year: close adult persons, i.e. family members (parents or either of them, guardians (foster parents), grandparents, brothers or sisters), have been mainly exerting violence against children.

In cases of violence against children assistance is most often initiated and/or provided to children and their family members by specialists of various fields and from various institutions:

- CRPO;
- health care institutions (paediatricians, psychiatrists, gynaecologists);
- mental health centres (psychologists, psychiatrists);
- social workers;
- social workers, educators and psychologists working in schools or care institutions;
- specialists of the pedagogical-psychological services;
- specialists of crisis centres;
- centres of specialised assistance;
- specialists providing integrated assistance to child victims of violence and their family members according to the project;
- law enforcement institutions;
- specialists working in non-governmental organisations, etc.

According to the CRPO data, all child victims of violence and/or their families were provided with assistance (in certain cases – several forms of assistance). Specialists note that assistance should be provided for a long period and in a systematic manner, taking into consideration a victim's needs; it should be coordinated and provided not only to a victim of violence, but also to the whole family and the closest environment of the child victim. It should also be noted that provision of assistance to a child victim only does not solve the problem of violence in the family. In order to avoid repetition of violence, it is important to provide targeted and timely assistance to the perpetrator.

In implementing the National Programme for Prevention of Violence against Children and for Assistance to Children 2011–2015149[1], the Ministry has been annually organising tenders for the provision of integrated services to child victims of violence and victims (witnesses) of indirect domestic violence and their family members, which are implemented by non-governmental organisations. In 2012–2015, qualified specialists of the field provided integrated assistance to 3 332 child victims of direct and indirect violence (in 2012 – 758; in 2013 – 900; in 2014 – 862; in 2015 – 812), of whom 1 730 girls (in 2012 – 389; in 2013 – 482; in 2014 – 446; in 2015 – 413) and 1 602 boys (in 2012 – 269; in 2013 – 418; in 2014 – 416; in 2015 – 399); integrated services were provided to 2 171 families (in 2012 – 483; in 2013 – 627; in 2014 – 509; in 2015 – 552).

In 2015, the period of implementation of the National Programme for Prevention of Violence against Children and for Assistance to Children 2011–2015 ended. The best and proven programme measures related to publicity of prevention of violence, organisation of assistance and training of specialists working in the field of child welfare have been transposed in the Action Plan on Child Welfare 2016–2018.

6.2.4. INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN THE AREA OF CHILD RIGHTS PROTECTION

In 2012–2016, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour pursued international commitments to implement the provisions of the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child, the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (hereinafter referred to as the “Lanzarote Convention”), as well as other commitments.

The Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania ratified the Lanzarote Convention on 6 November 2012. The Convention serves as a means to promote international cooperation and exchange information in order to prevent sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children. In 2016, the Lanzarote Convention was ratified by 40 countries and was signed by 7 countries. In order to properly implement the provisions of the Lanzarote Convention, Lithuania has been actively participating in the activities of the Lanzarote Committee, cooperating and exchanging information. The Lanzarote Committee monitors the implementation of the Lanzarote Convention in order to improve the capacity of states to prevent and combat sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, facilitates the collection, analysis and exchange of information, experience and good practice between the states.

On 6–7 November 2014, in cooperation with the Council of Europe Lanzarote Committee and the Committee on Social Affairs and Labour of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour organised an international conference entitled Progress in protecting children’s rights: challenges and opportunities in the Seimas, dedicated to the 25th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The conference discussed the relevant issues of the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, the importance of international cooperation, the progress achieved in the implementation of the provisions of this Convention and practice seeking to ensure children’s welfare and child-conducive environment in legal proceedings. The conference was attended by about 250 experts from Lithuania and foreign countries. In implementing the Lanzarote Convention, the 13th meeting of the Lanzarote Committee, held in Strasbourg on 7 December 2015, approved of the 1st implementation report of the States Parties “The protection of children against sexual abuse in the circle of trust”. It covered the preventive and intervention measures with regard to child victims of sexual exploitation of 26 Parties to the Council of Europe, including Lithuania.

The Ministry of Social Security and Labour has been submitting reports regarding the implementation of the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child every five years. On 23 September 2013, the Lithuanian Government delegation participated in the discussion of Third and Fourth Periodic Reports of the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Lithuania at the 64th session of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva. On 4 October 2013, Lithuania received recommendations from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child concerning the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour has disseminated these recommendations and considered them at the sitting of the Interdepartmental Council of Child Welfare, and has been drafting the plan of measures implementing these recommendations. The Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on a Communications Procedure, adopted in 2011 in New York, was signed on 30 September 2015. It provides Lithuania with the opportunity during the examination of complaints by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child to undertake necessary measures and address the States Parties by submitting comments and observations, requesting to take necessary measures to secure the rights of the child and better meet the interests of the child.

Assistance to child victims of sexual exploitation. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour has been implementing the project “Establishment of the Support Centre for Child Victims of Sexual Abuse” of the 2009–2014 European Economic Area Financial Mechanisms. The project is implemented by the care home “Užuovėja”. 
The project is co-funded from the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism and the state budget of the Republic of Lithuania and implemented together with the partner, the Icelandic Government Agency for Child Protection Barnaverndarstofa. While implementing the project bilateral cooperation creates the conditions to take over the best practice of Iceland related to working with child victims of sexual abuse.

Lithuania currently does not guarantee the possibility to every child victim of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation to receive necessary integrated assistance in a child-conducive environment. After the project is implemented, the centre with all services necessary for the child victim of sexual abuse and for his family members in one place will be established. The centre will provide integrated assistance (psychological, social, legal, medical). After the project is implemented, interinstitutional cooperation will be strengthened, and the guidelines on provision of integrated assistance to child victims of sexual exploitation will be prepared. These guidelines will aim at helping Lithuanian institutions responsible for the child’s welfare, health and protection of rights, to more efficiently implement functions related to the protection of the rights of the child and the child’s representation in criminal proceedings in order to protect the child’s rights and legitimate interests.

On 3 June 2016, an event of the opening of the Support Centre for Child Victims of Sexual Abuse was held.


The Law establishes that upon employing a person, he/she shall submit a certificate on data about a natural person from the Register of Suspected, Accused and Convicted Persons to the employer, certifying that he/she has not been convicted for the commitment of the acts specified in the Law. A person who wants to engage in voluntary activities shall also have to submit a certificate on data about a natural person from the Register of Suspected, Accused and Convicted Persons to the organiser of voluntary activities, whereas a person who concludes a contract with the provider of services regarding the provision of services to the child shall have the right to request from the provider of services to submit a certificate on data about a natural person from the Register of Suspected, Accused and Convicted Persons. Furthermore, persons who have been found guilty of committing criminal acts against children’s sexual independence and integrity by final judgement of conviction and working with children as of the date of coming into force of this Law shall immediately terminate the labour contract or voluntary activities.

By implementing the provisions of the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child, Lithuania aims to provide every child with the possibility to grow up in a family. The purpose is to develop accessibility of preventive and integrated services to the child and family and in case of a child deprived of parental care – to create proper conditions of guardianship (foster care) or adoption, which meet the best interests of the child and the need to live in a family environment and properly prepare for an independent life in a family and society.

Lithuania’s representatives were actively involved in the activities of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, set up by the Council of Europe in 2014, while preparing the European Strategy for the Rights of the Child. The European Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2016–2021, prepared by the Committee on the Rights of the Child, was presented at the international conference Reaching the heights for the rights of the child. Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2016–2021 held on 5–6 April 2016 in Sofia. The new strategy, approved by the Committee of Ministers on 2 March 2016, provides for five priority areas to guarantee the rights of the child:

1. Equal opportunities for all children;
2. Participation of all children;
3. A life free from violence for all children;
5. Rights of the child in the digital environment.

It should be pointed out that the Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2016–2021 aims at making States Parties guarantee the protection of the rights of the child and form the best practice of the rights of the child.

The Expert Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk of the Council of the Baltic Sea States is comprised of 11 members from each Baltic Sea state. An expert from Lithuania also participates in the activities of this group. The aim of the Expert Group is to cooperate on the issues of children at risk in the Baltic Sea region. The priorities for the Expert Group until 2017 are:

1. Promoting children's rights including child-friendly justice;
2. Early intervention and prevention;
3. Protecting children from sexual abuse and exploitation;
4. Protecting migrant children and child victims of trafficking;
5. Ensuring the rights of children in alternative care.

The Expert Group cooperates on the issues of the policy on the protection of the rights of the child, child care (in particular, institutional care), prevention of child abuse and trafficking in human beings, early intervention and prevention, with a view to protecting the child. The members of the meetings of the Expert Group, held twice a year, present and analyse the situation of the protection of the rights of the child in each country as well as the most relevant problems, and share experience. Having regard to the most relevant issues, the Expert Group prepares projects and participates in their implementation. These projects are aimed at a specific problem, e.g. trafficking in human beings (children), child care home auditing targeted at the quality of services provided by a child care home as well as guaranteeing the rights of the child, etc. The country’s public and non-governmental organisations take part in the implementation of these projects.

### 6.2.5. ACTIVITIES OF THE CHILDREN’S MAINTENANCE FUND

Pursuant to Article 38 of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, it is “the right and duty of parents to bring up their children to be honest people and faithful citizens and to support them until they come of age”. Article 3.204 of the Civil Code of the Republic of Lithuania entered into force on 1 January 2002 providing that the state shall maintain underage children receiving no maintenance from their parents or adult close relatives, who are in a position to maintain the child, for more than a month. In 2006, in implementing this provision of the Civil Code and having evaluated the abovementioned circumstances, the Republic of Lithuania Law on Children’s Maintenance Fund was adopted and took effect on 1 January 2008. The purpose of the law is to ensure the child’s right to social security and guarantee the state’s commitment to pay a fixed maintenance allowance to a child in the presence of the grounds stipulated in this law. Pursuant to this law, children receiving no maintenance from their parents may receive an allowance in the amount of up to 1.5 BSB (basic social benefit), which is currently EUR 57 per month. The state thereby acquires the right to require that the persons who are liable to provide child maintenance would repay to the state the child maintenance allowance paid by the state. The Children's Maintenance Fund (hereinafter referred to as the “Fund”), operating since 1 January 2008, was

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150 Civil Code of the Republic of Lithuania.
151 Republic of Lithuania Law on Children's Maintenance Fund.
established while observing Article 27(4) of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It stipulates that States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to secure the recovery of maintenance for the child from the parents or other persons having financial responsibility for the child, both within the State Party and from abroad.

As of the start of operation of the Fund, i.e. from 1 January 2008 to 31 March 2016, over 51 500 applications for payment were received: in 2008–2011, the Fund received over 35 000 applications; in 2012 – 5 099; in 2013 – 4 039; in 2014 – 3 673; in 2015 – 3 111; in the first quarter of 2016 – 780. On average 260 new beneficiaries apply to the Fund per month; over 23 000 children regularly receive benefits. Over EUR 14 million are allocated for their maintenance per year, while around EUR 0.5 million are recovered per year.

### Main indicators of the period 2008 – QI 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Average annual number of beneficiaries of payments from the Children's Maintenance Fund</th>
<th>Amount of appropriations allocated for payments, including adjustments (EUR thous.)</th>
<th>Amount of appropriations used (EUR thous.)</th>
<th>Funds repaid by debtors on whose behalf payments were made (EUR thous.)</th>
<th>Ratio of the funds repaid by debtors on whose behalf payments were made and the amount of appropriations used (percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>13 622</td>
<td>4 312</td>
<td>4 312</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>19 388</td>
<td>12 828</td>
<td>9 685</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>21 248</td>
<td>11 430</td>
<td>11 415</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>21 637</td>
<td>14 118</td>
<td>12 347</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>1.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>21 343</td>
<td>12 931</td>
<td>12 922</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>2.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>23 304</td>
<td>14 078</td>
<td>14 061</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>2.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>23 704</td>
<td>14 556</td>
<td>14 514</td>
<td>534</td>
<td>3.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>23 377</td>
<td>14 767</td>
<td>14 676</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>3.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QI 2016</td>
<td>23 088</td>
<td>3 964</td>
<td>3 656</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>102 984</strong></td>
<td><strong>97 588</strong></td>
<td><strong>2 234</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data of the Children's Maintenance Fund**

In order to return payments to the state budget, the administration of the Fund is entitled to recover payments made from the Children's Maintenance Fund from the debtor and insist on the 5 per cent annual interest. The administration of the Fund passes decisions regarding recovery of payments made from the Children's Maintenance Fund from the debtors. The decisions are enforcement orders executed in accordance with the procedure established in the Civil Code of the Republic of Lithuania. In the period from 2012 to the first quarter of 2016, 5 067 decisions regarding debt recovery were passed: in 2012 – 763, in 2013 – 653, in 2014 – 1 740, in 2015 – 1 635, in the first quarter of 2016 – 276.

The administration of the Fund is also entitled to initiate a pre-trial investigation into criminal liability of the debtor. It initiates pre-trial investigations into criminal liability of the debtor for avoidance to pay child maintenance awarded by a court's decision or stipulated in a child's (children's) maintenance agreement approved by the court, publicly announces the lists of debtors who avoid their duties, and promotes cooperation between various institutions in this area. In the period from 2012 to the first quarter of 2016, 1 303 requests to launch a pre-trial investigation due to avoidance to pay child maintenance were drawn up and filed to law enforcement institutions: in 2012 – 562, in 2013 – 505, in 2014 – in 112, in 2015 – 110, in the first quarter of 2016 – 14.
6.3. YOUTH POLICY

Youth policy comprises the activities targeted at finding solutions to youth problems and seeking to create favourable conditions for personality development of young people and their integration in social life. It is targeted at people aged 14–29, the number of whom was 580 000 in Lithuania in 2016.

During 2014–2016, while developing youth policy, considerable focus was shifted on the strengthening of regional youth policy, integration of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) in social life and the labour market. At the beginning of 2014, the analysis of municipalities was carried out with a view to identifying the main youth policy related problems, and its findings were used to plan data-based regional youth policy and organise the conference “Strengthening of regional youth policy” aimed to give an overview of regional youth policy tendencies and its strengthening opportunities. Furthermore, in 2014, the financing of job positions of municipal youth affairs coordinators was completely restored (LTL 2.7 million, or EUR 790 000, were allocated). The same amount has been envisaged for 2015 as well.

Municipal youth affairs coordinators have been involved in the implementation of the Youth Guarantee (YG), and their functions are established in the Description of the Procedure for Implementation of the Youth Guarantee\(^{152}\), which provides that a municipal youth affairs coordinator shall collect information about inactive young people from the child rights protection office of the municipal administration, youth organisations and organisations working with youth, open youth centres, open youth spaces, territorial police units, elderships, territorial labour exchange offices, educational institutions, social assistance, care and support organisations; therefore, an increasing number of actors have been involved in the implementation of the YG on the municipal level, thus strengthening the regional level.

In 2014, preparation for the implementation of the EU programmes in the youth area was carried out and subsequently the programmes were launched: a coordination, monitoring and supervision system for the implementation of the EU Erasmus+ programme in the area of youth has been established and clear cooperation between youth and employment representatives regarding youth while implementing the YG in Lithuania has been envisaged.

6.3.1. REGIONAL YOUTH POLICY

While implementing the Programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, youth in regions and strengthening of regional youth policy were named as priorities in 2014–2015. Thus, the Action Plan of Strengthening Regional Youth Policy 2015–2017\(^{153}\) (hereinafter referred to as the “Action Plan”) was drafted and approved in 2015. It pays particular attention to youth in rural areas and towns. While implementing regional youth policy, the aim is to increase the youth employment level and motivation, involve the business sector in the implementation of youth policy in municipalities, as well as improve dissemination of information on the issues relevant to youth. It should be noted that the Action Plan has envisaged actions for the development of open youth centres and spaces, strengthening of open work with youth and assistance for the establishment of youth organisations and organisations working with youth, improvement of infrastructure in municipalities in order to facilitate participation of young people in targeted activities.


In 2014, the analysis of municipalities regarding the main youth problems and the analysis of functions assigned to municipal youth affairs coordinators were carried out with a view to ascertaining how municipalities follow the Model Job Description of a Municipal Youth Affairs Coordinator. The aim is to ensure efficient fulfilment of the state function (assigned by the state to municipalities) of the protection of youth rights, and activity monitoring is carried out.

In 2014, monitoring of the legal regulation of the Methodology and the Description of the Assessment of Youth Policy Quality in Municipalities was carried out and in 2015 a new version of these documents was approved.

Youth policy quality assessment was started in municipalities in 2015. The results obtained during quality assessment will help municipal administrations, the municipal youth affairs council, youth organisations and organisations working with youth to agree on the priorities of the development of youth policy, and will be useful when drafting programmes and measures targeted at youth, youth organisations and organisations working with youth.

In 2015, two new tenders were announced in relation to support for youth initiatives, focusing on youth in rural areas and towns, on the solution of their problems, on the increase of their activeness and promotion of interinstitutional cooperation in order to solve youth employment problems in the regions. A total of 270 applications were received with respect to both tenders. 31 organisations that submitted applications to the tender of youth initiatives and 11 organisations that submitted applications to the tender of interinstitutional cooperation were financed. It should be noted that at the end of 2015 the tenders for the financing of projects related to youth initiatives and interinstitutional cooperation in the field of youth for 2016 were announced. In 2015, the abovementioned tenders had the budget of EUR 86,000; the same amount has been envisaged for 2016.

In 2015, the Department of Youth Affairs under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (hereinafter referred to as the “Department of Youth Affairs”) carried out the analysis of monitoring of the implementation of 2014 plans for the solution of youth problems in municipalities. This analysis is used for the planning of strategic documents on the local and national levels. Moreover, the Department of Youth Affairs initiated the preparation for youth problem surveys in municipalities in 2016.

6.3.2. NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY

In 2015, the implementation of the National Youth Policy Development Programme 2011–2019 was continued. 50 measures were implemented in accordance with the Action Plan 2014–2016 for the Implementation of the National Youth Policy Development Programme 2011–2019. While implementing programme measures, considerable attention was paid to raising youth awareness of the employment issues, the activities of youth employees, work with youth, and its development in open youth centres and spaces. In order to consolidate youth organisations and encourage young people to participate in social life as well as be active and aware Lithuanian citizens, 91 youth organisations and organisations working with youth were financed under the tenders in 2014. Detailed maps of financed youth organisations and organisations working with youth in 2014 and 2015 are presented below.

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154 Order No. A1-68 of the Minister of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania of 4 March 2008 “On the Approval of the Model Job Description of a Municipal Youth Affairs Coordinator (Chief Specialist) and the Model Job Description of a Municipal Youth Affairs Coordinator (Senior Specialist)”


Map of youth organisations and organisations working with youth financed in 2014

Data of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the Public Institution Agency of International Youth Cooperation, the Department of Youth Affairs under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour

Map of youth organisations and organisations working with youth financed in 2015

Data of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the Public Institution Agency of International Youth Cooperation, the Department of Youth Affairs under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour
In November 2015, the project “Youth Voluntary Service” was accomplished. 689 persons participated in the project. 634 young persons successfully completed voluntary activities (volunteering took 30 per cent or more time). Out of 689 young persons who participated in the project, 171 persons (24.8 per cent) found employment, 65 persons returned to the education system (19 of them are planning to do so), 20 persons emigrated. Seeking to ensure continuity of the National Programme for Voluntary Activities of Youth, cooperation agreements with seven partners of the project “Discover Yourself”, responsible for coordination of voluntary activities, were signed on 30 November 2015.

In 2015, the activities of the Pool of Youth Researchers was further developed, the concept of reinforcing the Pool of Youth Affairs Researchers was drafted, meetings were organised, joint events were attended, consultations about youth policy priorities were held while drafting and planning youth policy measures. In 2015, selections regarding Lithuania’s representation in the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy and a national correspondent for the Youth Wiki Tool were organised, representatives were selected and appointed. The aim is to enable members of the Pool of Youth Researchers to exchange information, knowledge and experience, implement joint projects, also to ensure monitoring of the youth situation in Lithuania, data accumulation, provision of consultations and advice to youth policy-makers, as well as consultation of youth and youth representatives through the activities of the Pool of Youth Researchers. Cooperation of the Pool of Youth Researchers with other networks, including international ones, is encouraged.

In 2015, with the view of analysing foreign experience and disseminating positive experience of the Lithuanian youth policy, an international event entitled “The influence of open work with youth while implementing Youth Guarantee” was organised. The event was attended by a representative from the European Commission, a researcher from the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, youth policy experts of the member states, youth employees, municipal youth affairs coordinators, YG coordinators, policy-makers, employers, etc. The event resulted in the drafting of guidelines for the actions to be undertaken, using open work with youth as a tool for high-quality implementation of YG. These guidelines were presented to the Youth Working Party of the Council of the European Union.

### 6.3.3. IMPLEMENTATION OF YOUTH GUARANTEE

The Youth Guarantee has been implemented in Lithuania since 2014. In 2015, the scheme of implementation of the Youth Guarantee in municipalities was approved. The Department of Youth Affairs conducted the selection of partners for the implementation of YG in accordance with the approved partner selection regulations; partner declarations were signed. The events presented the procedure for the implementation of YG in detail.

In July 2015, the Department of Youth Affairs submitted part of the application regarding the project “Discover Yourself”. In July and August, four national meetings with 58 partners of the project “Discover Yourself” were organised seeking to inform them about future project activities. Partners and potential employees were consulted on relevant issues by phone, e-mail and individually. 49 partnership agreements regarding the implementation of the project “Discover Yourself” in the country’s municipalities were signed, and partner organisations employed 62 local YG coordinators. Local YG coordinators create interdepartmental cooperation networks in their municipalities, which not only cover open youth centres and spaces, but also involve a youth affairs coordinator, a municipal education department, police, a probation service, elders and social workers, educational establishments, local employers, etc. In 2016, these interdepartmental cooperation networks will help to ensure smooth transition of inactive youth to the labour market and the education system.

According to the data of December 2015, 27 open youth centres and 136 open youth spaces functioned in Lithuania, and the development of the system of open work with youth could be observed. 20 554 young people,
including 1 125 NEET, attended open youth centres and spaces financed by the Department of Youth Affairs. 65 of them returned to the education system, 136 registered in territorial labour exchange offices, and 167 became employed.

Seeking to ensure adequate implementation of the Youth Guarantee, in 2014, in accordance with the Plan Implementing the Youth Guarantee\textsuperscript{158}, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour ensured the implementation of the Programme for Voluntary Activities in 2014 and its continuity. A new version of the National Programme for Voluntary Activities of Youth was approved\textsuperscript{159}. The programme aims to provide young people with conditions to get involved in voluntary activities and acquire personal, social, professional competences and working experience, thus helping them to choose a profession, reintegrate into a formal education system and/or prepare for the integration into the labour market. In accordance with the abovementioned programme, the Department of Youth Affairs was implementing the project “Youth Voluntary Service” (from 1 October 2013 until 31 July 2015). The target group of the project is unemployed young people aged 16–29. Voluntary activities are carried out at least 20 hours per week and last for up to three or six months. In 2014, 356 project participants engaged in three or six months long voluntary activities under the ESF project “Youth Voluntary Service” targeted at young unemployed people aged 16–29 and implemented by the Department of Youth Affairs together with the Lithuanian Youth Council, the Agency of International Youth Cooperation and 12 non-governmental organisations. 229 persons accomplished the project, and 102 of them (44.5 per cent) integrated in the labour market of the education system.

Moreover, it should be noted that in 2015 the Department of Youth Affairs financed 33 open youth centre and space programmes, during the implementation whereof 15 600 persons aged 14–29 received the services of motivation, development of general competences, involvement in socially useful activities, and individual social-pedagogical consultation. Of them young people not in employment, education or training accounted for 800, of whom 205 (25.1 per cent) integrated in the labour market or the education system and 127 (15.5 per cent) registered in the labour exchange. Open youth centres and spaces are planned to become the partners of the Department of Youth Affairs while implementing the YG, in particular focusing on NEET.

6.3.4. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EU ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME IN THE AREA OF YOUTH

In 2014, the European Commission joined sports, youth and education programmes to create the Erasmus+ programme (2014–2020), which gave a strong impetus for the improvement of the European education system and the development of youth potential. Already in the first year many projects were submitted and could be characterised by good application quality, innovative ideas and determination to solve problems that are relevant to young people, youth organisations and youth policy.

Youth is distinguished as a separate project activity area of the Erasmus+ programme. The programme aims to enhance the key competences and skills of youth with fewer opportunities, encourage young people to participate in the democratic European life and labour market, promote active citizenship, cultural dialogue, social inclusion and solidarity.

\textsuperscript{158} Order No. A1-692 of the Minister of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania of 16 December 2013 “On the Approval of the Plan Implementing the Youth Guarantee”.

In 2015, while implementing the EU Erasmus+ programme in the area of youth, 496 applications were received, which is 53 per cent more than in 2014. Funds were allocated to 121 projects (112 first main action, 3 strategic partnership and 6 structural dialogue projects). Applications from 27 municipalities were financed. It should be noted that 52.4 per cent of organisations submitted applications for the first time, and as much as 53.1 per cent of project implementers were programme novices.

It should be noted that in 2015 it was the first time that Erasmus+ offered an opportunity to finance international strategic partnerships in the area of youth. The aim was to promote international cooperation and experience sharing among the representatives of various sectors: education, training, non-governmental and business. In 2015, three strategic partnership projects were financed. While implementing the Erasmus+ programme in the area of youth in 2015, many applications regarding structural dialogue projects targeted at the European Youth Week were received (6 structural dialogue projects were financed in 2015).

In the same year, the list of organisations holding accreditation of the European Voluntary Service (EVS) was also widely expanded. In 2015, 59 organisations acquired the status of hosting, sending or coordinating organisation. Organisations currently holding the EVS accreditation function in 30 municipalities. This number is thrice as much as in 2014. Accreditation also entitles working with international volunteers or creating the conditions for Lithuanians to volunteer in other states and contribute to the activities of various organisations. During two years of programme implementation, 302 foreign volunteers came to Lithuania, and 75 Lithuanian volunteers went to other European states.

It should be noted that in order to improve the quality and impact of planned or ongoing projects, national agencies organised international training events in 2015. These courses aimed at attracting new organisations and provide additional competences to project implementers. The training courses targeted at national agency support structures – regional consultants and trainers, organised in cooperation with the Latvian national agency, could be mentioned as most significant.
6. Community, Child, Youth and Family Affairs

The results of the EU Erasmus+ programme in 2015

One of the activities supported under the EU Erasmus+ programme, co-financed from the state budget, is administration of the Eurodesk network. In 2015, the Eurodesk network was developed and supported in Lithuanian regions, enabling direct and easy access to young people and youth employees living in different cities. 40 Eurodesk Lithuania representative offices have been currently functioning in 30 cities: Molėtai, Kaunas, Panevėžys, Utena, Vilnius, Rietavas, Mažeikiai, Lazdijai, Plungė, Biržai, Šiauliai, Alytus, Zarašiai, Marijampolė, Kupiškis, Klaipėda District, Šilalė, Rokiškis, Radviliškis, Ukmergė, Visaginas, Naujoji Akmenė, Mažeikiai, Klaipėda, Šilutė, Druskininkai, Anykščiai, Kuršėnai and Jurbarkas. In 2015, regional representatives provided immediate consultations to 1 066 young persons and organised 163 information events. These events reached 4 901 young persons and professionals working with youth. 625 pieces of news and 52 articles of young journalists were announced on the portal during the year. The portal recorded 605 343 viewers in 2015.

Eurodesk Lithuania further developed the system of youth information and consultation.

Another activity supported by the EU Erasmus+ programme is the development of a structural dialogue with youth through the National Working Group. Financing for the implementation of the structural dialogue process by the National Working Group from the European Commission has been allocated since 2014. The agreement has been reached that responsibility for finance and activity implementation is undertaken by national youth councils throughout the European Union (the Lithuanian Youth Council in Lithuania). To sum up the key activities carried out between 1 August 2014 and 31 December 2014, the following work was done: (1) an analysis of the youth empowerment situation in Lithuania was conducted (legal, political and environmental aspects were overviewed); (2) a methodological publication for persons who organise structural dialogue consultations was prepared; (3) 20 immediate consultations and meetings with young people about youth empowerment were held (over 250 young persons participated in meetings, and consultations were held in 19 different cities); and (4) a communication strategy for 2015 was prepared. The National Working Group has been purposefully working during cycle IV in order to enhance visibility of the structural dialogue process among young people.
6.3.5. SHORT-TERM FOLLOW-UP

Consistent efforts are exerted in order to create favourable conditions for youth to become an active part of society and promote youth socialisation processes. The national youth policy priorities are to: involve young people in social life, promote active participation of youth at the national and regional levels, inform and consult youth, develop fact- and knowledge-based youth policy by strengthening the activities of youth researchers and cooperation with universities and research institutes in the area of youth. The plans for 2016 include improvement of the procedure for the collection of information on NEET in order to obtain reliable data about the situation in every municipality. The YG will be further implemented seeking to ensure provision of services to young people and prevention of occurrence of NEET in all municipalities. Furthermore, there are plans to submit the draft Law Amending the Law on Youth Policy Framework (new version) to the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania for deliberation. The new draft proposes to define work with youth, improve the activities of institutions working in the area of youth and strengthen regional youth policy.

6.4. FAMILY POLICY

Implementation of family policy remains one of the key strategic goals of the State of Lithuania. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour (hereinafter referred to as the “Ministry”) takes appropriate measures and actions to contribute to ensuring and consistently implementing family policy. The actions of the Ministry are based on the goal to involve all family members in decision-making related to ensuring and creating family welfare as well as sustainable society. The Ministry seeks to pursue family policy by implementing family policy measures envisaged in the Government Programme and coordinate actions in the area of family policy as well as the implementation of measures to reduce domestic violence.

6.4.1. FINANCIAL MEASURES FOR NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

In 2015, the Ministry financed 90 projects of non-governmental organisations (NGO) working in the area of family welfare. EUR 417 052 were allocated from the state budget funds to projects selected by tender. The aim of the tender was to select and finance projects targeted at promoting an independent and viable family based on mutual assistance and responsibility of family members, forming parenting skills, developing dissemination of positive upbringing methods in a family and young people’s social responsibility, carrying out prevention of crisis pregnancy and provide assistance in cases of crisis pregnancy.

In 2015, in accordance with the priority areas stipulated in tender regulations, project implementers carried out activities related to preparation for family and parenting, encouraging mutual assistance and responsibility of family members, formation of parenting skills, development of positive upbringing methodology, carrying out early prevention of family crises, and provision of assistance in divorce crises.

3 708 families, 2 779 engaged couples and 26 411 individuals (pregnant mothers, fathers, young people, children) took part in the activities carried out in 2015 (some people participated in several events organised by the same project implementer).

NGO activities were attended by 20 182 beneficiaries of services: young people (aged 14–29) – 6 025; young families (under 34 years of age) – 3 004; families of underage persons – 156; families in which at least one member has lived in the child care home – 135; underage persons and their families – 4 843 individuals/families; families with pregnant women or women who have recently given birth – 745; parents whose children have been
6. Community, Child, Youth and Family Affairs

placed under guardianship (foster care) – 231; single parents – 965; parents of families in crisis with children – 1 747; young people not in employment, education or training – 123; and other beneficiaries of services (“unique users”, participants of educational-information seminars, radio or TV audience, website visitors) – 2 208. NGOs also provided consultations to families, individuals and young people.

The number of persons participating in NGO activities has been increasing as of 2012; an increasing number of young persons and families have been using the services provided by NGOs. In 2012, there were about 13 000 such beneficiaries; in 2015–2016, over 20 000 persons participated in various activities.

In 2015, the Ministry selected activity projects of six non-governmental organisations, representing elderly people, by tender and allocated EUR 68 349 from the state budget. Project implementers carried out activities in the following fields: organisation of national and local (in the country’s cities and districts) civil-cultural events, organisation of conferences, assemblies and seminars for elderly people, maintenance of national and local art collectives and clubs, publishing activities (books, photo albums, other publications and articles on the issues relevant to elderly people) as well as publishing of other information material.

6.4.2. PUBLICITY ACTIVITIES IN RELATION TO THE NATIONAL DEMOGRAPHIC (POPULATION) POLICY STRATEGY IN THE AREA OF FAMILY WELFARE

When implementing measure “Publicising of the activities of the National Demographic (Population) Policy Strategy in the Area of Family Welfare” of the Action Plan of the National Demographic (Population) Policy Strategy in the Area of Family Welfare, the festival of families, social families, children from care homes, public organisations working with families, communities and individual persons of various age, entitled “One Family! One Heart!”, which has already become a tradition, was organised to mark the International Family’s Day and the International Children’s Day. The aim of the festival is to gather individual families, become involved in social and voluntary activities, rally family and social family organisations, promote positive parenting in families without children, and strengthen mutual communication and cooperation. In 2015, festive events were attended by more than 10 000 persons from all over Lithuania. They planted an oak wood of families and social families; individual families presented their family business; and the country’s regions introduced their sociocultural heritage. EUR 23 000 were allocated from the state budget for the organisation of the festival.

As of 2004, the Ministry has been implementing measure “Transferring funds for payment of premiums to mothers of many children”. This premium is granted to mothers who gave birth to, raised and brought up properly seven and more children. The ceremony is held annually at the President’s Office to mark the Mother’s Day. These mothers are awarded the medal of the Order for Merits to Lithuania in the name of the President of the Republic of Lithuania. The candidatures are nominated to the President of the Republic of Lithuania by the Minister of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania. Besides the award, lump sum premiums are granted to these mothers. In 2015, premiums were paid to 47 mothers of many children; a total of EUR 13 833 (EUR 290 to each person) were allocated for this purpose. In 2016, 44 mothers were awarded; EUR 13 000 were allocated for their premiums.

With the aim of improving the demographic situation and overcoming the consequences of population ageing, the Action Plan of Family Welfare and Reduction of Ageing Consequences 2016, the Action Plan of Integrated Services to Family 2016–2020, the Action Plan of Motivation of Elderly People and Promotion of Voluntary Activities 2016–2020 have been drafted. The action plans implement the provisions of the Programme of the Sixteenth Government 2012–2016160.

6.4.3. THE ACTION PLAN OF FAMILY WELFARE AND REDUCTION OF AGEING CONSEQUENCES 2016


The purpose of the Action Plan is to create legal, social, economic conditions to strengthen families, ensure their full-fledged functioning and help overcome the negative consequences related to population ageing. The Action Plan envisages measures aimed at promoting employment of family members and elderly people and creating conditions to reconcile family and work responsibilities, developing the network of services in order to ensure physical, material and psychosocial security of family, children and elderly people and guarantee prevention of social exclusion, improving the system of provision of financial support to family which helps meet the security and social needs of a family, raise family self-esteem, analyse and evaluate demographic changes in order to efficiently implement family policy.

Seeking proper planning and making decisions related to the country’s demographic development, in consultation with society, the Action Plan provides for measure “Drawing up the guidelines for the future development of demographic policy (White Paper)”. This measure will be developed in cooperation with scientists working in the areas of demographic (population) policy and reduction of ageing consequences. The drawn up document will be discussed in public space. The drafters expect to receive valuable proposals and observations from society and the expert community, which will be evaluated and summarised and, using information presented by scientists, the drafters will draw up a medium-term programming document that will envisage measures and funds to address the demographic issues and mitigate population ageing consequences.

6.4.4. THE ACTION PLAN OF INTEGRATED SERVICES TO FAMILY 2016–2020

The purpose of the Action Plan of Integrated Services to Family 2016–2020\textsuperscript{162} (hereinafter referred to as the “Action Plan”) is to create the conditions for the family to receive integrated services by ensuring their accessibility in the territory of every municipality in order to empower families to overcome crises and reconcile family and work responsibilities, develop and promote family citizenship and the sense of community.

The Action Plan will be implemented by financing the following integrated services to family: training of positive parenting, psychosocial assistance, services of development of family skills and sociocultural services, mediation services, child supervision services, a transportation service to persons who receive services stipulated in the Action Plan, organisation and coordination of services, information and counselling of a potential target group, etc.

When providing the envisaged services, priority is given to non-governmental organisations. At least 75 per cent of funds, planned to be allocated for the provision of services established in the Action Plan, must be envisaged for financing the services provided by NGOs.


Applicants, i.e. administrations of municipalities, are responsible for the preparation and proper implementation of a project aimed at implementing the Action Plan, planning of services to family envisaged to be provided during project implementation, as well as organisation of the provision of these services. A municipal administration must guarantee that coordination of integrated services to family, provision of information and consultations about the services are carried out following the ‘one-stop-shop’ principle, and the place where the activities indicated in the Action Plan are carried out is called the community family home and has a sign “Community Family Home” visible to the public.

The Action Plan is financed from the European Social Fund. EUR 21,159,863 have been allocated for its implementation in 2016–2020.

6.4.5. THE ACTION PLAN OF MOTIVATION OF ELDERLY PEOPLE AND PROMOTION OF VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES 2016–2020

The purpose of the Action Plan of Motivation of Elderly People and Promotion of Voluntary Activities 2016–2020 (hereinafter referred to as the “Action Plan”) is to increase participation of elderly people in the labour market and voluntary activities by creating favourable conditions to solve social and civil issues. The target group of the Action Plan includes persons aged 55 and older (up to the pensionable age) (hereinafter referred to as the “target group representatives”).

The Action Plan will be implemented by involving target group representatives in voluntary activities, providing consultations to target group representatives, motivating them and boosting their self-esteem, developing target group representatives’ generic competences necessary for their active citizenship, social integration, employment, and increase of possibilities to remain in the labour market, i.e. organisation of training, educational activities and information dissemination.

The Action Plan is financed from the European Social Fund within the framework of the Operational Programme for European Union Structural Funds Investments 2014–2020. The funds allocated for the implementation of the Action Plan amount to EUR 6,000,000.

6.4.6. REDUCTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Non-governmental organisations have been actively providing assistance to victims of violence. The network of specialised assistance centres (SAC), administered by NGOs, has been functioning in Lithuania since 2012. This network has been created in implementing the Republic of Lithuania Law on Protection against Domestic Violence. The aim of SAC is to guarantee provision of specialised integrated assistance to victims of violence. These centres help victims of violence overcome the crisis, inform and consult them on the type and place of assistance they may receive, mediate and represent them in other institutions, provide psychological and legal assistance as well as assistance in restoring interpersonal relationships with family members.

A tender for the selection of projects of specialised assistance centres was organised in 2015. Funds have been allocated to six organisations which together with partners (a total of 17 specialised assistance centres) will provide specialised integrated assistance all over Lithuania in 2016–2018.

In 2015, SAC registered 11,432 persons who suffered from domestic violence (the police reported 10,294 cases, whereas 1,138 (10 per cent) persons sought assistance independently). Specialised integrated assistance was provided to 10,591 victims of domestic violence (of whom 8,208 (77 per cent) women, 862 (8 per cent) men
and 1,521 (14 per cent) children, i.e. 93 per cent of victims of violence) who sought assistance independently or were reported about by the police. 812 (7.1 per cent) persons refused assistance or could not be contacted. The following services were provided: information and consultation – 17,018 times, psychological assistance – 4,226 times, and legal assistance – 2,540 times.

In the first quarter of 2016, SAC recorded 4,115 victims of domestic violence. Assistance was provided to over 2,400 victims of domestic violence.

As compared with 2012, when SAC started to operate, the number of victims of domestic violence who were provided assistance has more than doubled. In 2013, assistance was provided to over 5,000 persons, whereas in 2015, as many as 10,500 persons received specialised integrated assistance.

In 2015, work with abusers willing to abandon their violent behaviour was carried out. A tender for the selection of projects of NGOs working with abusers was organised, and eight projects were selected and financed. The tender budget amounted to EUR 23,000. Work was carried out with respect to 252 persons (239 men and 13 women) who exerted domestic violence. Among all abusers, the major share was constituted by men aged 30–59 (159 persons) and men aged 18–29 (63 persons). The age of female abusers (9 women) was 30–59 years. Several forms of assistance were provided to the same person. The most frequent forms of provided assistance included assistance of a social worker (202 persons) and information and consultation services (184 persons); other services (sessions of the programme of changing violent behaviour; restoring interpersonal relations with family members; practical sessions of the development of positive parenting skills; group sessions conducted by a psychologist and a social worker) were provided to 181 persons, psychological assistance – to 142 persons, and legal services – to 28 persons. Various events were organised, including discussions, meetings, conferences, seminars and other publicity measures.


In 2015, the Ministry organised a tender for the selection of projects targeted at the campaign “16 Days without Violence” (25 November – 10 December 2015); 50 projects received funding. They aimed at familiarising society with the manifestations of domestic violence, its consequences, legal outcomes and liability, developing intolerance of violent behaviour and informing about assistance provided to victims.

In 2015, training of specialists was organised, targeted at teamwork while providing integrated assistance to victims of domestic violence and carrying out prevention of domestic violence. The training was aimed at deepening knowledge in the field of prevention of domestic violence, in particular developing coordinated interinstitutional cooperation in order to efficiently reduce the prevalence of domestic violence. The training was targeted at prosecutors, investigators, specialists of municipal child rights protection offices, employees of specialised assistance centres, employees of non-governmental organisations, social workers, psychologists, social educators, medical specialists, and police officers. 85 specialists participated in training. The training was held in Šiauliai, Panevėžys and Utena counties (27–30 specialists from each county).

Moreover, training for consultants and employees of specialised assistance centres, who work in the area of prevention of domestic violence and provision of assistance to victims of domestic violence, was organised. 36 persons participated in training.


Equality between women and men is one of the principal values recognised on both the international and European Union (EU) level and a horizontal priority for all policy areas, which was also highlighted in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted in 2015 by the United Nations (UN). In Lithuania, equal rights for women and men in all areas are guaranteed *de jure* by the Republic of Lithuania Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (hereinafter referred to as the “Law”). Programmes, measures and projects are consistently and systematically being implemented in order to solve problems related to equality between women and men.

The guarantee of equal rights and equal opportunities for all is pointed out among the principal values in the Programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania 2012–2016. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour has been assigned to implement gender equality initiatives aimed at addressing the issues of equality between women and men.

Amendments to the Law were adopted during the period of implementation of the Government Programme. These amendments ensure proper transposition of the directives of the European Parliament and of the Council165 into national legislation, horizontality of the principle of equality between women and men on both national and local level, as well as smoother functioning of the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson.

A new National Programme of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2015–2021 (hereinafter referred to as the “Programme”) was drawn up in early 2015. In order to achieve its goals and objectives, the Action Plan 2015–2017 was developed. It is implemented by a number of ministries, various national institutions, non-governmental organisations, centres of gender studies and social partners.

Seeking to ensure proper functioning of the mechanism of equal opportunities for women and men as well as the horizontality of this priority, the Commission on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men held regular meetings in the period from 2012 to the first half of 2016 and discussed the key current issues related to implementation of the Programme and its Action Plan, international commitments, etc.

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In 2012–2016, the fifth periodic report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was submitted to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and further clarifications provided at CEDAW meetings. The Lithuanian candidate was re-elected to CEDAW in 2016. In March 2016, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour held for the first time a side event at the UN premises during the session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).

In 2015, Lithuania’s position concerning the conformity of the provisions of the recommendation on gender equality in education, employment and entrepreneurship of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to national law was endorsed. In 2016, national position concerning the OECD recommendation on gender equality in public life was drawn up.

7. Equality between Women and Men

7.1. LAW ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN AND MEN

The Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, adopted in 1998, is the principal national legal act which implements equal opportunities for all, irrespective of gender, enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania.

Seeking to adequately transpose Directive 2010/41/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2010 on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity and repealing Council Directive 86/613/EEC, an amendment to the Law was adopted on 13 March 2012. It specified the concept of direct discrimination and supplemented Article 3 with the provision that state and municipal institutions must, within their competence, not violate equal rights for women and men when providing administrative or public services. This amendment also stipulates the duty of state and municipal institutions and agencies, enterprises, organisations and natural persons to submit to the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson, at his request, the information, documents and material necessary for performing the functions of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson not later than within a period of 10 working days from the day of receipt of the request for information.

In order to ensure uninterrupted and smooth operation of the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson, Article 11 was amended in 2012, providing that the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson shall be substituted in the case of leave or due to other reasons (sickness, business trips, maternity or parental leave, etc.).

Article 3 of the Law was supplemented with paragraph 2 on 10 October 2014, which sets forth that state institutions shall provide for measures aimed at ensuring equal opportunities for women and men in strategic planning documents, whereas municipal institutions shall provide for measures aimed at ensuring equal opportunities for women and men in municipal strategic development and/or municipal strategic action plans. Supplementing of this Law has preconditioned adequate establishment of equality between women and men as a horizontal priority on all levels. In 2016, seeking to ensure more efficient protection of individuals against discrimination, proper implementation of the decisions of the Court of Justice of the EU and to conform to the EU directives, another amendment to the Law was tabled to the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania for approval. This amendment specifies that discrimination also includes women’s discrimination on grounds of pregnancy or maternity leave, and that besides sexual harassment in the workplace, harassment in the workplace is also prohibited.

7.2. NATIONAL PROGRAMME OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN AND MEN AND ITS ACTION PLAN

Seeking to implement initiatives aimed at addressing the issues of equality between women and men, the fourth National Programme of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2015–2021 was approved in early
2015. The purpose of the Programme is to address the issues of equality between women and men in all areas in a systematic manner and ensure the implementation of the provisions of the Law with regard to the EU and international commitments in the area of gender equality. The order of the Minister of Social Security and Labour of 13 April 2015 approved the Action Plan to be implemented by municipalities, the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson, the National Courts Administration, the Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania, non-governmental organisations, social partners (trade unions and employers’ organisations), and university centres for gender studies.

The programmes approved in 2010–2014 and in 2015 focus on the promotion of all opportunities for women and men in employment and work, seeking for the balanced number of women and men in decision-making and highest positions, development of the mechanisms and methods for the implementation of equality between women and men, and fulfilment of EU and international cooperation commitments.

In 2014, while implementing Measure 25.3 of the Programme of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2010–2014, the Social Innovation Fund conducted a survey “Women and men in Lithuania's society: Comprehensive comparative assessment of the impact of changes of the status of women and men in all areas” and compared its results with the findings of other similar surveys conducted in 1994, 2000 and 2009. The survey revealed that the favour of society towards women executives and women in the political and economic decision-making process has been constantly rising. Women's participation in the labour market and promotion of women's entrepreneurship were also evaluated favourably, yet the reduction of the gender pay gap and efficiency of institutional mechanisms did not receive a very favourable evaluation.

According to the information from Statistics Lithuania, in 2015 women's employment rate increased slightly more rapidly than men's employment rate, whereas the unemployment rate was lower. Gender pay gap in industry, construction and services companies, except for public administration and defence, compulsory social insurance, increased from 12.6 per cent (in 2012) to 14.8 per cent (in 2014). The most considerable gender pay gap was observed in financial and insurance activities – 40 per cent (in 2012) and 39.9 per cent (in 2014).

According to the data of the European Institute for Gender Equality, in 2012, the Lithuanian Gender Equality Index166 was 40.2 (22nd position in the EU), whereas the average of the EU Member States was 52.4. Lithuania's best result was achieved in the domain of health, average result – work and income, and the lowest result – power (decision-making) and time.

A study on the conformity of the Methodology of Evaluation of Positions and Job Descriptions and (hereinafter referred to as the “Methodology”) to Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast) was carried out in 2015. The study revealed that the Methodology is in line with the directive and there is no need to amend the concept of payment for work in legislation, yet methodology awareness should be raised, and the monitoring of the implementation of equal pay on the national level should be enhanced. Training is planned to be organised in 2016–2017 with a view to presenting the above Methodology to social partners in all regions.

In 2015, the Methodology for Gender Impact Assessment of Draft Decisions (a gender equality guide for state and municipal agencies) was drafted. Its aim is to serve as an aid for state and municipal institutions to more efficiently work in the area of equality between women and men and seek that policy-makers integrate gender equality in drafting legal acts. Furthermore, it aims to facilitate change in the attitude of civil servants and to renounce gender-neutral approach in the process of drafting legal acts by transforming procedural culture. The Methodology was presented for the Commission on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men on 28 February 2016.

166 The Gender Equality Index is the synthetic indicator developed by the European Institute for Gender Equality, which shows the progress of the EU and its Member States towards gender equality. The Gender Equality Index covers eight areas, six of which (work, money, knowledge, time, power and health) constitute the main index and the remaining two (intersecting inequalities and violence) are subsidiary areas. Further information is available at http://eige.europa.eu.
7.3. EUROPEAN UNION AND INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS

The Programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania points out the fact that Lithuania is seen as actively involved in international policy and EU member which has an important task to maintain permanent cooperation by ensuring the principles of human rights and freedoms. Being a member of various international organisations, Lithuania has many commitments in the area of equal opportunities for women and men, thus it is necessary to participate in relevant international discussions.

**European Union**

During Lithuania’s Presidency of the Council of the EU, Lithuania placed promotion of the effectiveness of institutional mechanisms as the gender equality priority. A high-level conference “Gender Equality de facto as a Contribution to Reaching ‘Europe 2020’ Targets”, held on 13 September 2013 in Vilnius, aimed at a review of institutional mechanisms for gender equality of the EU Member States and ways of promoting their effectiveness. On 9 December 2013, the EU Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council adopted Conclusions on the Effectiveness of Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality. In order to improve women’s involvement in economic decision-making, Lithuanian presidency made efforts to reach a compromise on the Proposal for a Directive on improving the gender balance among directors of companies listed on stock exchanges and related measures. The discussion was further continued by other EU presidencies.

The gender balance in decision-making is one of the priorities in both the EU Strategy for Equality between Women and Men and the National Programme. In late 2015, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour in cooperation with partners accomplished the two-year project “Gender balance in economic decision-making”. As a result, the situation and trends of Lithuanian company boards were analysed, training on gender equality law and practice, added value of balanced representation was organised. An international conference entitled “Make the profitable investment!” was held in Vilnius on 2 July 2015.

In 2015–2016, considerable attention was paid to the development of the Strategy for Equality between Women and Men on the EU level. In December 2015, the European Commission presented the Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016–2019 for the EU Council. Strategic Engagement focuses on the following five priority areas: (1) increasing female labour-market participation and the economic independence of women and men; (2) reducing the gender pay, income and pension gaps and thus fighting poverty among women; (3) promoting equality between women and men in decision-making; (4) combating gender-based violence and protecting and supporting victims; (5) promoting gender equality and women’s rights across the world. The Minister of Social Security and Labour supported EU Strategy and its priorities, which are in line with the Lithuanian strategic documents, at the EU level meetings.

**United Nations**

Lithuania is a state party to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. In fulfilling its commitments, the fifth report of the Republic of Lithuania on the implementation of this Convention in Lithuania was submitted to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. On 9 July 2014, in Geneva, further clarifications were provided at CEDAW meeting. CEDAW recommends Lithuania strengthening the mandate and authority of the Commission on Equal Opportunities.

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for Women and Men, ensuring efficient budget and effective monitoring the implementation of the National Programme in all regions. Lithuania is requested to provide written information on gender equality institutional mechanisms and violence against women by 1 July 2016.

The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted in September 2015. It sets out gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls both as a separate goal and a complex issue integrated in all sustainable development objectives and indicators. Seeking empowerment for women, all forms of discrimination have to be eliminated, violence has to be combatted, full and effective participation of women as well as equal opportunities for leadership have to be ensured, unpaid care and domestic work have to be recognised and valued. During the debates of the 60th Session of the CSW regarding the UN Agenda, the Minister of Social Security and Labour stressed the importance of a strong legal and political framework, effective institutions and non-governmental organisations and the need for the review of national programmes in order to achieve the goals of the UN Agenda.

The Ministry of Social Security and Labour held for the first time a side event entitled “Tangible and Measurable Tools for the Prevention of Violence against Women” on 17 March 2016, during the 60th Session of the CSW. The panellists of this event were the Minister of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania, representatives of the UN Women, the European Institute for Gender Equality and CEDAW, including Prof. Dalia Leinartė, who has later been elected for the second term to CEDAW. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have been supporting the publicity campaign of the Lithuanian candidate to CEDAW.

**Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development**

In 2015, seeking membership of Lithuania in the OECD, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour drew up Lithuania’s position regarding the OECD recommendation on gender equality in education, employment and entrepreneurship. OECD encourages states to ensure gender equality in education, increase women’s representation in decision-making, reduce pay gap, take measures to eliminate sexual harassment in the workplace, reduce gender gap from the aspects of entrepreneurship and financial literacy. The legal framework of the Republic of Lithuania is in line with the provisions of this OECD recommendation.

In May 2016, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour started analysing the new OECD recommendation on gender equality in public life. OECD recommends to commit at the highest political level to the development and implementation of a whole-of-government strategy for effective gender equality in public life, to integrate gender perspective in all phases of the budget cycle, to conduct gender impact assessment, to promote women’s participation in politics and judiciary, to raise awareness and accountability among public sector managers. In June 2016, the mission of OECD public administration experts visited Lithuania with the interest in implementation of this recommendation.
8.1. FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION STRUCTURAL FUNDS

8.1.1. MEASURES UNDER PRIORITY 1 “HIGH QUALITY EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION” OF THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES 2007–2013

Financial support granted to Lithuania by European Union (hereinafter – EU) Structural Funds enables implementation of the national long-term goal – to ensure continuous economic growth of the country and to reduce economic development imbalances between Lithuania and EU average. This goal is aimed at improving of the growth rates of the Gross domestic product (GDP) of the Lithuanian economy and creating more new and better jobs.

Through implementation of the Priority 1 “High Quality Employment and Social Inclusion” (hereinafter – Priority 1) of the Operational Programme for the Development of Human Resources 2007–2013 (hereinafter – OPHRD) administered by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (hereinafter – Ministry), the following objectives were pursued:

- **Objective 1** – to increase adaptability of employees and companies to the labour market needs;
- **Objective 2** – to promote population’s employment and participation in the labour market;
- **Objective 3** – to enhance social inclusion.

In 2015, the implementation of OPHRD was completed.

8.1.1.1. INCREASING YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

In 2012–2015, significant attention was focused on measures aimed at increasing youth employment. For this purpose, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour implemented OPHRD measures financed from EU Structural Funds.
During the period of 2013–2015, the measure “Promotion of Youth Employment and Motivation” was carried out within the framework of OPHRD Priority 1, the purpose of which is to motivate socially vulnerable young people to integrate into the labour market and/or formal education system, by providing them with personal, social, professionals competences, creating prerequisites for social employment and professional activity and participation in volunteering activities for them. Financial support of EUR 2.3 million was granted to the measure and it was implemented by the Department of Youth Affairs (hereinafter – DYA) under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour by implementing the project “Youth Voluntary Service (EUR 1.16 million) and by the Lithuanian Labour Exchange under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour by implementing the project “Trust Yourself” (EUR 1.16 million).

The target of the DYA’s project “Youth Voluntary Service” was unemployed youth aged 16–29, prioritising young people who have not acquired any education or acquired only primary or secondary education and who were registered in the labour exchange. Youth who completed vocational training programmes or higher education studies were also eligible to the project. The purpose of the project was to create conditions for young people to participate in voluntary activities. By 31 December 2015, 436 young persons were included into the project who carried out voluntary activities in 197 accredited organisations.

The objective of the Lithuanian Labour Exchange’s (hereinafter – LLE) project “Trust Yourself” was to promote youth integration into the labour market and/or education system, by providing the services of social rehabilitation and training for employment on the labour market by applying the experience of NGOs. Young people aged 16–25, not in education, employment or training and not participating in active labour market policy measures participated in the project. By 31 December 2015, 3 538 young people were included into activities, 75.2 per cent of whom successfully completed intensive support programmes, 28.9 per cent also took part in the active labour market policy measures.

In 2015, the implementation of the OPHRD global grant measure “Support for the first job” was completed. The measure is aimed at increasing employment of 16–29 aged young people who have never been in employment, by providing employers with additional financial incentives. The incentive of partial compensation of wages was used by 2 743 companies, which employed 22 246 young people with no working experience. The total amount of compensations paid was EUR 8 million. In case of the success of this measure, it is planned to continue a similar measure from the EU Fund Investments Funds 2014–2020, by expanding the circle of target group, stipulating support not only for youth but also to elderly people.

During 2015, loans from the Entrepreneurship Promotion Fund were further provided. The purpose of this Fund is by providing loans to create conditions for very small and small companies, natural persons to start-up their own business, as well as for social enterprises to develop their business by using financial engineering measure, thus promoting entrepreneurship and self-employment and job creation. Implementation of the measure (providing of loans) is combined with training and consulting of business start-ups, assistance in developing and implementing business plans. Since the beginning of the measure implementation, over 1 200 persons and companies received loans and created over 3 500 jobs. Despite full use of the funds of EUR 14.6 million assigned to the measure, reporting on them and achievement of the set indicators, the fund is continuing its activities and providing loans from the money repaid by the borrowers. On 31 March 2016, the amount of lent money is EUR 17,72 million.

In 2015, the implementation of the OPHRD global grant measure “Entrepreneurship Promotion Subsidies” was completed, the aim of which was to create additional financial incentives for loan borrowers of the Entrepreneurship Promotion Fund to facilitate their foothold in the market at the initial independent activity stage. This measure strongly increased the interest in the Entrepreneurship Promotion Fund and activity of loan borrowers and contributed to the achieved and exceeded results of the Fund’s activities. The total number of companies that used subsidies to start business was 787, they received loans in the amount of over EUR 4.5 million. The measure is planned to be continued also in 2014–2020. In order to implement 7.3.3 objective “To
8.1.1.2. OTHER MEASURES OF THE OPHRD PRIORITY 1

In 2007–2013, the measure “Reconciliation of Work and Family Life”, i.e. 22 projects that received financial support in the amount of EUR14 006 993.46 were implemented and completed. The purpose of this measure is to create favourable conditions for economically active working-age population to reconcile work and family life, to promote creation of family-friendly jobs. This measure was aimed to help people unemployed due to family obligations or unable to participate in the labour market to receive care of their dependents, by increasing availability and flexibility of services, promoting diversity of work organisation forms, building tolerant approach to employees with family obligations. By 31 December 2013, 7 296 persons participated in the activities funded under this measure, 2 638 attended training courses organised within the framework of this measure. Project participants who managed to sustain their jobs six months after the project implementation accounted for 59.12 per cent, 20.97 per cent persons found employment during the project implementation and within six months after the project implementation.

The measure “Discrimination Reduction, Prevention of Social Problems on the Labour Market” was implemented in 2012–2013. Out of 18 project proposals submitted, funding of EUR 1 047 127.71 was provided to eight projects. The purpose of this measure is to reduce discrimination on the labour market, to promote equality between women and men and prevention of social problems, by informing and educating society in pursuit of this goal. During the implementation of this measure, 7 211 persons participated in 635 various events organised within the framework of this project, 36 publications were drawn and issued, 6 663 persons positively assessed knowledge acquired at the events.

In 2013–2015, projects under the OPHRD measure “Reconciliation of Work and Family Life: Development of Integral Assistance” were implemented in the following municipalities: districts of Anykščiai, Biržai, Kaunas, Kretinga, Pasvalys, Radviliškis, Šakiai, Šilalė, Šilutė, Tauragė, Telšiai, Trakai, Ukmergė, Vilkaviškis, towns of Alytus, Klaipėda, Šiauliai, Visaginas, Vilnius City, Elektrėnai, Raseiniai. These projects received funding of EUR 5.9 million in total. Twenty two projects were financed under this measure, one of which is intended to determine efficiency and applicability of integral assistance. The outcome of the projects was created model of qualitative integral home assistance (social care and nursing at home) for people with disability, elderly people and counselling assistance to family members. The measure was aimed to help adult family members looking after their family members to reconcile work and family life. Upon implementation of the projects, by 31 December 2015, 801 person participated in training, all of them successfully completed training, 633 nursing specialists were employed (social workers, assistants of social workers, nurses, assistants of nurses, physical therapists, massage specialists). During the implementation of the projects, various technical equipment, vehicles were purchased, over 80 mobile teams were set up, 1 505 persons received integral assistance services.

Department of Supervision of Social Services under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour implemented the project in 2013–2015 within the framework of the OPHRD measure “Building of Competences of Employees of Social Services Institutions”. The measure was aimed at increasing competences of employees of social services institutions, improving their knowledge and skills. The project received funding of EUR 1.5 million. By 31 December 2015, qualifications were improved of 4 862 employees of various social services institutions from 58 municipalities. Specification of information system (registration journal) requirements was prepared and approved, information system module was developed.

increase labour demand by promoting entrepreneurship of population facing difficulties on the labour market” of Priority 7 of the operational programme, new measure No. 07.3.3-IVG-T-428 “Start-up Subsidies” will be organised.
In 2013–2015, to ensure quality and accessibility to services of rehabilitation and reintegration into society to the persons addicted to psychoactive substances, in order to prevent their social exclusion, the Drug, Tobacco and Alcohol Control Department implemented the project under the OPHRD measure "Psychological and Social Rehabilitation of Persons Addicted to Psychoactive Substances". The project was allocated EUR 3.2 million. Under the signed agreement, participation of minimum 625 persons in the project activities was planned, but following increased funding, by 31 December 2015, free psychological and social rehabilitation services were provided to 716 persons addicted to psychoactive substances, 28.07 per cent of whom were employed.

From the commencement (2008) of the implementation of the measure “Integration of Persons of Social Risks and Social Inclusion into the Labour Market” until the end of 2015, three calls to take proposals were announced, under which 133 projects were funded and implemented (EUR 53.8 million). The purpose of the measure is to help people suffering from social risk and social exclusion to integrate into the labour market to prevent their social exclusion. During the implementation of this measure in 33 large municipalities of Lithuania, the following activities were supported: social rehabilitation (individual and group motivation; assessment of person's needs; development, maintenance and restoration of social and independent life skills and working skills; organisation of self-help groups in communities) and professional rehabilitation (professional guidance, information, consulting, assessment, restoration of professional skills or development of new skills; practical training at workplace; development of general skills; vocational training).

From 2012 until 31 December 2015, 26,864 persons suffering from social risk and social exclusion participated in the projects. Out of all participants of the projects 4001 person belongs to target group of disabled, 8,053 are convicted persons released from detention institutions, 1,738 persons addicted to psychoactive substances, 3,054 members of social risk families were included into the measures of the projects. Upon implementation of this measure, persons suffering from social risk or social exclusion, who found jobs or continued training six months after the completion of the activities accounted for 30.85 per cent, including 35.29 per cent of people with disability, 24.63 per cent convicted or released persons, 32.83 per cent persons addicted to psychoactive substances.

In 2015, the measure “Development of Human Resources in Companies” of the OPHRD Priority 1 was further implemented. The measure is aimed at improving qualifications of employees and managers, knowledge and skills in companies, enhancing employees’ abilities to adapt themselves to company’s needs and labour market changes. Under this measure, funding was allocated to 251 project, but during 2009–2015, implementation of 12 projects was ceased. Implementation of the last projects under this measure was completed in the fourth quarter of 2015. In total, 239 projects were implemented under this measure. It must be noted that by 31 December 2015, 44,206 employees of companies participated in training organised under this measure, including 42,658 employees in training granting or improving professional qualifications, special professional knowledge and skills, 44,019 employees of companies successfully completed their training. Upon implementation of this measure, funds of EUR 73.4 million were used, including EUR 50.8 million EU funds. The measure will not be implemented in 2014–2020.

In 2015, implementation of the measure “Human Resources INVEST LT+” under the OPHRD Priority 1 was continued, which is aimed at improving qualifications of employees and managers, knowledge and skills in companies that attract foreign direct investments into start-up or development of businesses engaged in high value added production and/or high value added services. Under this measure, funding was allocated to 22 projects, but during 2014, implementation of 3 projects was ceased. Implementation of the last projects under this measure was completed in the fourth quarter of 2015. In total, 19 projects were implemented under this measure. It must be noted that by 31 December 2015, 1,617 persons participated in training under this measure, 1,585 successfully completed their training. Upon implementation of this measure, funds of EUR 3.75 million were used, including over EUR 2.24 million EU funds. The measure will not be implemented in 2014–2020.
Under the measure “Development Computer Literacy Skills”, which is aimed at promoting population's competitiveness on the labour market, increasing their possibilities in the field of employment through development of computer literacy skills, 22 projects were launched in 2010, EUR 10.5 million was allocated for them. During implementation of the measure, training was organised for Lithuanian population irrespective of their status on the labour market (employed, unemployed, economically inactive persons, with exception of pupils and students). Implementation of the last projects under this measure was completed in the first half year of 2014. During the implementation of the measure, 66 008 persons participated in training, 65 811 successfully completed their training.

Under the measure “Development of Human Resources in Public Sector” 37 projects were launched in 2009, which received financing in the amount of EUR 29.5 million. The purpose of this measure is to enhance qualifications, knowledge and skills of employees of public sector institutions and bodies. Implementation of the last projects under this measure was completed in the first half year of 2013. During the implementation of the measure 46 051 person participated in training, including 45 203 persons in training granting or improving professional qualifications, special professional knowledge and skills, 46 035 persons successfully completed their training.

Funding for the active labour policy measures was terminated in 2015, following implementation of the projects under the OPHRD measure “Integration of Job Seekers into the Labour Market”. It was the largest measure of the period 2007–2013, aimed at helping unemployed and economically inactive persons to establish themselves or to return into the labour market, to increase motivation, employment capacities and possibilities to find employment of unemployed (especially, of long-term unemployed). The last and largest project “Stay in the Labour Market” of this measure was completed during the reporting period. In total, including additional funding, this project received over EUR 30.3 million EU support. Nearly 30 000 job seekers participated in the project activities, including 24 600 in supported employment programmes, 5 343 in vocational training. Within six months after participation in the project, over 80 per cent project participants found employment. Active labour market policy measures will be further financed from EU 2014–2020 period funds, by implementing Priority 7 “Promoting Quality Employment and Participation in the Labour Market” of the Operational Programme for the European Union Fund’s Investments in 2014-2020 prioritising increase of employment of elder people and long-term unemployed.

In the first half year of 2013, implementation of the OPHRD measure “Corporate Social Responsibility” (hereinafter – CSR) was completed, which was aimed to propagating social awareness in business, improving capacities to implement the principles of corporate social responsibility in business in pursuit of competitiveness, safe and environmentally clean environment, strong social cohesion and transparent and ethical business practice. This measure partly implemented the National Programme of Corporate Social Responsibility Development approved by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania on 12 January 2010 and the plan of its implementing measures.

During implementation of the measure, two projects of the total value of EUR 1.58 million were funded. They were implemented by the United Nations Development Programme in Lithuania.

During implementation of the measure, 398 events were held and attended by 3 393 persons, 67 companies joined the United Nations Global Compact Initiative, 16 methodical publications were prepared, 23 co-initiatives of non-governmental organisations and business were implemented in the fields of environment protection, labour relations, business integration into society, promotion of business citizenship and volunteering, human rights, and anticorruption.

In the course of 2015, implementation of the OPHRD measure “Promoting Social Dialogue” was completed. The purpose of this measure was to develop capacities in the field of social partnership of employers, employers organisation and their associations, trade unions and their associations, to improve collective labour relations, to promote signing of collective agreements, to inform and educate members of trade unions and society
about social dialogue development. The measure is intended for companies, institutions, organisations willing to develop social dialogue, to sign collective agreements, to set up Safety and Health Committees. During implementation of the measure, 32 projects of the total value of EUR 4.35 million were implemented. 23 688 participants (planned 18 000) participated in the activities of the measure, 270 collective agreements and 13 sectoral collective agreements were signed. Some results pursued by the project were not reached during the implementation of the projects, but collective negotiations are still taking place and results are sought even after completion of the projects. The measure evidently induced more active social dialogue, in the period 2014–2020 investments into this field will be continue, attempts will be made to develop social dialogue further and to improve its quality.

8.1.2. MEASURES OF THE COHESION PROMOTION OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME 2007–2013 FINANCED FROM THE EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

Cohesion Promotion Operational Programme (hereinafter – CPOP) Priority 2 “Quality and Accessibility of Public Services: Health, Education and Social Infrastructure” is aimed at ensuring accessible and high-quality basic services provided by institutions implementing health care, education, state employment support policies, social services and services for people with disability.

**Supported measures and funds allocated for their implementation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Financed measures</th>
<th>Assignations from EU Funds EUR million</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Development of infrastructure of non-institutional social services</td>
<td>44,30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Development of infrastructure of institutional (stationary) social services</td>
<td>39,18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Modernisation of the infrastructure of territorial labour exchange offices of the Lithuanian Labour Exchange</td>
<td>20,35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Development of institutions providing services to people with disability, including professional rehabilitation</td>
<td>23,30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour*

Since commencement of funding period, 204 agreements on the projects of funding and administrative infrastructure development were signed under the measures of CPOP Priority 2 administered by the Ministry. As on 29 February 2016, 198 projects were successfully completed, 6 projects were terminated upon project promoters’ request. Implementation of all measures was completed in 2007–2013, 99.78 per cent support was absorbed.

As on 29 February 2016, the total financial support from the European Regional Development Fund (hereinafter – ERDF) distributed and absorbed during implementation of the projects amounted to EUR 126.85 million of EU funds. Implemented measures of CPOP Priority 2 were aimed at the following target groups: adult persons with disability, children with disability and impaired intellect, elderly people, social risk families, social risk adults, children without parental care, oncological patients and their families, employers and job seekers, persons pursuing professional career.

ERDF financial support allocated to the measures “Development of Infrastructure of Institutional (Stationary) Social Services”, “Development of Infrastructure of Non-institutional Social Services”, “Development of Institutions Providing Services to the Disabled” contributed to improvement of the quality of public services and
their development throughout Lithuania. As many as 228 social services provision objects were modernised or constructed in the country. Once the projects are implemented, about 254,000 people are expected to receive services, they will be more accessible and more in line with the needs of old service recipients.

### Projects by target groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target group</th>
<th>Number of projects</th>
<th>Assigned funding (EU+SB) EUR million</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults with disability</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>42.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social risk families</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>11.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elderly persons</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children with disability</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social risk adults</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children without parental care</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed social services institutions</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>45.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employers, job seekers and persons pursuing professional career</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oncological patients and their families</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour*  
Table 8.1.2-2

#### 8.1.3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION FUNDS’ INVESTMENTS 2014–2020

During the period 2014–2020, the Ministry is responsible for implementation of the measures under Priority 7 “Promoting Quality Employment and Participation in the Labour Market” and Priority 8 “Promotion of Social Inclusion and Combating Poverty” within the framework of the Operational Programme for the European Union funds’ investments 2014–2020 (hereinafter – Operational Programme 2014–2020). EU funds’ investments of EUR 564 million were allocated for implementation of these measures in the period 2014–2020 (including: funding from the European Social Fund (hereinafter – ESF) amounts to EUR 460.4 million, funding from the European Regional Development Fund – EUR 103.6 million, EUR 93 million national co-financing. According to both priorities of the Operational Programme 2014–2020, 27 measures are planned to be implemented: four measures are funded by ERDF (for infrastructure development), 25 measures by ESF.

When planning EU funds’ investments for the period of 2014–2020, priority fields include: increasing employment of unemployed, in particular long-term and unqualified and disabled unemployed; long-term integration of youth, primarily not in employment, education or training, into the labour market (implementing the Youth Guarantee Initiative), reduction of poverty and social exclusion, increasing social housing availability to most vulnerable groups of population, improving accessibility and quality of services provided in community, by moving from institutional care to communal services, development of services for families.
8.1.3.1. General Information about the State of EU Funds Investment 2014–2020 as on 1 May 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages</th>
<th>Measures implementation stages</th>
<th>EU funds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Planned measures, in total: 27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EU funds allocated, in total: EUR 564 million</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Measures implementation plans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of approved measures 24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EU funding allocated to approved measures EUR 528 million</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Share of EU funding allocated to approved measures in the total funds of the Ministry 93.6 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Descriptions of projects funding conditions (DPFC)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of measures with approved DPFC 12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EU funding allocated to approved DPFC EUR 289 million</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Share in total EU funds administered by the Ministry 51.2 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Calls announced, lists of state and regional projects drawn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of measures 12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EU funding EUR 265,6 million</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Share in total EU funds administered by the Ministry 47 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Signed agreements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EU funding in signed agreements EUR 211,6 million</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Share in total EU funds administered by the Ministry 37.5 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Disbursed EU funds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Amount EUR 89,5 million</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Share in total EU funds administered by the Ministry 15.87 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour

Table 8.1.3-1


Measure “Integration of Unemployed into the Labour Market” (ESF). Funding is used to tackle the problem of qualifications, skills of job seekers and inactive persons mismatching the labour market needs and lack of working experience. People of low level education, unskilled, youth (due to lack of working experience), older persons, people with disabilities frequently encounter difficulties on the labour market. Therefore, the projects under this measure are aimed at providing and improving professional qualifications and competences of unemployed, building their practical working skills, promoting territorial mobility, as well as at dealing with emotional, personality and communication problems of unemployed, increasing their motivation. Long-term, unskilled unemployed, older people who were not in employment for long time are prioritised. The measure received funding of EUR 124 million from ESF and EUR 36,7 million from the state budget. It is planned to include 85 000 unemployed, including minimum 30 000 older age unemployed into the activities of the projects financed under the measure.

In 2014, the Lithuanian Labour Exchange launched four projects financed from ESF and state budget, which received funding of EUR 78,1 million from ESF and state budget, in which ESF funding amount to EUR 59,08
These 3-year long projects are planned to include over 40,000 unemployed, including: 14,000 unqualified unemployed, 10,800 long-term unemployed and persons who were not in employment for long time, 14,000 people over 54 years old. Unemployed are referred to the activities of vocational training (formal and non-formal), subsidised employment, support of working skills acquisition and territorial mobility support. Since 2014, over 25,500 unemployed took part in the projects under this measure. During implementation of these projects, by 1 April 2016 over EUR 35.8 million was used.

**Measure “Support to the Disabled in Social Enterprises” (ESF).** Under this measure, employment of people with disabilities in social enterprises is supported by partly subsidising wages and state social insurance contributions and assistant’s (sign language interpreter’s) employment by subsidising expenses related with assistance that is needed for a person with disability to perform his/her job functions. The purpose of this measure is to promote social enterprises to increase employment of workers with disability, who are incapable of competing on the labour market under equal conditions, to retain their workplaces, to support newly-employed people with disabilities, to increase their social integration and to reduce social exclusion, as well as through assistants’ help to enable them to perform their job functions. The measure received funding of over EUR 35.33 million from ESF for its implementation. Subsidies to be provided under this measure are expected to help sustaining 5,500 people with disabilities on the labour market. The 1st project was implemented under this measure in 2014–2015, the 2nd project in 2015–2016. During implementation of the projects under this measure, by 1 April 2016 over EUR 24 million of ESF funds were used for project activities. Over 5,700 people with disabilities, 92% per cent of whom managed to stay in their workplaces, participated in the project activities.

**Measure “Building of Administrative Capacity of the Lithuanian Labour Exchange” (ESF).** Funding secured by this measure is used for improvement of special capacities of the Lithuanian Labour Exchange’s staff; creation of new services and improvement of already existing ones, in particular by applying more individualised approach enabling the staff to assess every applicant’s situation better and to offer the optimum package of services; monitoring of the implementation of labour market policy measures, assessment and improvement of their adequacy and efficiency, other measures improving the quality of the activities and services of the institution; introduction of the monitoring system for implementation of Youth Guarantee Initiative; assurance of EURES operation in Lithuania: improvement of operation management, improvement of staff’s competences, improvement of the quality of services. The measure received funding of over EUR 2.3 million from ESF for its implementation. In 2015, two projects were launched: “Creation of YGI Monitoring System” and “Improvement of Operating Efficiency of LLE and TLEO, Development of Innovative Services”. YGI monitoring system is nearly completed, program testing is currently carried out, staff of labour exchange offices are taught to operate it and it is planned to be completed during the first half of 2016. Besides, public procurements of qualification improvement training for labour exchange specialists are organised.

**Measure “Professional Rehabilitation of the Disabled”**. Under this measure, provision of professional rehabilitation services to people with disabilities is financed: restoration of person’s capacity to work, professional competence and capacity to participate on the labour market through development, social, psychological rehabilitation and other measures. Professional rehabilitation programme (cycle) consists of assessment of professional skills, professional guidance and consulting, restoration of professional skills or development of new ones, assistance in finding employment, support at workplace. The measure received funding of EUR 17 million from ESF for its implementation. Professional rehabilitation services are planned to be provided to about 5,000 people with disabilities. Following approval of all legal acts, ESF project “Assistance to People with Disabilities” was launched in the first quarter of 2015, the main goal of which is to increase employment of people with disabilities by providing professional rehabilitation services. In the period from the first quarter of 2015 until 1 April 2016, 704 people with disabilities were referred to the professional rehabilitation programme, funding of EUR 1.5 million was used for that. Upon completion of professional rehabilitation, 42% participants of the project found employment.
**Measure “Increasing Youth Employment”** is implemented under task 7.4.1 “Reducing the Number of 15–29 Year Old Youth Not in Employment, Education or Training of the Operational Programme 2014–2020. The measure will play an important role during implementation of the Youth Guarantee Initiative in Lithuania, the goal of which is to ensure that all young people, who failed to join the labour market on their own, within four months after school leaving or job loss would receive quality job offer or would be provided with continued learning possibilities. The measure is allocated funding of EUR 63.56 million from the Youth Employment Initiative (hereinafter –YEI) and European Social Fund and of EUR 5.6 million from the state budget. Under the measure, early intervention and youth activation services (primary intervention) and measures promoting integration into the labour market (secondary intervention) are financed. Primary intervention activities include measures developing additional skills and competences (improvement of entrepreneurship, project management, information technology knowledge, etc.), psychological social rehabilitation measures, services of minimum supervision, assistance in learning about oneself, development of social and life skills, motivation, information about young person’s possibilities, intermediation with educational institutions, organisation of voluntary activities, training during volunteering, mentoring services during volunteering, and other activities according to individual action plans. Secondary intervention measures include vocational training of unemployed, support to acquisition of working skills, subsidised employment, job rotation, territorial mobility, voluntary practical training, acquisition of working skills under bilateral agreement on acquisition of working skills, and other activities according to individual action plans.

Since the fourth quarter of 2015, two projects financed under this measure have been carried out: “Discover Yourself” and “New Start”. During implementation of the projects under this measure, by 20 April 2016 over EUR 0.8 million of ESF funds were used for project activities, 513 young people were included into the activities of the projects. By the end of 2018, 35 000 young people aged 15–29, who are not in employment, education or training, will be included into the project activities. From 2019, further implementation of the measure will be funded from ESF (EUR 17.54 million) and state budget (EUR 3.1 million), additionally including another 10 000 young people.

**Measure “Institutional Care Reorganisation”** (ESF). Under this measure, activities needed for sustainable transit from institutional care to provision of services in community to children without parental care and persons with mental and intellectual disabilities are planned to be carried out. Planned activities include preparation of methodical documents of new form social, health and other services needed for reorganisation of institutional care and their provision packages, assessment of the needs of population of institutions under reorganisation (pilot projects) and individual plan drafting according to assessed needs, assessment of competences of the staff of institutions under reorganisation (pilot projects) and of their motivation to work in community, preparation of plans for their professional competence improvement and/or re-qualification, preparation of infrastructure plans for regions in which pilot projects are implemented, provision of new forms of services to target groups, development of community-based services and their provision to target groups, improvement of professional competence of employees of social services system, execution of public information and education measures needed for institutional care reorganisation, internal and external assessments of the progress of institutional care reorganisation.

Funding of EUR 6.5 million from EU funds was assigned to the 1st stage of the measure implementation (2015–2017), project commenced in November 2015. During implementation of the project, publicity activities (logo design, creation of website www.pertvarka.lt and 4 information clips to be displayed in public transport) are carried out, methodical documentation packages intended for assessment of residents of social care institutions and of employees of social care institutions were prepared, joint training programme for guardians (carers and foster parents was developed, polls to discover Lithuanian population's opinion (public opinion) about institutional care reorganisation and Lithuanian population's attitude to adoption, guardianship were conducted, founding conference of Institutional care reorganisation cluster was organised.
Measure “Social Integration of Persons Addicted to Psychoactive Substances” (ESF). Funding under this measure is assigned to provision of psychological and social rehabilitation services, assessment, restoration of professional skills or development of new skills, development of general skills, vocational training, intermediation in finding employment. Funding of EUR 8.7 million from ESF is planned to be assigned for implementation of the measure. One project is being implemented under the measure, which was launched in January 2016 and its completion is planned for 2020. Psychological and social rehabilitation services are expected to be provided to 1 600 persons addicted to psychoactive substances, in total. By 29 February 2016, 251 person was included into the project activities, EUR 0.44 million of ESF funds was used.

Summarised information on projects under implementation, which are financed under the measures of the Operational Programme 2014–2020, is provided in the table 8.1.3-2.

### Projects financed under the measures of the Operational Programme 2014–2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures of the Operational Programme 2014–2020</th>
<th>Projects/agreements</th>
<th>Funding allocated to projects, EUR million</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Integration of Unemployed into the Labour Market | 1. Supporting Employment of Long-term Unemployed  
2. Enhancing Competences of Unskilled Persons  
3. Acquire Profession in Demand  
4. Support to Old Unemployed | 59 19 78 |
| Professional Rehabilitation of the disabled | Assistance to the Disabled | 4,3 3,2 7,6 |
| Building of Administrative Capacity of LLE | 1. Creation of YGI Monitoring System | 0,4 - 0.4 |
|                                              | 2. Improvement of Operational Efficiency of LLE and TLEO, Development of Innovative Services | 1,47 1.47 |
| Support to the Disabled in Social Enterprises | Support to Social Enterprises in 2014–2015 | 21,4 11 28,53 |
|                                              | Support to Social Enterprises in 2015–2016 | 13,9 7 20,9 |
| Increasing youth employment (JGI) | “Discover Yourself” | 31 2,8 33.8 |
|                                              | “New Start” | 32,5 2,9 35.4 |
| Institutional Care Reorganisation | Sustainable Transit from Institutional care to Family and Community-based Care and creation of conditions of such system in Lithuania | 6,5 - 6,5 |
| Social Integration of Persons Addicted to Psychoactive Substances | Social Integration of Persons Addicted to Psychoactive Substances | 8,7 - 8,7 |

Data of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour

### 8.1.3.3. PLANNING OF EU FUNDS’ INVESTMENTS BY OTHER MEASURES OF THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME 2014–2020

By 1 May 2016, the Minister of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania passed orders approving implementation plans for 24 measures (out of 27 planned). Presentation of 20 measures was made.
at the Monitoring Committee, which approved the measures and selection criteria applied to them. According to the approved implementation plans of the measures, EU funds’ investments are planned to be made into the following measures: preparation of descriptions of project financing conditions, planning and approval of state projects, announcement of calls for proposals, drafting of other legal acts needed for those measures of the Operational Programme 2014–2020 and projects financed under them, implementation of which will be launched in 2016.

**Measure “54+” (ESF).** Under this measure implemented through tender, the following services intended for older (55 and over) persons of working age are financed: organising and carrying out volunteering activities; motivation, individual work, assessment of their needs and possibilities, information, consulting, psychological help; training to develop general skills; organising educational activities and spread of information in order to promote potential of older persons, to motivate them to take active participation in social life, to shape positive opinion of society and employers about older persons. The measure received funding of EUR 6 million from ESF for its implementation. Services are planned to be provided to about 8 000 target group persons. Projects will be implemented by non-governmental organisations together with partners. Call for proposals were announced in May 2016.

**Measure “Integral Support at Home” (ESF).** Under this measure, funding is assigned to provision of integral support (social care and nursing at home) to children and adults with disabilities and older people, consulting services (on caring and nursing at home) to family members looking after children with disabilities, persons of working age with disabilities or elderly people; training of employees and volunteers of mobile teams is held. The measure received funding of over EUR 16.36 million from ESF for its implementation. Integral support (social care and nursing at home) services at home are planned to be provided to about 2 000 elderly people and people with disabilities. 21 project agreements of the first stage were signed and projects were launched in May 2016.

**Measure “Integration of Roma into the Labour Market” (ESF).** Under this measure, the following activities are financed: individual or group motivation of Roma, assessment of person’s needs, development, maintenance and restoration of social and working skills, sociocultural services, professional guidance, information, consulting, assessment, restoration of professional skills or development of new ones, development of general skills (e.g. digital literacy, languages, entrepreneurship), vocational training, development of practical working skills at work, intermediation, and other help in finding employment and during employment. The measure received funding of EUR 868 000 from ESF for its implementation. Social integration services are planned to be provided to about 300 persons. Project agreement will be signed and project will be launched in June–July 2016.

**Measure “Integrated Services for Families” (ESF).** Under this measure, the following services are planned to be organised, coordinated and provided to families and individuals: positive parenting training, psychosocial assistance, development of family skills and sociocultural services, mediation services, childcare, transportation services planned according to individual family (person’s) needs and contributing to family (person’s) empowerment and enhancement, crisis resolution, family and life reconciliation, reduction of social exclusion; information, consulting of target group (families and individuals) about services for families available, inclusion into activities, measures, information of target groups about other relevant services available in the municipality. The measure received funding of EUR 21,16 million from ESF and the state budget for its implementation. Integrated services are planned to be provided to about 15 000 persons.

**Measure “Development of Social Housing Fund” (ERDF) is implemented by planning regional projects.** Under this measure, development of social housing fund is planned by constructing new or reconstructing and adapting the existing buildings to residential purpose, buying houses or flats.

The measure received EUR 49.9 million from EU (European Regional Development Fund) and EUR 8,8 million from municipal budgets. It is planned to have 1 150 social dwellings refurbished or purchased.

**Measure “Development of Social Housing Infrastructure“ (ERDF) is implemented by planning regional projects.** Under this measure, the following activities will be financed: 1) modernisation and development of
usage of the European Union (EU) Structural Support infrastructure of social care homes for elderly people in community; 2) development of non-stationary and community-based social services infrastructure (e.g. independent or group living homes, hostels, day centres, psychosocial help or social rehabilitation institutions) for vulnerable groups and families not covered by the process of reorganisation of social home care for people with disabilities, children with mental and/or intellectual disabilities and without parental care. Besides, the list of activities supported under the measure includes also establishment of innovative institutions which would provide innovative social services. The measure was allocated EUR 17.2 million from ERDF, EUR 2 million from municipal budgets, and EUR 1 million from state budget. Investments under this measure are expected to be made to 26 objects of social services infrastructure.

**Global grant measure “Support for Employment”** (ESF). Under this measure, financial incentives are planned to be provided to employers (by partly compensating employees’ wages) for employing persons facing difficulties on the labour market, i.e.: youth under 29 and older people who are over 54. The measure received funding of EUR 40.5 million from ESF for its implementation. During the period, subsidies to 35,000 target group persons are planned to be provided.

**Measure “Entrepreneurship Promotion 2014–2020”** (ESF). Under this financial measure, small loans (under EUR 25,000) will be provided to persons facing difficulties on the labour market, willing to start their own business: natural persons, very small, small companies in operation for less than one year. Maximum loan amount is EUR 25,000. Unemployed, youth, older people, people with disabilities, women and those creating “green” jobs are prioritised. The measure received funding of EUR 24.5 million from ESF for its implementation. The planned number of recipients of loan throughout the implementation period is minimum 1,000.

In the third quarter of 2015, the implementation plan for the measure was approved. In the third–fourth quarters of 2015, selection of the manager (project promoter) of the fund of funds “Entrepreneurship Promotion Fund 2014–2020” financed from the European Social Fund was held. On 8 December 2015, Entrepreneurship Promotion Fund 2014–2020 was founded by tripartite agreement (Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Ministry of Finance, LTD “Investment and Business Guarantees”.

**Measure “Subsidies for Business Start-ups”** (ESF). Under this measure, subsidies will be issued for partial compensation of employees’ wages to business entities that received loans under the financial measure “Entrepreneurship Promotion 2014–2020”. The measure is directly related to financial measure “Entrepreneurship Promotion 2014–2020” and creates necessary additional financial incentives to take loans from the “Entrepreneurship Promotion Fund 2014–2020”, helps to consolidate one’s position when starting business, promotes job creation. The measure received funding of EUR 16 million from ESF for its implementation. Minimum 700 economic entities are planned to be issued subsidies during the whole period. The measure is planned to be launched in the fourth quarter of 2016.

**Measure “Promoting Equal Opportunities for Women and Men”** (ESF). Activities intended to strengthen assurance of gender equality at local municipality level will be financed: educational and training activities, preparation of methodical material, adaptation and consulting, training programme development, public information campaigns, publicity events, surveys, monitoring and assessment, exchange of experience in Lithuania and abroad. Funding of EUR 724 million from ESF is planned to be assigned for implementation of the measure. About 2,500 persons are planned to participate in the activities of the project carried out under the measure.

**Measure “Providing Social Services to People Suffering from Epilepsy”** (ESF). Under this measure, funding is planned to be assigned to provision of social rehabilitation services to persons suffering from epilepsy and their family members, as well as related activities: preparation of methodical documents on provision of social rehabilitation services to persons suffering from epilepsy, their family members; public education on epilepsy (conferences, discussions, information on internet, other relevant activities); training for specialists providing and administering social rehabilitation services to people with disabilities suffering from epilepsy, police, educational institutions and other employees; training for family members of people with disabilities
suffering from epilepsy; completion of assessments, surveys related with social services provided to people with disabilities suffering from epilepsy. The measure received funding of EUR 1.7 million from ESF for its implementation. Services within the framework of this measure are planned to be provided to over 800 persons of the target group.

**Measure “Promoting Social Responsibility and Social Dialogue”** (ESF). Funding to the following will be assigned under this measure: 1) **corporate social responsibility promoting activities**: training, consulting, staff exchanges, surveys and assessment, public information, campaigns promoting corporate social responsibility, preparation of methodical publications on social responsibility, implementation of pilot projects of social responsibility, preparation and testing of business sustainability and responsibility index, monitoring of progress of corporate social responsibility implementation, organising and attending international conferences and 2) **social dialogue promoting activities**: training, round table discussions, organising social partners’ negotiations, preparation and revision of methodical publications, development and application of effective publicity tools intended for society on social dialogue subject, organising conferences on novelties in labour law, organising and attending international conferences, conducting public opinion polls, staff exchanges. The measure received funding of EUR 3.8 million from ESF for its implementation. Projects financed under this measure are planned to receive about 7,000 participants.

**Measure “Integration of Socially-excluded Persons into the Labour Market”** (ESF). Under this measure, the following services for persons suffering from social risk and social exclusion are financed: individual or group motivation, assessment of person’s needs, development, maintenance and restoration of social and working skills; professional guidance, information, consulting; development of general skills (e.g. digital literacy, languages, entrepreneurship); vocational training; development of practical working skills at work; intermediation, and other help in finding employment and during employment; enhancement of capacities of staff implementing the project. The measure received funding of EUR 24.9 million from ESF and EUR 6.4 million from the state budget. 12,000 persons of the target groups are planned to be included into the activities of the projects financed under this measure.

**Measure “Reducing Discrimination”** (ESF). Educational and information activities are financed under the measure, which are aimed at reducing discrimination on the grounds established in the Law on Equal Opportunities of the Republic of Lithuania and preventing discrimination on the labour market, as well as activities promoting establishment of representatives of national minorities on the labour market. Funding of EUR 724,000 from ESF is planned to be assigned for implementation of the measure. About 2,500 persons are planned to participate in the activities of the project carried out under this measure.

**Measure “Enhancing Social Services System”** (ESF). Project is planned to be implemented within the framework of the measure, during which social services quality management (EQUASS) system is planned to be installed in social services institutions. Funding of EUR 1.5 million from ESF is planned to be assigned for implementation of the measure. The total number of 120 social services institutions are planned to participate in the project on installation of social services quality management (EQUASS Assurance) system, 80 per cent of which will have this system successfully installed.

**Measure “Improving Quality and Accessibility of the Infrastructure of Vilnius Territorial Labour Exchange Office”** (ERDF). Improving quality and accessibility of the administrative premises of Vilnius Territorial Labour Exchange and of the infrastructure of Vilnius City Division is planned under this measure. The measure received funding of EUR 3.6 million from ESF and EUR 0.6 million from the state budget.
8.2 OTHER EU ASSISTANCE

8.2.1. THE EUROPEAN GLOBALISATION ADJUSTMENT FUND

The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (hereinafter – EGF) provides support to people losing their jobs as a result of globalisation consequences, or as a result of the global economic and financial crisis in order to make their integration into labour market easier. The main goal of EGF is individual labour market measures helping workers to return to the labour market soonest possible.


The Lithuanian Labour Exchange is continuously monitoring the scale of redundancies and provides information to the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. Once the EGF Regulation criteria are satisfied, applications for financial assistance from EGF will be drawn.

8.2.2. THE GENERAL PROGRAMME ON SOLIDARITY AND MANAGEMENT OF MIGRATION FLOWS

The General Programme on Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows is one of the major measures of the European Union’s (hereinafter – EU) third-country nationals’ integration policy aimed at introducing integrated EU external borders control and implementing common axes of asylum and immigration policies. Four funds were founded on the basis of the above-mentioned programme: External Borders Fund; European Return Fund (hereinafter – RF); European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals (hereinafter – IF); and European Refugee Fund (hereinafter – ERF). During the financial period of 2007–2013, the ERF and IF programmes were administered by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour.

8.2.2.1. EUROPEAN REFUGEE FUND

The aim of the ERF is to support and encourage the efforts made by the Member States in receiving, and in bearing the consequences of receiving, refugees and displaced persons, taking account of Community legislation on those matters through co-financing of actions.

The Ministry of Social Security and Labour is implementing two ERF supported priorities in accordance with the strategic guidelines set by the European Commission (hereinafter – EC):

Priority 1. Implementation of the principles and measures established by the Community’s acquis in the field of asylum, including integration-related fields;
Priority 2. Development of reference tools and evaluation methodologies to assess and improve the quality of procedures for the examination of claims for international protection and to underpin administrative structures in an effort to respond to the challenges brought forward by enhanced political cooperation with other Member States.

In 2015, implementation of five projects under the EPF 2013 programme of the value of EUR 706 000 was completed. Activities of the project implementing the action “Improvement of Receiving Conditions and Asylum Procedures” of Priority I of the ERF 2013 programme were aimed at organising provision of legal, health, social, counselling services to asylum seekers, Lithuanian language course, IT courses, information meetings with specialists of various institutions, a wide range of events for children and adults. In order to provide knowledge about Lithuania, cultural sightseeing trips and social events with local communities were organised. Residential premises of asylum seekers were refurbished. Within the framework of the projects integrating the Action “Integration of Aliens Awarded Asylum in the Republic of Lithuania, social assistance to successful asylum seekers, financial support to vulnerable people, health care services were provided; legal, counselling and other necessary consulting services were provided; teaching of the fundamentals of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania was organised in municipalities, vocational training courses, computer literacy training were held. During the implementation of the Action “Enhancement of Member States’ capacity to develop, monitor and evaluate their asylum policies, in particular with a view to engaging in practical cooperation activities between Member States”, certificates on countries of origin of asylum seekers were drawn and placed on information system.

During the implementation of the ERF multiannual programme, 30 projects received funding and were implemented. In 2012–2015, ERF 2012–2013 programmes of the value of EUR 2.8 million were implemented, and 600 aliens awarded asylum and over 1 200 asylum seekers participated in 25 projects funded under the latter programmes. The last projects within the framework of the ERF 2013 programme were completed in the second quarter of 2015.

8.2.2.2. EUROPEAN FUND FOR THE INTEGRATION OF THIRD–COUNTRY NATIONALS

The aim of the IF is to support the efforts made by the Member States in enabling third-country nationals of different economic, social, cultural, religious, linguistic and ethnic backgrounds to fulfil the conditions of residence and to facilitate their integration into the European societies.

IF programming documents stipulate three strategic priorities of the fund:

- actions aimed at implementation of “Common key European principles of migrants’ integration policy in the European Union”;
- determining and developing common indicators and assessment methods to assess the progress, to correct axes and measures, and to simplify comparative teaching coordination;
- development, coordination of political capacities and enhancement of intercultural competence of the Member States at different levels and bodies of authority.

The above-mentioned priorities are implemented through actions, some of which target directly third-country nationals, the aim of others is to enhance the capacities of our society and institutions, organisations regarding integration of third-country nationals. During the financial period of 2007–2013, the IF programme supported projects encouraging third-country nationals legally residing in Lithuania to attend the Lithuanian language courses, where they also receive knowledge about the history of Lithuania, its culture, living, studying.

168 Information system about asylum seekers' countries of origin. Online access: [http://coi.migracija.lt](http://coi.migracija.lt)
and working conditions. The IF also supported projects aimed at enhancing capacities of Lithuanian population to adapt themselves to diversity, carrying out studies and researches related with third-country nationals’ integration, assessment of the integration policy progress, as well as projects promoting collaborations and relations between competent institutions, organisations, enhancement of intercultural competence of experts.

The IF financial assistance was provided within the framework of the multiannual (2007–2013) and annual programmes developed by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and approved by the EC. The multiannual programme implemented through annual programmes received funding of EUR 6.7 million (including EUR 5.2 million assigned by the EU). During the implementation of the IF multiannual programme, 81 project was funded and implemented. In the period of 2012–2015, IF 2010–2013 annual programmes of the value of over EUR 4 million were implemented, and in 2012–2015 about 1 700 third-country nationals legally residing in Lithuania, and over 2 000 Lithuanian people, including school children, students, employees of trade unions, child rights protection experts, social workers, specialists of municipalities and other institutions participated in 42 projects financed under the latter programmes. The last projects within the framework of the IF 2013 programme were completed in the second quarter of 2015.

8.2.3. ASYLUM, MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION FUNDS

In order to overcome common challenges arising in the field of home affairs and following consistent approach to migration and safety at EU level, for the financial period of 2014–2020, two EU funds – Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (hereinafter – AMIF), consisting of ERF, IF and RF 2007–2013, and Internal Security Fund - were set up. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour was appointed responsible for implementation of the AMIF programme.

The aim of the AMIF is to promote efficient management of migration flows as part of the area of freedom, security and justice, and the implementation, in accordance with the common policy on asylum, subsidiary protection and temporary protection and the common immigration policy.

Financial assistance of EUR 8.1 million was granted to Lithuania for the implementation of the AMIF programme in 2014–2020. Lithuanian will have to contribute 25 per cent national funding (EUR 2.7 million) to the latter amount. In addition, Lithuania will receive EUR 1.5 million for technical assistance in 2014–2020: to organise calls for applications for AMIF programme, to inform society and to spread information and to monitor projects implementation, to enhance administrative capacities of administrating institutions.

AMIF funds will be allocated for the following fields of activities:
1) to improve the Common European asylum system;
2) to promote integration and legal migration of third-country nationals;
3) to organise third-country nationals’ return procedures.

AMIF will support projects targeting third-country nationals or stateless persons seeking asylum in Lithuania, aliens awarded asylum in Lithuania, third-country nationals legally residing in Lithuania (holding residence permits), third-country nationals who opted for voluntary return to their country of origin or third-country nationals subject to forced return procedures.

On 20 March 2015, the EC adopted the decision No. C(2015) 1731 approving the national programme of Lithuania for AMIF support during the period of 2014–2020. AMIF management and control system, AMIF national legislation were developed. 15 descriptions of project funding conditions (DPFC) were approved, 10 project agreements were signed for the total value of EUR 2.17 million, including EUR 1.63 million EU funds.
During the period of 2015–2016, financial assistance in the amount of EUR 0.78 million (including EUR 0.59 million EU funds) was disbursed to the AMIF projects. During 2015–first quarter of 2016, 887 third-country nationals participated in the AMIF projects. Besides, agreement on AMIF special case (aliens’ relocation from the EU Member State into the territory of the Republic of Lithuania) project of the value of EUR 0.8 million was signed.

8.2.4. THE FUND FOR EUROPEAN AID TO THE MOST DEPRIVED

The Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (hereinafter – Fund) promotes social cohesion in the EU helping to pursue the goal of the Europe 2020 strategy to reduce the number of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion in Europe at least by 20 million, by supporting national systems, under which non-financial assistance is provided to the most deprived by involving partners’ organisations. The Fund replaced the previous Food distribution programme from intervention reserves to the most deprived, in which Lithuania participated from 2006 until the end of 2013. Financing of the Fund’s activities in Lithuania started in 2014.

Financial assistance of EUR 90.8 million, including EUR 77.2 million EU funds, was allocated for the Fund’s programming period of 2014–2020. The average annual amount of financial assistance is EUR 12.5 million, including 15 per cent co-funding. The Fund supports acquisition of food and hygienic products. Acquisition of hygienic products will start from 2018.

Target group of the Fund are persons with the average monthly incomes not exceeding 1.5 times of the state-supported incomes (hereinafter referred to as SSI) approved by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania per month. For objective reasons, following the procedure established by the municipal administration, support can be granted in other cases as well (e.g. disability, survivors, large families, etc.), if incomes per one of persons living together are above 1.5 SSI, but do not exceed 2 SSI per month. If incomes per one of persons living together are above 1.5 SSI, but do not exceed 2 SSI per month, at person’s request, support can also be provided to the following persons:

1. asylum seekers displaced to the territory of the Republic of Lithuania according to the Resolution No. 628 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of 22 June 2015 “On Displacement of Aliens who Need Asylum into the Territory of the Republic of Lithuania” and accommodated in the Refugees Reception Centre;
2. persons granted asylum in the Republic of Lithuania:
   2.1. aliens granted refugee status according to Article 86 of the Law on Legal Status of Aliens of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter – LLSA);
   2.2. aliens under additional protection according to Article 87 of the LLSA.

During the reporting period since 2014, implementation of two annual projects was completed: Food Support and Food Support II. In 2016, the third annual project supported by the Fund – Food Support III – is implemented. In 2015–2016, Fund’s projects are implemented by state enterprise Lithuanian Agricultural and Food Market Regulation Agency (hereinafter – Market Regulation Agency) together with its partners: municipal administrations, charity and support fund Food Bank, Red Cross of Lithuania and Samaritan Community of Marijampolė land.

In 2014, the “Food Support “ project was completed (project value EUR 3.4 million). Through three distributions (in May, July and September 2014), support was granted to 272 113 persons. Distributed products include: flour, sugar, oil, rice, three-grain groats, peas, pasta, canned meat, and cereals.
In 2015, the “Food Support II” project was completed (project value EUR 8.2 million). Fund’s support in the form of food packages in 2015 reached slightly over 279 000 individual beneficiaries all over Lithuania. In 2015, the following long-life basic food products were distributed: flour, sugar, oil, rice, three-grain groats, buckwheat, pasta, canned meat with vegetables, cereals, quick-cooking oat porridge, quick-cooking wheat porridge, quick-cooking pasta (instant) and sweetened condensed milk.

On 24 November 2015, new agreement of the “Food Support III” project (EUR 16.4 million) was signed and will be implemented until 31 December 2016. During the implementation of the agreement, food support is planned to be granted to up to 300 000 people. During 6 distributions to be made every second month, the most deprived will be given the following 15 products proportionally: rapeseed oil, sugar, canned meat, rice, buckwheat, pasta, three-grain groats, quick-cooking oat and wheat porridge, sweetened condensed milk, tinned beans, cereals, peas, barley groats, and biscuits.

With the gradual recovery of the European economy from the economic crisis, the focus of politicians and analysts begins shifting to the social consequences of the economic crisis and its impact on employment in the EU Member States with an increasing frequency. In the Annual Growth Surveys presented by the European Commission (hereinafter referred to as the EC) over the last few years, where the EC summarises the economic and social situation in Europe and establishes broad policy priorities for the whole EU for each following year, growing emphasis is placed on the labour market and social affair issues: promotion of employment, especially among youth, job-creating economy and social security of vulnerable individuals.

In the context of the implementation of the targets of the Europe 2020 Strategy, the Lithuanian employment and social situation is assessed positively. Referring to the statistical data for 2016, the employment target set in the Europe 2020 Strategy by Lithuania has been achieved. The 2020 target was to reduce poverty and social exclusion and achieve an employment rate of 72.8%; however, the target was achieved already this year and the employment rate was 73.3%. Economic growth, decreasing unemployment rates, the rapid growth of the minimum salary and non-taxable income in recent years promoted growth in the minimum labour income at the same time decreased the poverty trap. Already in 2014, Lithuania implemented its expressed national targets – by 2020, the number of population living at risk of poverty or social exclusion should not exceed 814 thousand. In 2014, 804 thousand people living in Lithuania were at the risk of poverty or social exclusion. However, the country still encounters certain social and labour market challenges, which are identified in the country-specific recommendations published by the EC on an annual basis. Lithuania takes into consideration the proposals from the EC, observations presented in the Annual Growth Survey, and summarises the most important ongoing and planned social and employment policy structural reforms with a view to achieving the targets of Europe 2020 Strategy, and presents all that in the National Reform Programme.
9. International Cooperation

9.1.1. KEY EVENTS IN THE EU AND LITHUANIA’S EUROPEAN POLICY IN 2012–2016

In recent years, the states holding the presidency169 sought more stable and growing economy in Europe. For example, the slogan of Ireland’s presidency programme “For Stability, Jobs and Growth” emphasised economic stability, which influences job creation and economic growth. Greece paid special attention to youth employment, continued the discussions on the strengthening the social dimension of Economic and Monetary Union, which took place during the Lithuanian presidency. Italy stood out for organising the joint debate of the EU’s employment and environment ministers on green economy and employment topics. The priorities of the Latvian presidency included the issues of an inclusive and growing labour market. Luxembourg, having chosen the words “A union for the citizens” as its presidency slogan, called for a debate aimed at involving citizens, supporting business, working with partners and authorities seeking to ensure European interests and promoting investments that would increase growth and employment. The Netherlands identified the revision of the Posting of Workers Directive, sharing of good practices in the field of poverty reduction, and the protection of workers from carcinogens as its priority areas.

In 2014, the European Union’s institutions experienced numerous changes. In July 2014, new members of the European Parliament (hereinafter referred to as the EP) elected for the term of five years gathered for the first plenary session; in November 2014, the new European Commission was appointed for the term of five years. The new Commission presented an ambitious agenda and, emphasising its determination to fight with the consequences of the economic crisis, for example, a slow growth of employment and assurance of social justice, paid much attention to initiatives improving the situation in these areas. The agenda aims to apply the triple-A assessment not only on the EU’s economy but also on social issues. Since the current system was created in addressing individual specific issues, it requires a comprehensive revision. It is necessary to revise social policy at the EU level and to discuss its shortcomings and possible factors for their elimination. So, a new initiative was proposed in improving the EU’s social model – the European Pillar of Social Rights. It is aimed at moving social issues to the political agenda of common EU priorities. Another initiative is the Investment Plan proposed in November 2014 aimed at recovering investment in Europe and creating up to 1.3 million new jobs.

Lithuania’s priorities and other most relevant initiatives at the level of the European Union were defined in national strategic documents. In 2015, the Strategic Guidelines for Lithuania’s EU Policy for 2015–2020 were prepared. It is a medium-term strategic planning document, providing for the key Lithuania’s EU initiatives and Lithuania’s position in the EU Council, formulated on the basis of these initiatives. The following strategic guidelines are assigned to the competence of the Ministry: job quality, social security, equality between women and men, non-discrimination and active youth.

In 2016, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania approved the Lithuanian code of the most relevant issues of the EU’s agenda, which was drawn up according to the annex “New Initiatives” of the European Commission’s work programme for 2016. It distinguishes 19 initiatives of the EC that are the most relevant to Lithuania. In the field of social security and employment, the following initiatives are distinguished: the labour mobility package, the European Pillar of Social Rights, simplification of legislation regulating occupational safety and health and better management of migration. A part of the labour mobility package, the proposal to revise the 1996 Posting of Workers Directive, was presented by the European Commission on 9 March 2016. The 1996 Directive establishes a balance between the objectives promoting and facilitating the cross-border provision of services and ensuring a level playing field to compete for local and foreign service providers, while protecting the rights of posted workers. However, the new revision of the Directive was received critically by many Parliaments of Member States, including the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, because of the potential non-compliance with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality. Another priority issue, i.e. the initiative of the European Commission’s work programme for 2016.

Pillar of Social Rights, will aim at expanding the minimum rights guaranteed by EU acquis and creating additional benchmarks, which will seek greater clarity and improved assessment of employment and social convergence in the EU’s Member States. Public consultations, which will continue until the end of 2016, have been started. Another relevant issue is the simplification of legal acts regulating occupational safety and health at work, the main objective of which is to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the EU’s workers protection system and to review legislation related to the exposure to carcinogens and mutagens at work. On 6 April 2016, the EC together with the EP presented a communication on a reform on the common European asylum system. This communication, which implements the European Agenda on Migration, sets out various actions to be taken in seeking a more efficient European asylum policy as well as a better-managed legal migration policy. One of its important measures is a reform of the EU Blue Card Directive, through which highly skilled third country nationals could be ensured more flexible admission conditions, improved admission procedures and enhanced rights.

In 2016, a new proposal on the Accessibility Directive was presented, which aims to improve the proper functioning of the internal market and remove and prevent barriers for the free movement of accessible products and services. The achieving of this objective would also ensure the proper implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

9.1.2. LITHUANIAN PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EU

On 1 July 2013, Lithuania became the first Baltic country which took over presidency of the Council of the EU for a half-year period. The state holding the presidency shall ensure the objective continuity of the European agenda and smooth functioning of the working structures of the Council of the European Union. To ensure that EU-level issues are taken efficiently and consistently, the states holding the presidency are put together in groups of three Member States and the so-called presidency trio coordinate the overall programme with each other. Together with the presidency trio partners – Ireland and Greece, Lithuania implemented a common 18-month-long programme and also a separate national 6-month presidency programme. Presidency of the Council of the EU is the duty and challenge of each Member State.

Preparation for this historically important and responsible event took quite a few years. Interinstitutional cooperation teams were formed and information was consistently shared at national level; a list of all experts from different governmental institutions involved in the presidency together with the presidency responsibilities performed by them was drawn up (so called “Treasury”). According to this list, English and French language courses and trainings for the organisation of meetings and other important administrative skills were organised for the staff of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and its subordinate institutions, national experts also had the opportunity to take traineeship in the EU institutions and to visit states that had presidency experience. The presidency processes involved many staff members of the Ministry and its subordinate establishments.

In December 2012, Lithuania, jointly with the partners in the EU Council presidency, Ireland and Greece, presented the joint presidency trio programme, in which they emphasised the importance of tackling social and employment problems, objective to implement the Employment Package presented by the EC in 2012 and the EC’s initiative the Social Investment Package.

170 EU blue card (Directive 2009/50) is the authorisation to legally reside and work in Lithuania and to move to another Member State of the EU to engage in highly-skilled work.
172 The Communication from the Commission “Towards a job-rich recovery”, COM (2012) 173 final, to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions.
During the half-year period of the Lithuanian presidency, the country organised around 200 meetings and other events, which were attended by more than 25 thousand guests. As the slogan of its National Presidency Programme, Lithuania chose the words “For a Credible, Growing and Open Europe”. In the field of social security and employment, Lithuania set the following priorities:

- Greater employment opportunities – special attention to young people;
- Better protection of workers (including migrant workers);
- Enhancement of the social dimension in the European Union;
- *De facto* equal rights of women and men and non-discrimination.

During the time of the presidency, much attention was paid to the Youth Employment Package, setting out recommendations for the establishment of Youth Guarantee and European Alliance for Apprenticeships as well as the supplement to the youth employment package, Youth Employment Initiative. At an informal EPSCO Council held in Vilnius in July 2013, a discussion with social partners and Member States was initiated on the European Alliance for Apprenticeships and a declaration of intent was signed, where further actions for the implementation of the goals of the Alliance in the Member States were envisaged. Lithuania, as the state holding the presidency, stressed the importance of the social inclusion of young people not in employment, education or training (hereinafter referred to as “NEET”) and the Council conclusions on the social inclusion of NEET were adopted. Agreement was reached on measures and actions in the fields of NEET youth prevention, education, vocational training and informal learning, transfer from the educational system to the labour market and employment. Together with the Agency of International Youth Cooperation, the Ministry held the first meeting of the Eastern Partnership Youth Forum to discuss the validation of non-formal education implications and share best practices.

Aiming to better implement the minimum protection of posted workers, Lithuania continued negotiations on the Posting of Workers Directive. Lithuania helped to establish a dialogue between disagreeing parties and, after a long debate, an overall compromise was reached within the EU Council at the EPSCO Council meeting held in December 2013, owing to which the Directive was adopted in May 2014. During its presidency, Lithuania sought consensus in the EU Council with the EP on the improvement of cooperation between public employment services, and the Regulation was adopted in 2016.

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disadvantage” (2013/112/EU).


275 Regulation (EU) 2016/589 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 April 2016 on a European network of employment services (EURES), workers’ access to mobility services and the further integration of labour markets, and amending Regulations (EU)
An overall compromise was also reached with the EP on the transfer of guarantees of supplementary professional pensions\(^{176}\). Adopted in 2014, this initiative is aimed to reduce obstacles to worker mobility and to ensure fair treatment in relation to rights to the acquisition and preservation of supplementary pension rights. Seeking to protect employees made redundant as a result of structural changes caused by globalisation in the world’s manufacturing sector, Lithuania agreed with the EP that the Regulation on the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (2014-2020)\(^{177}\) would apply from 1 January 2014. During the half-year period of its presidency, Lithuania also agreed in the EU Council, and coordinated trialogues with the EP on the Directive on the non-discrimination of free movement for workers\(^{178}\). This proposal is aimed to fight discrimination on grounds of nationality and to facilitate the free movement of workers. In order to reduce poverty and promote social cohesion, Lithuania agreed with the EP on the establishment of the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived\(^{179}\), whose objective is to promote social cohesion and provision of continued support for the most deprived. The financial resources of almost EUR 3.5 billion will be distributed to all Member States over a period of 7 years (2014-2020).

During its presidency, Lithuania paid attention to the Social Investment Package, which includes the Recommendation from the Commission on investing in children and its accompanying working documents, where Member States are provided with proposals for more effective use of European Structural Fund (hereinafter referred to as the ESF) funding and the modernisation of social protection systems. During the Lithuanian presidency, informal discussions in the EPSCO Council were organised. Their theme was “Investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage”. The discussions looked at the areas requiring improvement of the effectiveness of social costs, best practices of the countries, and the role of the NGO sector in reducing child poverty.

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\(^{176}\) Directive 2014/50/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 on minimum requirements for enhancing worker mobility between Member States by improving the acquisition and preservation of supplementary pension rights.


During its presidency, Lithuania placed particular emphasis on discussions on the inclusion of the social dimension in the Economic and Monitory Union and organised discussions during an informal joint meeting of the Social Security and Employment Committees, seeking a consensus between the EU Member States regarding emphasis on social policy in the Economic and Monitory Union. Owing to productive and successful discussions, in December 2013, the EPSCO Council approved the Employment and Social Indicators Scoreboard, which was first included in the European Semester management cycle in 2014. In subsequent years, both Member States and the EC commented favourably on the creation of the scoreboard. A part of the Annual Growth Survey for 2016, the Alert Mechanism Report, included three social indicators (the activity rate, youth and long-term unemployment rate) in the macroeconomic imbalances procedure for the first time.

9.1.3. MISSOC ACTIVITIES

In the activities of MISSOC ( Mutual Information System on Social Protection in the European Union) Lithuania has been participating since 2003. This information system provides basic information about social protection in the Member States of the European Union, Switzerland, and countries belonging to the European Economic Area. MISSOC comparative tables include twelve parts: (I) Financing; (II) Health care; (III) Sickness-cash benefits; (IV) Maternity/Paternity; (V) Invalidity; (VI) Old-age; (VII) Survivors; (VIII) Accidents at work and occupational diseases; (IX) Family benefits; (X) Unemployment; (XI) Guaranteed minimum resources; (XII) Long-term care. The beginnings of the tables provide brief introductions of the structure of the social protection systems of each country and diagrams. In annexes to the tables, each country describes the social protection of the self-employed. The information in these tables is updated twice a year. The system operates in English, German and French languages. The information collected until 1 January 2016 is planned to be published in June 2016.

On 17–18 2013, Vilnius hosted an event for the Lithuanian presidency in the Council of the European Union (EU) in the field of social protection – the meeting of national rapporteurs of the EU’s Mutual Information System on Social Protection (MISSOC). During the meeting, the Lithuanian pension system and its reform were presented and international experts and national representatives shared their insights on pension systems. Further cooperation with the European Social Policy Network was discussed and various social problems were addressed.

9.1.4. COORDINATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION’S SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEMS

With Lithuania’s accession to the European Union, the right to social security of Lithuanian citizens departing to another EU country to live or work began to be regulated by the regulations of the EU on coordination of social security systems. From 1 May 2010, the Member States of the European Union apply Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the coordination of social security systems and its implementing Regulation (EC) No 987/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 September 2009 (hereinafter referred to as the Coordination Regulations). The Swiss Confederation began applying Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 and Regulation (EC) No 987/2009 from 1 April 2012, and these Regulations also became effective in relations with the Member States of the European Economic Area (Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein) on 1 June 2012. The Coordination Regulations cover the following main areas of social security:
pensions, unemployment insurance, family benefits, sickness and maternity benefits, death grants or accidents at work benefits.

One of the most important innovations provided for in the new Regulations is the transition to the electronic exchange of information. In communicating with each other, the competent institutions of the Member States still use paper E-form certificates or paper structured documents (SED), which provide all the information needed to identify and confirm the person’s right to benefits. However, at the end of the transitional period, all Member States will be required to exchange information electronically. This will be done through the use of the Electronic Exchange of Social Security Information (hereinafter referred to as the EESSI), which is currently under development. It will be intended for the Member States’ specialists awarding benefits in accordance with the EU Regulations on the coordination of social security systems. It is planned that the EESSI system should start functioning from 2019.

Pursuant to Article 71 of Regulation (EC) No 883/2004, the Administrative Commission for the Coordination of Social Security Systems of the EU (hereinafter referred to as the Administrative Commission) was established. One of its functions is to deal with questions on the implementation of the Coordination Regulations. The Administrative Commission adopts decisions and recommendations specifying and interpreting the provisions of the Coordination Regulations. Meetings of the Administrative Commission are held four times a year. In December 2013, during the Lithuanian presidency of the EU Council, a meeting of the Administrative Commission was held in Vilnius. The meeting addressed the issues on the implementation of the Coordination Regulations. The focus of the meeting was on the determination of the applicable legislation and preparation for the electronic exchange of information. The meeting approved amendments to the Practical Guide for Determining the Applicable Legislation180, supplementing the document with new part on the determination of place of residence in accordance with the Coordination Regulations.

9.1.5. THE UNITED KINGDOM’S REFERENDUM ON WITHDRAWAL FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION

In 2015, much debate began at the EU level on the upcoming United Kingdom’s referendum on withdrawal from the European Union (Brexit) and on the EU reforms proposed by the United Kingdom, which would have been accepted if the country had remained in the European Union after the referendum. One of the questions discussed was the possibility of limiting social welfare payments to EU migrants. These amendments would have been implemented only if the United Kingdom had decided to remain in the European Union at the referendum.

According to the information provided by the Administrative Commission for the Coordination of Social Security Systems of the EU, in 2014, around 4 500 family benefits were exported to Lithuania, including around 1 700 from the United Kingdom.

The United Kingdom’s referendum on EU membership took place on June 23, 2016. Leave won by 52% to 48%. For the United Kingdom to leave the EU it has to invoke the appropriate procedure on withdrawal from the EU according to Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty. Once Article 50 has been triggered, the United Kingdom will have two years to negotiate its withdrawal conditions. After initiating withdrawal procedure, until the United Kingdom ceases being a Member State, it will continue to abide by EU treaties and laws, but not take part in any decision-making.

What happens to the United Kingdom citizens living in other EU Member States or to EU nationals, who want to live or work in the United Kingdom, depends on the kind of deal the United Kingdom agrees with other EU Member States. This might be a bilateral agreement between each EU Member State and UK or an international agreement with the EU and UK. Ministry of Social Security and Labour of Lithuania is closely

fallowing and analysing EU level processes and will aim at ensuring rights of Lithuanian citizens on the questions within the competence of the Ministry.

9.2. MEMBERSHIP IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

The Ministry of Social Security and Labour actively participates in the activity of various international organisations, of which Lithuania is a member, contributing to the tackling of major global problems in the field of social security and labour. The representatives of the Ministry of Social Security and Lithuania, representing Lithuania, participate in the activities of the International Labour Organisation, the Council of Europe, the United Nations, and other organisations. At present, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour is actively cooperating with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. Lithuania holds the candidate status in it.

9.2.1. MEMBERSHIP IN THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION

The Ministry of Social Security and Labour represents Lithuania’s interests in the International Labour Organisation (hereinafter – ILO). Governmental delegation consisting of representatives of the Government and social partners every year participates in the International Labour Conference, where ILO conventions and recommendations are adopted, international labour standards are set, elections to the Governing Body take place, most relevant labour issues are discussed. Tripartite delegations from all ILO Member States participate in the Conference.

On 1–13 June 2015, the 104th session of the International Labour Conference was held in Geneva (Swiss Confederation), at which sustainable and productive employment creation in small and medium enterprises, strategic goals of social (labour) protection were discussed thus continuing implementation of the International Labour Organisation’s Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalisation 2008. Recommendation on transitioning from informal to formal economy was adopted at the Conference, which is the first international document aimed at fighting against informal economy.

Lithuania takes part in the activity of the ILO executive body – Governing Body. Lithuania is a Deputy Member of the ILO Governing Body for the period of 2014–2017 (from 2011 until 2014, Lithuania was a Regular Member of the ILO Governing Body). Governing Body adopts decisions on ILO policies, considers the agenda of ILO Conference, approves ILO budget, elects Director-General.

At the 325th session of the ILO Governing Body held on 2–12 November 2015, the Terms of reference of the Standards Review Mechanism Tripartite Working Group were approved in the Legal issues and international labour standards section. Lithuania was elected from Eastern European countries as a member to this important working group. This group is entitled to review international labour standards and submit its recommendations on necessary amendments and revisions of the standards. At the 326th session held in 2016, the Governing Body discussed the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and ILO’s role, migrants’ crisis and potential ILO’s contribution in tackling challenges in this context.

Implementing the Government’s Programme 2012–2016 of the Republic of Lithuania, on 4 December 2012 Lithuania ratified the ILO Convention concerning the Protection of Workers against Ionising Radiations, on 13 June 2013 ratified the ILO Maritime Labour Convention. In the nearest future, draft legal acts regarding

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ratification of ILO Convention concerning work in the fishing sector will be discussed at the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania.

The Ministry of Social Security and Labour, in cooperation with the ILO, organised international conference How to Make Formal Work Attractive on 17–18 September 2014. The conference was attended by Guy Ryder, Director–General of the ILO and Heinz Koller, Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia, William Danvers, Deputy Secretary-General of the OECD and Mark Keese, Head of Employment Analysis and Policy Division, Armindo Silva, Director of Employment and Social Legislation, Social Dialogue of the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission, as well as the ministers and other high level representatives and experts from the Member States of the European Union and European Free Trade Association, international, European and national social partners. Participants of the conference discussed informal work issues, exchanged information and good practice, policy methods and measures implemented by the governmental institutions dealing with informal work problem.

Implementing the Agreement between the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania, the Institute for Social Policy and the Research Department of the International Labour Office on the Research Cooperation in the Fields of Social Security and Labour Law signed on 10 June 2014, on 18 September 2015, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour together with the ILO organised a round table discussion on “Older workers integration into labour market”. At the meeting, the ILO experts summarised their experience and other countries’ good practices, representatives of the institutions introduced national measures applied during integration of older workers into the labour market. The discussion was attended by the representatives of state authorities, non-governmental organisations, social partners, national and international experts. Three key topics were discussed at the meeting: 1) older workers’ in the demographic changes perspective; 2) situation of older workers in the labour relations; 3) older workers in the labour market: the role of Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs), lifelong learning, professional qualification.
9.2.2. MEMBERSHIP IN THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Representatives of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour participate in the activities of the following committees and commissions of the Council of Europe: European Social Cohesion Platform (hereinafter – PECS) (former European Committee for Social Cohesion, Human Dignity and Equality (hereinafter – CDDECS), the Governmental Committee of the European Social Charter and the European Code of Social Security (hereinafter – GC) and its Bureau, the Committee of the Parties to the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Committee), the Committee of Experts on the Rights of People with Disabilities.

In 2012, Lithuania’s representative – Director of International Affairs Department of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour Rita Skrebiškienė was elected to chair of CDDECS for the first time in history. Lithuanian representative not only chaired the CDDECS but also took active participation in the activities of the CDDECS Bureau and Committee in 2012–2016. In 2012, Lithuanian representative – Deputy Head of International Law Division, International Affairs Department, Ministry of Social Security and Labour Kristina Vyšniauskaitė–Radinskenė was elected to the GC Bureau for the first time. In 2015 she was elected to chair of GC. Election of Lithuanian representatives and their participation in the governing bodies of the committee demonstrate not only recognition of their competence in the field of human right protection but also a possibility, by presiding over the committee, to influence the decision making process and make the name of Lithuania known by representing the committee in the activities of the Council of Europe and other organisations.

9.2.2.1. ACTIVITIES OF PECS AND FORMER CDDECS

At the Governmental Committee of Social Cohesion, Human Dignity and Equality held in 2014–2015, the main attention was focused on social diversity, social inclusion of all persons (in particular, of vulnerable groups) and efficiency of rights. Decision was made to develop inclusive and harmonious society, as well as to take actions to protect social rights and to review the Social Cohesion Strategy of the Council of Europe. Having considered the goal of the Council of Europe to work harder in the field of social cohesion, and in particular having considered the main pillars of the Council, i.e. human rights, democracy, rule of law, the decision was made to reform the Committee.

A new European Social Cohesion Platform (hereinafter – Platform) established in 2016 will ensure attention to social cohesion throughout the Council of Europe. The concept contributing to assessment of the impact of various activities in different sectors will be further developed. At the same time, efforts are made to build socially integrated society and to promote specific actions contributing to social cohesion.

The Platform will encourage exchange of good practice and innovative methods in the field of social cohesion between the Member States, as well as with respective international organisations and other interested parties. It will examine arising trends and challenges in specific fields of social cohesion, for example, protection and integration of migrants and refugees; impact of economic crisis on social security and health care; combat against poverty and social exclusion which may induce radicalisation of violent behaviour; availability of social rights of vulnerable groups and youth; perspectives of human dignity and combat against discrimination.
9.2.2.2. GC ACTIVITIES

In 2015, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour in cooperation with other institutions drew the thirteenth report of the Republic of Lithuania regarding implementation of the provisions of Articles 1, 9, 10, 15, 18 (Paragraphs 1 and 4), 20, 24, 25 of the first group “Employment, training and equal opportunities” of the European Social Charter (hereinafter – Social Charter) 2011–2014.

In 2016, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour in cooperation with other institutions drew the third report of Lithuania regarding compliance of the national law and practice of Lithuania with non-ratified provisions of the Charter. On 6 April 2016, a meeting of Lithuanian representatives with the delegation of the European Committee of Social Rights of the Council of Europe was held at Seimas, during which the legal situation and practice of Lithuania regarding non-ratified provisions of the Charter, possibility to ratify them were assessed and the most relevant issues related with implementation of the provisions of the Charter ratified by Lithuania were discussed. The meeting was attended by the President of European Committee of Social Rights Giuseppe Palmisano, Executive Secretary of the European Committee of Social Rights (Director of the European Social Charter Department) Regis Brilliant, other representatives of the Council of Europe, representatives of the Seimas, Government, President’s Office, Ministry of Social Security and Labour and other interested ministries and institutions of the Republic of Lithuania. At the meeting, the experts of the Council of Europe highlighted the progress achieved by Lithuania in implementation of both ratified and complying with non-ratified provisions of the Charter. During 15 years of the Charter implementation, the number of negative conclusions of the European Committee of Social Rights of the Council of Europe regarding improper implementation of the ratified provisions of the Charter decreased. According to the data of the Council of Europe, in 2011–2014 Lithuania was among ten countries that received the best evaluation regarding fulfilment of their obligations.

In May and October 2015, GC sessions were held in Strasbourg (France), where conclusions of the ILO’s experts regarding the implementation of the European Code of Social Security (hereinafter – the Code), the drafts resolutions of the Committee of Ministers and negative conclusion of 2014 of the European Committee of Social Rights (hereinafter – ECSR) were examined. Among other countries, the GC examined the negative conclusions of the ECSR regarding improper implementation of Paragraph 1 Article 2182, Paragraph 1183, 4184 and 5185 Article 4 of the Charter by Lithuania.

Implementing the priority measures of the Government’s programme 2012–2016 of the Republic of Lithuania, in 2015 the Minister of Social Security and Labour passed the order establishing an inter-institutional working group which analysed the compliance of the legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania with the requirements of the Code 1964, and based on this analysis, prepared suggestions regarding possibilities to ratify this Code and

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182 Ground of non-conformity – working day of some categories of employees in Lithuania can be up to 24 hours, while according to the interpretation of the ECSR a working day can in no event exceed 16 hours.
183 Ground of non-conformity – net minimum monthly wage in Lithuania is below 50 per cent of average monthly wage net required by the Charter.
184 Ground of non-conformity – advance notice about termination of employment agreement in Lithuania is not applied following coming into effect of the court decision according to which an employee is imposed punishment due to which an employee cannot proceed with work; when an employee has special rights to hold certain job revoked following the procedure established by the law at the request of the bodies or officers empowered by the law; when certain institutions draw a conclusion that employee is unsuitable for work.
185 Ground of non-conformity – in Lithuania after all deductions from wage are made, low-paid employees cannot maintain themselves and their dependants.
Convention on Minimum Social Security Standards No. 102 of the International Labour Organisation. Decision to ratify the latter convention was made. This suggestion was submitted to the Government of the Republic of Lithuania.

9.2.3. MEMBERSHIP IN THE UNITED NATIONS ORGANISATION

Lithuania has signed the main United Nations (hereinafter – UN) human rights documents.


The Ministry of Social Security and Labour also contributes to the implementation of other UN documents: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Unhuman or Degrading Treatment; Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

In 2012, the first report of Lithuania on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was submitted, while in 2014 the fifth report on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was submitted.

In 2013, the report on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child was successfully defended, while in 2014 the period report on the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was defended. Following the Convention, in 2015 the Ministry of Social Security and Labour contributed to the consideration of the Lithuanian Report on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

In 2016, at the 15th session of the UN Committee on the Persons with Disabilities the governmental delegation headed by the Minister of Social Security and Labour A. Pabedinskienė successfully defended the first report of Lithuania on the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

On 14–24 March 2016, the 60th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women was held with the priority theme to women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development. Lithuania was represented by the governmental delegation headed by the Minister of Social Security and Labour A. Pabedinskienė. At the session, a side-event on the subject ”Tangible and Measurable Tools for the Prevention of Violence Against Women” was organised by Lithuania and Japan together with the European Institute for Gender Equality.

On 14-16 June 2016, the ninth Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was held in New York. At the conference, the tenth anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was marked and the implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for sustainable development regarding persons with disabilities was discussed.

In the second quarter of 2016, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour together with other competent institutions prepared the Report of the Republic of Lithuania on the implementation of the UN documents according to the universal periodic review procedure, which will be discussed at the United Nations Human Rights Council session in November 2016.

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188 Decree No. 46 of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Lithuania of 31 March 2016 On Establishment of the Delegation.
189 Decree No. 34 of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Lithuania of 09 March 2016 On Establishment of the Delegation.
On the basis of UN conventions committees from independent experts seeking to monitor the implementation of the conventions were set up. Lithuania is represented in two such committees dealing with the issues within the competence of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. In the UN Committee on Elimination of Discrimination against Women Lithuania has been represented by Prof. Dalia Leinartė since 2012, and she is currently seeking her second term of office at the election in 2016. In June 2014, Professor Jonas Ruškus was elected as a member of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

9.2.4. COOPERATION WITH THE ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

On 3–4 June 2015, the official decision regarding Lithuania's accession to the OECD was made by the Council of Ministers of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. On 8 July 2015, the OECD Council approved the Roadmap for the Accession of Lithuania to the OECD Convention. On 22 January 2016, Lithuania officially submitted the Initial Memorandum of the Republic of Lithuania to the OECD, which holds positions of Lithuania on with consideration of more than 200 OECD legal instruments. On the basis of this memorandum, the OECD Committees will carry out reviews for which additional information on a candidate country will be collected. In order to push Lithuania closer towards good practice, the OECD may suggest recommendations on improvement of laws and policies.

The Ministry of Social Security and Labour is also actively participating in the preparation process for the membership of the OECD. On 29 May 2013, the Ministry applied to the OECD expressing an interest to participate in the activity of the Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee. In June 2013, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour was invited to participate in the Committee and its working groups with the invitee’s rights. The Committee is discussing the issues regarding labour, inequality (in particular, inequality of incomes), demography, social security, integration of immigrants. Recently, special attention is focused on impact of technological changes and digitalisation on jobs, social security modernisation, and welfare of the child.

On 14–15 January 2016, the Minister of Social Security and Labour A. Pabedinskienė participated at the Policy Forum on Future of Work and at the OECD Meeting of the Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee at Ministerial Level held in Paris (France). At the meeting, the Ministerial Statement on Building More Resilient and Inclusive Labour Markets and two new OECD legal acts: Recommendation of the Council on the Integrated Mental Health, Skills and Work Policy and Recommendation of the Council on Ageing and Employment policies were approved.

In 2015–2016, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour intensely cooperated with the OECD experts in preparation of two studies in the field of youth policy. In June 2015, the common report of the European Commission and the OECD on youth entrepreneurship in Lithuania (hereinafter – the Report) was completed. The main goal of this project is to promote youth entrepreneurship at national level. The experts presented three key recommendations: strengthen entrepreneurship education through the school system, vocational training and higher education; to promote role models for youth entrepreneurs to strengthen the entrepreneurship culture; strengthen business development services for youth entrepreneurs. On 24 February 2016, the OECD’s review “Investment in Youth: Lithuania” (hereinafter – the Review) was introduced. The launch event of the Review was attended by Mark Pearson, the Deputy Director of Employment, Labour and Social Affairs (DELSA) of the OECD and the OECD Policy Analyst Alessia Forti. The Review was carried out as a part of the implementation of the OECD instrument “Action Plan of Youth”, which was joined by Lithuania in 2014. The recommendations based on the findings suggested in the review should facilitate youth transit from the educational system to the
labour market. An action plan was drawn for implementation of the recommendations contained in the Report and the Review.

On 15 March 2016, the Economic Assessment of Lithuania prepared by the OECD was launched, and Angel Gurria, Secretary-General of the OECD attended the event. Majority of the issues discussed in the assessment cover the competences of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. In addition, it analysed fiscal and financial policies, as well as the assessment and recommendations regarding increase of efficiency and integral growth (employment increase, improvement of labour relations, poverty reduction, efficiency of social assistance, sustainability of pension system) were emphasised.

In May – June 2016, an extensive Lithuania’s accession to the OECD Social Policy and Labour Market (hereinafter – Review) has started. In order to understand the current situation of Lithuania and to prepare adequate recommendations, during the Review the OECD experts’ team will thoroughly examine legal acts in this field, statistical data and other information, and meet national experts. Presentation and discussion of this Review is planned in autumn 2017.

9.3. BILATERAL CO-OPERATION

In 2012–2016, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour continued its active cooperation with other countries in the field of social security, initiated and signed new bilateral agreements on social security and youth exchange with Latvia, Hungary, Moldova, Ukraine, New Zealand, Belarus, Georgia, Germany, Denmark.

9.3.1. BILATERAL AGREEMENTS ON SOCIAL SECURITY

On 16 May 2016, agreement was signed between the Government of the Republic of Lithuania and the Government of the Republic of Latvia on taking account of insurance periods of the former USSR, which came into effect on 1 April 2013. The aim of this Agreement is to avoid the duplication of including the insurance period acquired in the territories within the jurisdiction of the former USSR, where such insurance periods may be included both in Lithuania and Latvia. Once Lithuania and Latvia joined the European Union (EU), EU regulations on coordination of social security systems were directly applied in both countries.

On 1 October 2014, in Kishinev the Minister of Social Security and Labour Pabedinskienė and Minister of Labour, Social Security and Family of Moldova Valentina Butiga signed an agreement of the Republic of Lithuania and Republic of Moldova on social security and Administrative agreement on application of the latter agreement, which came into effect on 4 October 2015.

On 2–3 December 2014, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour received a visit of the delegation from the Ukrainian Ministry of Social Policy and Ukrainian Pension Fund headed by Ukrainian Vice-Minister of Social Security and Labour Sergey Ustimenko. During the meeting, amendments to the agreement between the Republic of Lithuania and Ukraine on social security was discussed, regarding the possibility to recalculate previously-granted pensions for persons, by applying new principle of including soviet period of insurance, according to which each state would calculate and pay pension only for the period of insurance in its country, while soviet period of insurance, e.g. acquired in Kazakhstan, would be included by the country, in which insurance period is longer. Similar principle of soviet insurance period distribution is established in the bilateral agreements with Latvia, Estonia, and Moldova. The Ukrainian representatives welcomed the Lithuania’s suggestion. In
2015, Ukraine informed about its inability to approve the amendment to the Agreement, therefore negotiations continue in search of the provisions acceptable to both countries.

On 5–7 May 2014, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour received a visit of the Republic of Belarus delegation. During the visit, amendments to the agreement on social insurance signed between the Republic of Lithuania and Belarus Republic on 4 February 1999 (hereinafter – the Agreement) were discussed. The main discussed issues were related with recently encountered problems, because of changes in the national legislation it becomes more difficult for countries to make uniform application of the clauses of the Agreement. It was suggested to extend the application of the Agreement and to apply it not only to permanent but also to temporary residents of both countries, in order to secure the possibility to receive social insurance benefits while residing in the other contracting state. Opinions were exchanged regarding the amendment to the procedure of including soviet insurance period and possibility to recalculate granted pensions. The issues on defining applicable law, payment of orphan pensions and other relevant and urgent issues regarding application of the Agreement were also discussed. In 2016, the new draft agreement on social security between the Republic of Lithuania and the Republic of Belarus was drafted, which following its coordination with the Lithuanian competent institutions will be presented to Belarus.

In 2013, the draft agreement on social protection between the Government of the Republic of Lithuania and the Government of the United States of America (hereinafter the draft agreement) was prepared. The purpose of the draft agreement is to regulate the system of awarding and paying old-age pensions and payment of social insurance contributions for persons moving from one country to the other country for residence and (or) employment, and to ensure payment of pensions to persons living in a territory of any of the countries and having accumulated the period of state social pension insurance according to the legislation of one or both countries. In May 2014, the Draft Agreement was introduced to the United States of America through diplomatic channels, inviting the US to start negotiations on the Agreement. On 19 August 2015, the United States of America informed that currently they are working on other agreements, but in the future other priority countries will be considered.

In the beginning of 2016, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour conducted the analysis of the need for development of interstate relations in the field of social security. Considering statistical data of migration into and from Lithuania during 2004–2014 and having evaluated that good relationship with neighbouring countries – Eastern partners – and extensive support in implementation of political, economic and social reforms is the consistent priority of the Lithuania foreign policy, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour is considering possibilities to initiate negotiations on signing bilateral agreement in the field of social security with Georgia in the nearest future.

9.3.2. BILATERAL AGREEMENTS ON YOUTH EXCHANGE AND COOPERATION

On 24 September 2012, an agreement was signed in Vilnius between the Government of the Republic of Lithuania and the Hungarian Government on Stefan Batory Lithuanian and Hungarian Youth Cooperation Foundation, which came into effect on 3 October 2013. By this agreement, Stefan Batory Lithuanian and Hungarian Youth Cooperation Foundation was established with the goal to support and develop friendly cooperation between Lithuanian and Hungarian youth aged from 13 to 30. The Foundation is implementing its goals by supporting and funding youth cooperation and information projects, youth's methodical meetings. On 6 November 2015, in Budapest, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour Pabedinskenė and State Minister for Family and Youth Affairs of the Hungarian Ministry of Human Resources Katalin Novák signed an agreement between the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania and the Hungarian Ministry
On 8 August – 4 September 2015, the Minister of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania A. Pabedinskienė and Minister for Education, Youth, and Sports of the Federal State of Brandenburg Günter Baaske of German Federation signed an agreement between the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania and Ministry for Education, Youth, and Sports of the Federal State of Brandenburg of German Federation on the cooperation in the field of youth affairs in 2015–2016. Four programmes are planned to be implemented under the latter agreement, which are aimed at exchanging experience and information by organising meetings of Lithuania and German youth workers, youth coordinators-researchers, etc. The agreement is implemented by the Department of Youth Affairs under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour.

On 28 August 2015, The Government of the Republic of Lithuania and the Government of Ukraine signed an agreement on Lithuanian and Ukrainian Youth Exchange Council, which came into effect on 30 December 2015. The agreement is aimed at establishing Lithuanian and Ukrainian Youth Exchange Council (hereinafter – Council) to support cooperation between Lithuanian and Ukrainian youth in order to develop friendly collaboration of Lithuanian and Ukrainian people. The Council will pursue its goals by supporting and financing Lithuanian and Ukrainian youth exchanges, various projects, events, meetings, and other initiatives. The Council’s activities will be financed from the budgets of both countries (from the overall appropriations from the national budget of the Republic of Lithuania approved for the Ministry of Social Security and Labour) and from other sources stipulated in the national laws of each country. The amount of funds to be allocated will be determined on a yearly basis by the agreement between the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania and the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine.

On 1 October 2015, an agreement was signed between the Government of the Republic of Lithuania and the Government of New Zealand on working holiday programme. The purpose of this agreement is to promote youth movement for discovering different traditions and cultures, to offer an opportunity to the nationals aged from 18 to 30 year old of the contracting countries to visit the other country and stay there for 12 months on holidays, with the right to study or work for the period of maximum six months. The agreement will come into force after the countries carry out the procedures stipulated in the national legislation. Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania ratified the Agreement with New Zealand on 19 May 2016. This Agreement will enter into force after New Zealand will implement relevant national procedures and inform Lithuania.

On 21 April 2015, in Riga, the Minister of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania Pabedinskené and Employment Minister of the Kingdom of Denmark Henrik Dam Kristensen signed a joint statement on cooperation and information exchange in the field of services provision and posting of workers.

On 17 December 2015, in Vilnius, the Minister of Social Security and Labour Algimanta Pabedinskiene and Deputy Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs of Georgia Revaz Javelidze signed an agreement between the Ministries of Social Security and Labour of Lithuania and of Sports and Youth Affairs of Georgia on co-operation in the field of youth affairs. The agreement on cooperation is aimed at exchanging information and experience in forming and implementing youth policies, and promoting cooperation of youth organisations of both countries.