The Social Report
2012–2013
THE SOCIAL REPORT
2012–2013

Vilnius
2013
Dear Readers of the Social Report,

This year Lithuania has assumed the obligation periodically falling within each EU Member State, namely the Presidency of the Council of the EU, with joy and great responsibility. This annual publication of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour not only gives an overview of annual works, but also describes the social policy carried out during the period of preparation for the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU and provides the statistics illustrating the current situation. During the Presidency period, while dealing with the issues which are relevant to the whole Europe, we will seek to ensure smooth EU decision-making and continuity of works by involving all partners concerned into this process. We have chosen the statement “Growing Europe: Attention to People” as our slogan, since we believe that people are the greatest treasure of Europe and Lithuania.

Last year was joyful for Lithuania due to improving situation in the labour market. During the period of January – May 2013 the territorial labour exchanges registered 9.4 percent less unemployed persons than during the same period in 2012. In total, even 106.3 thous. vacancies were registered during the period of January – May 2013 and in May 2013 employers registered the greatest number of vacancies in the territory of the Lithuanian Labour Exchange, namely 35.9 thous. Such indicators were possibly influenced by the minimum monthly wage and the minimum hourly pay which were raised since 1 January 2013. Different employment support programmes contributed to increase of employment and the measures provided for in the Strategy for Increasing Employment for 2014–2020 will further assist in reducing unemployment in a structured manner.

During this year the Lithuanian social security system underwent a lot of significant changes. We have improved the procedure for provision of monetary support which will encourage people to work and not to live from benefits from now on. Furthermore, we have drawn up the drafts which will allow making the lists of persons waiting for subsidised housing significantly shorter.

In pursuance of creating the environment for children growing in child care institutions or social families which would be as close to family environment as possible, promoting are in families and social families, the trends of reconstruction of the child care institutions have been established. Furthermore, we have made the first steps towards the licencing of social care institutions. The simplified conditions will enable social care institutions to use the funds from the state budget in a more expedient manner and reduce the administrative burden, the care institutions will be able to pay more attention to provision of high quality services.

One of the most important innovations in the social security is the reconstructed pension system allowing people to freely decide on the way of pension accumulation in the future. The social security system will undergo a lot of other changes: in order to save administrative expenditure, since 1 January 2013 the function of payment of unemployment benefits carried out by the Lithuanian Labour Exchange has been assigned to the territorial divisions of the State Social Insurance Fund Board and the saved funds will be used for performance of other functions in relation to employment. Furthermore, now the state benefits for artists, prosecutors, sportsmen are paid through the State Social Insurance Fund Board, other changes have been realised.

The key priorities of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU in the area of social security and labour are increasing employment by paying special attention to reduction of youth unemployment. Furthermore, debate
on improvement of the protection of employees including employees-migrants, seeking for the balance between the goals of social and economic policy, equal opportunities for women and men and ensuring of efficient non-discrimination policy have been arranged. Major attention is paid to ensuring equality between women and men. During the Presidency Lithuania will seek for a more rapid progress in the area of equality between women and men not only in legislation, but also in practice, promote the balance between women and men in decision-making.

To consider the afore-mentioned issues and other relevant issues the Ministry of Social Security and Labour organises meetings on different level both in Lithuania and in Brussels. I hope that during such meetings we will be able to successfully continue the started debates, ensure smooth reconciliation of the interests of all Member states, and find the common points of common attitude and necessary solutions.

We will be able to create a reliable, growing and open Europe and ensure welfare in our country only by virtue of active cooperation and looking for the most effective ways of meeting the challenges met by the whole Europe today.

I wish you great success and fruitful works in pursue of such goals!

Minister of Social Security and Labour

Algimanta Pabedinskienė
CO–AUTHORS OF SOCIAL REPORT 2012–2013

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The Administration of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour pays heartfelt thanks to the team of editors for their work preparing this edition.
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The Social Report for 2012–2013 (hereinafter referred to as the "Report") gives an overview of activities carried out by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (hereinafter referred to as the ministry) in 2012–2013. The Report has been drafted in the context of challenges posed by the former difficult economic situation of the country to the Lithuanian social security system, rather high unemployment rate, and financial difficulties experienced by various social layers; dependency of the social security system on the economic condition of the state has been observed and vulnerability of the system has been revealed. The necessity to further improve the current social security system has emerged.

The second chapter hereof thoroughly explores the issues of the labour market, employment relationships, occupational safety and health policy. It gives the statistical data and tendencies of changes in the labour market. Efficiency of the activities of the Lithuanian Labour Exchange and the activities of social enterprises, improvement of the legal framework of the labour market are overviewed. Legal regulation of collective and individual employment relations, changes in the wages and social liability of enterprises are explored. The relevant issues of safety and health at work are overviewed.

The third chapter of the Report analyses the issues of social insurance and pensions. The chapter describes the relevance of the financial sustainability of the social insurance system, addresses the improving collection of the budget of the State Social Insurance Fund. The chapter gives an overview of the changes in the social insurance and state pension system; described the constantly changing scheme of financing of the pension accumulation system.

The fourth chapter of the Report describes the measures of monetary social assistance for families and children seeking that assistance was as targeted as possible and able to mitigate the consequences of scarcity for the groups of most vulnerable residents. The monetary social assistance guaranteed by the State is provided with regard to the national social and economic development and financial capacity of the State. The chapter considers social services and the activities of social care institutions, support for acquisition or rental of housing, subsidised housing and their future perspectives. Major emphasis is put on the issues of gender equality: social integration of the disabled, return of political prisoners and exiles and their family members to Lithuania, social integration of foreigners granted asylum, implementation of migration policy. The above relevant issues are sensitive to all members of the society.

The fifth chapter of the Report describes the activities of communities and non-governmental organisations as well as participation in social policy, and deals with activity development directions. Considerable attention is paid to child and youth rights and the current situation. The chapter discusses how, with regard to emerging challenges, family policy is shaped and implemented.
The sixth chapter hereof is concerned with gender equality issues.

The seventh chapter of the Report presents information about the usage of support from the European Union Structural Funds, gives an overview of implemented measures and achieved results.

The eighth chapter of the Report thoroughly explores activities related to Lithuania’s membership in the European Union, discusses international cooperation, participation in the activities of international organisations, and defines the country’s social security system in the international context. The activities related to the Presidency of the Council of the EU held by Lithuania since 1 July 2013 have been elaborated. It is obvious that membership in the European Union and active international cooperation lay down new guidelines over and over again, set new requirements and open new opportunities in the area of social policy.

For the readers who are more interested in social security issues the Report provides references to different resources. Every reader can also use the websites of the ministry (www.socmin.lt; www.socialiniszemelapis.lt, data mart module of the information system of social support for family etc.), which provide them with information on various relevant issues.
2.1. LABOUR MARKET

2.1.1. EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

According to the data of the Statistical Survey of the population employment performed by the Statistics Lithuania, 1,278.5 thous. residents (or 22.1 thous. (1.8 percent) residents more than in 2011) were employed in the country in 2012. The number of employed people most increased in the areas of industry (9.1 thous.) and agriculture, forestry and fishery (4.9 thous.). In 2012, the national economy employed 88.7 thous. persons aged 15–24 or every fifth resident of such age. As compared with 2011, the number of such employees increased by 7.3 thous. (8.9 percent).

In 2012, the employment rate of residents aged 15–64 reached 62.2 percent, and it increased by 1.9 percentage point over the year. In 2012, the employment rate among men aged 15–64 made up 62.5 percent, and among women – 61.9 percent, and, over the year, it increased by 2.1 and 1.7 percentage points respectively. The employment rate among elderly residents aged 55–64 increased by 1.7 percentage point over 2012 and reached 51.8 percent. The employment rate among the youth (aged 15–24) reached 21.6 percent in 2012 and increased by 2.5 percentage point over the year.

In 2012, the total unemployment rate reached 13.2 percent and was lower by 2.1 percentage point than in 2011. In 2012, the male unemployment rate amounted to 15.1 percent, and the female unemployment rate – to 11.5 percent. Over the year, the male unemployment rate decreased by 2.6 percentage point and female unemployment rate – by 1.4 percentage point. In 2012, the rate of long-term unemployment reached 6.5 percent, and was lower than the rate of 2011 by 1.4 percentage point. The number of long-term unemployed persons was 95.7 thous. or nearly every second unemployed person (49 percent), i.e. 22.2 thous. (18.8 percent) less than in 2011. As compared with 2011, in 2012, the unemployment rate among youth (aged 15-24) decreased by 5.8 percentage point and reached 26.4 percent.
2.1.2. LABOUR MARKET

According to the data of the Lithuanian Labour Exchange, in 2012 the following tendencies were prevailing in the labour market:

- 330.8 thous. unemployed persons addressed the labour exchange over the year. Lack of professional preparation, working experience, a long-lasting work break or non-conformity of the acquired professional knowledge with the labour market demands impeded integration of persons into labour market. 40.6 percent of the registered employed did not have professional qualification;

- youth up to 25 years of age made one fifth of the registered unemployed persons. More than a half of them (40.3 thous.) were first time jobseekers, every second young unemployed person (37.4 thous.) did not have any professional qualification and, therefore, could not compete in the labour market. In 2012, 97.8 percent of young unemployed persons were offered the so-called “new start”; however, only 46.2 percent of the registered young unemployed persons were employed;

- 202.5 thous. persons were employed over the year. Nearly every fifth employed person was young person up to 25 years or a long-term unemployed person. 47.3 thous. persons commenced independent activities under business certificates;

- long-term unemployment has decreased: the number of long-term unemployed persons registered in the labour exchange reduced from 93.4 to 51 thous. (or by 45.4 percent) over the year. As compared with 2011, in 2012 the average unemployment duration became shorter by one fifth (up to 7.8 month);

- support for employment through implementation of the measures of active labour market policy was granted to 74.4 thous. jobseekers. Public works made the greatest part, namely 44 percent, of the measures of active labour market policy (in 2011 – 60 percent). As a result of implementation of vocational training according to the new model, the employment results became much better. 89 percent of the participants of the measure (in 2011 – 52
percent) were employed after such training. During the year, the status of a social enterprise was granted to 5 enterprises, and for 6 social enterprises the status was withdrawn. At the end of 2012, 136 enterprises with such status operated in the country. In 2012, 515 jobs, i.e. 22 percent new jobs more than in 2011, were created through subsidies; as compared with 2011, labour demand increased by around 18 percent. The greatest demand arose in the sector of services which provided more than a half of the registered vacancies.

Issued work permits for foreigners during the period of 2008–2012

Data of the Lithuanian Labour Exchange

With a view to meeting the demand for qualified labour force in separate economic sectors and with production necessity of companies, the Lithuanian Labour Exchange issued 4.6 thous. work permits to foreigners, i.e. 1.4 times more than in 2011. The greatest demand was for drivers of international cargo carrying vehicles (70 percent of all work permits), assemblers of metal bodies of ships (9 percent), and welders (7 percent). Foreigners made 2.3 percent of all persons employed in 2012.

2.1.3. IMPROVEMENT OF THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF THE LABOUR MARKET

In 2012, after adoption of the Law on Amending Articles and Annex of the Republic of Lithuania Law on the Legal Status of Aliens, Council Directive 2009/50/EC of 25 May 2009 on the Conditions of Entry and Residence of Third-Country Nationals for the Purposes of Highly Qualified Employment was transposed into the Lithuanian Law. In the law a list of the grounds for issue of temporary residence permits for an alien was supplemented with the new ground where an alien who intends to perform a job requiring high professional qualification according to the provisions of Article 44 of this Law. Pursuant to the new provisions of the Law, as regards an alien as an employee with high professional qualification, as of 1 January 2013 the Lithuanian Labour Exchange only shall make a decision on

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1 Law on Amending and Supplementing Articles 1, 2, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 17, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 33, 37, 38, 40, 43, 49, 50, 53, 54, 55, 57, 58, 89, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 104, 106, 113, 128, 131, 133, 139, 140, 141 of and Annex to the Republic of Lithuania Law on the Legal Status of Aliens, Supplementing the Law with Articles 44, 49, 98, 99, 103, 105, 105, 105, 105, 106 and Declaring Articles 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 20, 145 Null and Void (Official Gazette Valstybės žinios, 2012, No 85-4450).
whether an alien’s work meets the demands of the labour market of the Republic of Lithuania and notify the Migration Department under the Ministry of the Interior. A decision on issue of temporary residence permit (according to Directive 2009/50/EC – blue card) to an alien shall be made by the Migration Department. It is to be noted that an alien intending to perform a job requiring high professional qualification must have a higher education degree and during the period of validity of the temporary residence permit in Lithuania his/her wages according to the employment contract must be not lower than 2 rates of the national average monthly gross earnings which were most recently published by the Lithuanian Department of Statistics.

Thus, by the Order of the Minister of Social Security and Labour there was approved the Description of the Procedure for Making a Decision on Compliance of an Alien’s Work Requiring High Professional Qualification with the Demands of the Labour Market of the Republic of Lithuania. It governs the criteria of establishing the demand for the work of an alien who is a third-country national requiring high professional qualification in the labour market of Lithuania, the evaluation of the demand and the procedure for making a decision on compliance of the work of such alien with the demands in the labour market by the Lithuanian Labour Exchange. During I quarter 2013, the Lithuanian Labour Exchange made 11 decisions on foreigners with high professional qualification. The aliens included engineers, economics, physicians, jurists, lecturers of different languages. The average monthly wages of such aliens amounted approximately to LTL 6.2 thous.

During II quarter 2013, the draft Law Amending and Supplementing Articles 1, 2, 13, 23, 24, 26, 29 and 32 of the Republic of Lithuania Law on Support for Employment, Supplementing the Law with Article 26 1 and the Law Declaring Article 91 of the Labour Code of the Republic of Lithuania Null and Void (hereinafter referred to as the “draft laws”) which were presented to the authorities concerned for negotiation were drawn up. By the above drafts the following proposals were put forward:

- to establish that not only the persons residing in Lithuania, but also other persons residing in other member states of the European Union (and the European Free Trade Association) (if their last workplace was in Lithuania) could take advantage of the possibilities of the support for employment;

- to specify the concept “unemployed” by transposing its content to the compound terms “persons out of work”, “work-capable persons”, “persons of working age” and eliminating its regulation from the Labour Code. It is proposed to categorize the persons who render agriculture and forestry services under service tickets as persons out of work. The acquired qualification included in the term “work-capable person” specified by the term “decent work” if such qualification was acquired more than 5 years ago will not become the basis for considering the work related to it as decent;

- to provide for a possibility for persons to voluntarily terminate vocational training, it was proposed to shorten the time limit for job retention of such employed person by employers (from 12 months to 6 months), the duties of the participant of the vocational trainings to be employed and, in the event of a failure, to indemnify the labour exchange against the incurred costs, were regulated in a more detailed manner;

- to provide for the version of support for alternative working skills acquisition: not employing persons directly in a job, but concluding a bilateral contract for acquisition of working skills in accordance with which no wages shall be paid. This aims at solving one of the major issues of the labour market in Lithuania, i.e. particularly high youth unemployment rate, by creating conditions for young people to acquire working skills directly in their job, thus, increasing the possibilities for employment of such persons;

- when supporting creation of jobs to specify the amount of the subsidy, proportionality thereof with regard to the duration of working time per week and cases when weekly duration of working time is shorter due to the reasons set out in Article 145 of the Labour Code (in the event of extending the duration of weekly work, the subsidy shall not be increased);

• to provide for that subsidy for individual activities under business certificate may be paid for the persons who commence such activities for the first time or unemployed persons who were engaged in such activities more than one year ago, it is proposed to create possibilities for subsiding the costs of incorporation of an enterprise. Termination of subsidies for individual activities is regulated.

The draft laws were supplemented according to the remarks of other competent authorities, negotiated during the meetings of the Tripartite Council or the Commission of Employment Relationships thereof. On 2 July 2013, they were presented to the Ministry of Justice for receiving remarks from it. The drafts provide for that if the drafts are adopted, they shall come into force on 1 October 2013.

2.1.4. INCREASING EFFICIENCY OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE LITHUANIAN LABOUR EXCHANGE

In 2013, it has also been planned to pay major attention to increasing efficiency of the activities of labour exchanges so that they would really become helpers both to the jobseekers and the ones who offer a job. On 1 January 2013, in all territorial labour exchanges there was installed a model of result oriented activities. When a consultant works with an unemployed person or a person who was notified of his/her dismissal, his/her preparation for the labour market, motivation shall be evaluated, specific measures for increasing employment possibilities shall be provided with regard to individual needs. The evaluation of the consultant evidencing in possible changes in remuneration for work shall also depend on the achieved results.

Further enhancing of the activities of the Lithuanian Labour Exchange and territorial labour exchanges thereof resulted in drawing up of the plan for reforming the function of the Lithuanian Labour Exchange and territorial labour exchanges thereof aiming at development of the high quality and individualized system of implementation of the measures of support for service of jobseekers and employers and support for employment and provision of labour market services. Upon strengthening the role and responsibility of territorial units, satisfaction of the demands in the local labour market will result in the quality of the provided services. Drawing up of the plan has been planned till 2015.

In 2013, one of the major challenges was increasing the employment of residents, in particular, youth. Although the economy has recovered, the number of jobs was not increasing so rapidly. In pursuance of solving employment issues, a working group for proposals concerning tendencies and priorities of increasing the employment of residents and drawing up of the draft Strategy for Increasing Employment for 2014-2020 was set up by the Ordinance of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Lithuania.

The main reasons determining unemployment is growth of business which does not create jobs, non-compliance of qualification with the demands in the market, education and teaching system which does not respond to the need for providing the market with necessary specialists quickly enough, decreasing labour force resources, lack of integrity in employment policy. Upon evaluation of the afore-mentioned obstacles, four main tendencies which will prevail in the new employment programme should be distinguished. One of the priorities will be business development and promotion of creation of jobs. Another priority is increasing compliance of the qualification of labour force with the demands in the market. Particularly great emphasis will be put on solution of the afore-mentioned issue. High employment rate and inadequate compliance of the qualification with the demands in the labour market result in a risk structural unemployment and long-term imbalance in labour market. Therefore, through implementation of the systemic measures provided for in the strategy attempts will be made to ensure compliance of the qualification and retraining of specialist with the demand in the labour market. It is expected that till 2020 the employment rate (in the group of persons aged 20-64) will be increased from 68.7 percent to 72.8 percent. One more priority of the programme will be reducing the long-term unemployment rate from 6.5 percent to 4.5 percent over the period of six years.

During the period of 2014-2020 the Lithuanian employment policy guidelines were presented during the conference which took place on 17 May in the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania. It is planned to present a programme with particular measures to the Government of the Republic of Lithuania in July.
2.2. EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIPS AND REMUNERATION FOR WORK

2.2.1. Employment Relationships

2.2.1.1. Collective Employment Relationships

In Lithuania, the main institution in charge of reconciliation of interests of social partners, namely trade unions and employers’ organisation, and public authorities is the Tripartite Council of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter referred to as the “Tripartite Council”). Currently the Tripartite Council consists of trade unions, employers and representatives of the Government (in total, 21 members, i.e. 7 representatives of each party) and the following institutions and organisations are represented:

1) public administration bodies: the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the Ministry of Economy and the Office of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania;

2) three central (republican) trade union organisations: the Lithuanian Confederation of Trade Unions, the Lithuanian Labour Federation and the Lithuanian Trade Union "Solidarumas";

3) several employers’ organisations: the Lithuanian Confederation of Industrialists, the Lithuanian Business Employers’ Confederation, the Chamber of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania and the Association of Lithuanian Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Crafts.


During the period of its existence the Tripartite Council established in the Lithuanian public life as a significant institution reconciling interests of partners, dealing with the issues and solving them. During the years 2012–2013 (till June) there were arranged 18 sitting of the Tripartite Council including 2 circuit sitting and 3 extraordinary sittings. During the meetings there were considered 84 social economic issues, namely the issues concerning amendments and supplements to the Labour Code; increase in the minimum monthly wages; the draft National Agreement for the years 2012–2016; the draft Republic of Lithuania Law on the Base Amount of the Basic Salary (Wage) of the State Politicians, Judges, State Officials and Public Servants Applicable in the Year 2013 and other issues.

The Ministry of Social Security and Labour registers the collective agreements concluded at the State (national), sector (production, services, vocational) or territorial (municipality, county) level upon application the parties to which are trade unions and employers’ organisations. Today the following agreements are in force:

The sectoral collective agreement concluded in 2007 between the Lithuanian Journalists’ Union and the Association of National Regional and Urban Newspaper Publishers (Chairman – Dainius Radzevičius);

In 2012, there was concluded a territorial collective agreement between the Western Lithuania Alliance of Trade Unions of Builders and Designers (Chairwoman – Elena Sungailienė) and the association of the Western Lithuania Group of Construction and Design Companies (Vakarų Lietuvos statybos ir projektavimo įmonių grupė) (President – Gediminas Bartkevičius). The agreement deals with the issues of remuneration for work, support for social partnership, additional support for employment and occupational safety and health.

According to the provisions of the Republic of Lithuania Labour Code in force, collective agreements of an undertaking are not subject to registration and there is no precise data on the number of collective agreements of such level. In 2012, the inspectors of the State Labour Inspectorate inspected 6,697 companies and structural units thereof (ac-
cordingly, 18,872 companies were inspected in 2006, 17,600 companies – in 2007, 15,859 companies – in 2008, 15,935 companies – in 2009, 12,411 companies – in 2010, and 12,325 companies – in 2011) and established that 204 collective agreements were signed in 2012 (1,157 collective agreements were signed in 2006, 1,238 collective agreements – in 2007, 903 collective agreements – in 2008, 290 collective agreements – in 2009, 248 collective agreements – in 2010, 273 collective agreements – in 2011). The provided data suggests that the number of collective agreements signed in 2012 was lower than the number of collective agreements signed in 2011, but in 2012 less companies were inspected. An impact of the ongoing economic crisis is still felt and the social partnership take-off which was in the years 2006–2008 is still an objective to be attained.

### 2.2.1.2. Individual Employment Relationships

In pursuance of enhancing the flexibility of employment relationships, encouraging creation of new jobs, decreasing unemployment and the administrative burden, modernisation of the labour market as well as balancing the regulation of employment relationships with safety at work assurance, the laws on supplementing and amending the Labour Code were adopted.

By the afore-mentioned amendments to the Labour Code, contracts on the supply of services were relinquished: works of the supply of services may be carried out as individual activities or, subject to an agreement between the parties, an employment contract may be concluded.

There were adopted new provisions that a person may be appointed to a position included on the list of competitive positions prior to a competition under a fixed-term employment contract but for a period not exceeding one year.

It was established that in the event of transferring business or any part thereof, employment relationships shall be continued under the same conditions; at the same time provisions concerning notifying employees in such case were supplemented. The above provisions are in compliance with the requirements set out in Council Directive 2001/23/EC of 12 March 2001 on the Approximation of the Laws of the Member States Relating to the Safeguarding of Employees’ Rights in the Event of Transfers of Undertakings, Businesses or Parts of Undertakings or Businesses.

The new amendments to the Code establish that monetary compensation for unused annual leave shall be paid for the period not longer than three years. Furthermore, it was established that when employing or dismissing a person in religious community, communion or centre, they may be subject to the requirement concerning religion in case where work is related to the activities of religious organisations. The above provision is in compliance with the European Social Charter (revised) and allows applying the requirement concerning religion with respect to employees when dismissing or employing them where their work is related to the activities of religious organisations.

In response to the existing situation in the labour market and in pursuance of enhancing the flexibility of employment relationships, promoting creation of new jobs, a possibility for concluding a fixed-term employment contract in the newly created jobs was extended till 31 July 2015 upholding special rules (“protectors”) preventing from misuse of conclusion of such contracts. At the same time implementation of the provisions of the European Union Council Recommendation of 12 July 2011 concerning enhancing flexibility of the labour market and possibility to better use of fixed-term contracts was ensured.

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3 Data of the State Labour Inspectorate.
In order to ensure a right of parties to employment relationships to high quality and more effective resolution of labour disputes, there were adopted amendments to the Labour Code\(^5\) whereby the mandatory procedure for adjudication of labour disputes under out-of-court procedure was changed. There was established a mandatory pre-trial body, namely labour disputes commissions, which since 1 January 2013 act under the territorial units of the State Labour Inspectorate and are set up of employers, representatives of employees and a specialist of the State Labour Inspectorate.

It is to be noted that when investigating infringements of labour laws the State Labour Inspectorate spent much time, exploited a lot of financial resources, but the courts followed the established legal precedent for adjudication of labour disputes and would state that, pursuant to the Labour Code, the right to adjudicate labour disputes is granted to the bodies adjudicating labour disputes, namely labour disputes commission and court; thus, delivery of decisions on the substance of labour disputes does not fall within the competence of the State Labour Inspectorate. Meanwhile, according to the provided data, the labour disputes commissions set up on delegation of the employer in workplaces till 1 January 2013, would not actually resolve labour disputes. In the light of the above, more effective regulations on adjudication of labour disputes were adopted which have the following advantages: labour disputes commission is a less formalised phenomenon than courts; therefore, in principle, a labour dispute is adjudicated more quickly than in court; a possibility to reconcile the parties at any stage; address to the labour disputes commission is free of charge for persons (decreased costs of employers and employees); higher competence of labour disputes commission (the requirement to have higher university education in law is set for the chairman, competent social partners); lower work load in courts; lower burden for business, since less complaints to monitoring authorities.

On 25 May 2013 the Law Amending Article 41(2) and 41(5) of the Code of Administrative Offences of the Republic of Lithuania came into force\(^6\). The above law aims at facilitating application of administrative liability with respect to persons precluding the offices of the State Labour Inspectorate and strengthening the sanctions for violations of recording of working time. It was not only the importance of the contents of the violation of recording of working time, but also the increasing scope of such violations that encouraged toughening of the sanction provided for in Article 41(5) of the Code of Administrative Offences.

On 1 May 2013, the Law Amending the Law on Temporary Agency Work of the Republic of Lithuania\(^7\) came into force. It was drawn up with regard to the issues stated and proposals put forward by the Association of Lithuanian Employment Agencies. The law aims at facilitating the procedure for temporary agency work that the business enterprises were provided with temporary employees as soon as possible when they need this most. It was established that only temporary work agencies could notify the State Social Insurance Fund Board (hereinafter referred to as “Sodra”) of employment of a temporary employee not later than an hour before commencement of his/her work, i.e. in this case, there would be created a possibility for notifying on the same when he/she is employed, but the employee could commence his/her work only 1 hour after notifying Sodra of his/her employment. Before the above law came into force, the general procedure prescribed in the Labour Code was applicable in accordance with which the employer must notify Sodra of the commencement of work of such person not later than 1 working day to the planned commencement of work. Such regulation restricted business possibilities of temporary work agencies, since they could not provide business enterprises with temporary employees in an expeditious manner.

In Lithuania, the number of temporary employees has increased. According to the data of the State Labour Inspectorate, during the first half of 2012 17 temporary work agencies notified of employment of 947 temporary employees, whereas during the second half of 2012 18 temporary work agencies notified of employment of 2,475 temporary employees. However, although the number of temporary employees in Lithuania increases, it makes 0.16 percent of all employees of Lithuania working under employment contracts and, on average, in Europe the number of all employed makes 1.6 percent.


\(^{6}\) Law Amending Articles 41(2) and 41(5) of the Code of Administrative Offences of the Republic of Lithuania (Official Gazette Valstybės žinios, 2013, No 54-2683).


### 2.2.2. REMUNERATION FOR WORK

#### 2.2.2.1. Remuneration for Work in 2012–2013

The former Government of the Republic of Lithuania, taking into account 24 April 2012 recommendation of the Tripartite Council of the Republic of Lithuania, on 1 August 2012 approved the minimum monthly wage amounting to LTL 850 (hereinafter referred to as the “MMW”) (increased by 6.25 percent as compared with the previous MMW) and the minimum hourly rate amounting to LTL 5.15. The decision was made after evaluation of the economic situation in the country, the financial possibilities of the State budget and municipal budgets and employers, in particular, small employers, to pay higher minimum monthly wage.

Paragraph 85 of the Programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania for 2012-2016 sets out that as the economy recovers, the wages of employees of the public sector, budgetary institutions, the national minimum wage shall be consistently increased seeking to converge it with 50 percent of the average wage. Following the afore-mentioned provisions and 18 December 2012 recommendation of the Tripartite Council of the Republic of Lithuania, since 1 January 2013 the Government of the Republic of Lithuania approved the MMW amounting to LTL 1,000 (increased by 17.65 percent as compared with the previous MMW) and the minimum hourly rate amounting to LTL 6.06. The increase in the MMW affected approximately 200 thous. employees including around 50 thous. employees of budgetary institutions.

Increase in the minimum wage resulted in an increase of income of the employees receiving the lowest wage (since 1 January 2013 the employee whose wage amounts to the MMW and who is not subject to the additional non-taxable income rate less taxes and contribution receives LTL 824.5 per month), the domestic consumption increases, there arise possibilities for monetary social support with regard to the number of beneficiaries and the part of the State funds used for payment of social benefits and compensations for heating and water.

Determination of the fixed part of the monthly wages of the heads, deputy heads and chief accountants of the state enterprises, public limited liability companies and private limited liability companies where the State owns more than 50 percent of votes in the general meeting of shareholders is subject to the MMW. In order to ensure that the wages of such employees did not directly depend on the increase in the MMW, the previous MMW amounting to LTL 850 was established for the fixed part of the monthly wage.

Seeking to reduce state budgetary appropriations for work pay, stabilise the state system of finance and to use state funds more rationally, and considering the difficult situation in the European and world economies and financial markets, the amounts of remuneration of state politicians, state officials, judges, civil servants and employees of budgetary institutions, which were cut down in 2009, were valid in 2012. In 2012, the Seimas and the Government adopted amendments to legal acts specifying that the above mentioned cut downs would be valid in 2013. The base amount of the basic salary (wage) amounting to LTL 450 was established. Laws prolonging decreased salary coefficients of state politicians, civil servants, judges and other state officials until 31 December 2013 were also adopted. The max-

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imum coefficients of basic salaries and bonuses of the heads of budgetary institutions and organisations, heads of structural divisions and their deputies were also reduced in an analogous manner. The validity of the reduced rates was extended till 31 December 2013\(^\text{12}\).

The issues of remuneration for work of prosecutors and social workers were also put under consideration. In the course of the implementation of the structural reorganisation of the Prosecutor General’s Office of the Republic of Lithuania, the basic salary coefficients of chief prosecutors of regional prosecutor’s offices, their deputies and prosecutors of specialised divisions were increased from the general state budget appropriations for the General Prosecutor’s Office\(^\text{13}\).

Seeking to increase the official remuneration of social workers, the Government established a 30 percent higher maximum amount of official remuneration of social workers for a period of one year (2012)\(^\text{14}\). Furthermore, the resolution of the Government providing for a legal possibility for increasing the wage for all employees set out in Annexes Nos. 1-4 to the Resolution, i.e. the established that basic salary coefficients of the heads, deputy heads of national culture and art institutions, heads, deputy heads and other employees of structural divisions may be up to 65 percent higher, the basic salary coefficients of the heads, deputy heads and other employees of other budgetary institutions (including the employees of not national libraries, museums, cultural centres, theatres etc.) may be up to 45 percent higher from the funds meant for wages of the State and municipal institutions or bodies\(^\text{15}\).

As the data of the Department of Statistics of the Republic of Lithuania indicates, in 2012 the average monthly gross earnings of the national economy (including sole proprietorships) amounted to LTL 2,123.8 and were 3.8 percent higher than in 2011. In the public sector the average monthly gross earnings amounted to LTL 2,318.1 and were 3.0 percent higher than in 2011. In the private sector (including sole proprietorships) the average monthly gross earnings amounted to LTL 2,015.7 and were 4.6 percent higher than in 2011. The growth of remuneration was greatly determined by the growth of production, labour productivity and increase in the minimum monthly wages up to LTL 850 (increased by 6.3 percent).


2.3. CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

There were approved the National Programme for the Development of Corporate Social Responsibility for 2009-2013 and the Implementation Measures Plan for 2009-2011 thereof\(^{16}\), the strategic goal of which is to create necessary conditions for the development of corporate social responsibility (hereinafter referred to as the “CSR”) and encourage companies to adhere to the principles of corporate social responsibility in their activities. In October 2010, the implementation of an almost LTL 5,000 (thousands) worth project “GATES: Social and Environmental Business Innovations” aimed at promotion of development of corporate social responsibility in Lithuania was launched. Till the end of the year 2012 the following works were carried out: 3.3 thous. persons were trained; 73 companies drew up and published their reports on CSR; 13 methodological publications (“Responsible Business”, guidelines for listed companies etc.) were drafted; 2 surveys (a primary survey of economic benefit; an analysis of national situation in the field of corporate social responsibility) were carried out; 393 events (trainings, events aimed at dissemination of know-how, conferences, presentations) were carried out; 65 enterprises joined the initiative of the United Nations Global Compact; the system of the indicators of evaluation of the activities of the companies was developed.

With a view to creating legal and institutional environment favourable for development of the CSR\(^{17}\), the corporate social responsibility development coordination and effective institutional cooperation management structure was simplified (the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Development Commission under the Government which was earlier specified in the Programme for the CSR was relinquished), the quantitative criteria of evaluation of the implementation of the objectives set out in the Programme for the CSR were optimised and it was established that by the order of the Minister of Social Security and Labour there was set up and approved the Committee for Supervision of the Implementation of the National Programme for Development of Corporate Social Responsibility (hereinafter referred to as the “CSR Committee”) the aim of which is to directly supervise implementation of the measures of the National Programme for Development of Corporate Social Responsibility for 2009–2013. Furthermore, there was created CSR network\(^{18}\). The representatives of the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and the Ministry of Economy, the Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania and the United Nations Development Programme in Lithuania have been included in the network. The main aim of the above network is to ensure continuity of development of the CSR at inter-institutional level.


\(^{18}\) Order No A1-473 of the Minister of Social security and Labour of 29 October 2012 “On the Composition of the Network of Interdepartmental Exchange of Information on Corporate Social Responsibility and Experience in This Area”.
2.4. TOPICALITIES OF SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK

2.4.1. SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK IN ENTERPRISES IN 2012

According to the data of the State Labour Inspectorate of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter referred to as the “State Labour Inspectorate”), in 2012, labour inspectors performed almost 10 thous. inspections. In the course of the inspections it was established nearly 4.5 thous. violations of legislation including violations of legislation governing safety and health at work which make 65.3 percent. To eliminate the violations which could not be eliminated during the period of presence of the inspector at the respective economic entity (15.8 percent of all violations), the requirements for the managers of the companies were drawn up and by reason of non-compliance of working instruments with the requirements set out in the legislation it was forbidden to use 13 working instruments and in 18 workplaces it was requested to suspend works.

Accidents at Work

In 2012, the Lithuanian enterprises experienced 2,897 accidents at work related to work (hereinafter referred to as the “accidents at work”) including 57 fatal accidents at work, 140 serious accidents at work and 2,700 minor accidents at work.

260.8 accidents at work fell per 100 thous. workers out of which 5.1 accidents at work were fatal and 11.1 accidents at work were serious.

In 2012, the total number of accidents at work, the number of serious and fatal accidents at work per 100 thous. was higher than the number of accidents recorded in 2010–2011.

Occupational Diseases

In 2012, the State Register of Occupational Diseases registered 393 cases of occupational diseases among 282 persons. 295 (75 percent) of occupational diseases were diagnosed to men, and 98 (25 percent) of occupational diseases were diagnosed to women.

The comparison of the cases of occupational diseases and the number of diseased people in 2006–2012 indicates that the number of occupational diseases in 2006–2012 decreased from 1,447 to 393.

In 2012, like in 2011, the following occupational diseases prevailed in the register:

- diseases pertaining to connective tissue and skeletal-muscular system (252 cases or 64 percent);
- diseases of the ear and mastiod process (78 cases or 20 percent);
- nervous system diseases (37 cases or 9 percent).
2.4.2. AMENDMENT OF THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK IN 2012–2013

The Law Amending and Supplementing Articles 1, 2, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 22, 25, 27, 29, 33 of the Law on Safety and Health at Work and the Annex to the Law19 and the Law on Amending Articles 264, 266 and 274 of the Labour Code20 were adopted which came into force on 1 July 2012. The Law Amending and Supplementing Articles 1, 2, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 22, 25, 27, 29, 33 of the Law on Safety and Health at Work and the Annex to the Law specifies the provisions concerning liability of the employer, more precisely and clearly establishes the employer's duties in ensuring safety and health at work in cases of danger and accidents, sets out more clear conditions and warranties for the workers’ representatives with specific responsibility for the safety and health of workers so that they could perform the functions assigned to them, specifies the provision concerning accounting of accidents at work and occupational diseases in enterprises, establishes that workers in charge of organisation of safe work received information on employment of workers, rescinds the obligation of the employers to fill the Safety and Health at Work Status Card in the Enterprise. By the Law Amending Articles 264, 266 and 274 of the Labour Code the obligation to fill the Safety and Health at Work Status Card in the Enterprise and the requirement to include the general duties of workers in ensuring the safety and health of workers in work regulations have been abandoned. As a result of implementation of the above laws, the Typical Form of the Safety and Health at Work Status Card in the Enterprise and the procedure for filling thereof21 was declared null and void.

In the light of the fact that on 1 July 2012 the State Public Health Service under the Ministry of Health was reorganised22, the Regulations on the Investigation and Accounting of Occupational Diseases23 and the Regulations on the Investigation and Accounting of Accidents at Work24 and the Procedure for Establishment, Setting up of County Territorial and Municipal Occupational Safety and Health Commissions25 were amended by assigning performance of the functions of the State Public Health Service under the Ministry of Health to public health centres.

As a result of improvement of the regulation of the mandatory testing of knowledge of the employer or authorised person thereof in occupational safety and health, the Description of the Procedure of the Mandatory Testing of Knowledge of the Employer or Authorised Person Thereof in Occupational Safety and Health was amended and, in the light of the provisions of the legislation in force, the List of Employers Who are Exempt From the (Qualification) Testing of Knowledge in Occupational Safety and Health26 which came into force on 1 May 2013 was fine-tuned. The Description of the Procedure of the Mandatory Testing of Knowledge of the Employer or Authorised Person Thereof in Occupational Safety and Health sets out that the knowledge of such persons shall be tested by

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19 Law Amending and Supplementing Articles 1, 2, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 22, 25, 27, 29, 33 of the Law on Safety and Health at Work and the Annex to the Law No XI-2045 (Official Gazette Valstybės žinios, 2012, No 69-3525).
means of a test (in written form) by the qualification testing commission set up by the educational establishment the chairman of which shall be an inspector of the State Labour Inspectorate.

In the light of the amended provisions of the Law on Safety and Health at Work and provisions of other legislation governing occupational safety and health, and the application of the Regulations on Evaluation of Occupational Risk\(^\text{27}\), the \textbf{General Regulations on Evaluation of Occupational Risk}\(^\text{28}\) which came into force on 1 November 2012 were amended. The Regulations fine-tune the definitions, the provisions concerning organisation and performance of risk evaluation, establish that upon evaluation of occupational risk, a document of the form chosen by the enterprise shall be filled in. The enterprises which evaluated the occupational risk according to the Regulations on Evaluation of Occupational Risk shall revise and fine-tune or repeatedly perform evaluation of occupational risk subject to the terms and conditions set out in Paragraph 5 of the General Regulations on Evaluation of Occupational Risk.

In pursuance of reconciling the provisions of the \textbf{Description of the Procedure for Drawing up and Legitimation of the Programmes of Training on Occupational Safety and Health}\(^\text{29}\) with the provisions of the Law on Vocational Education\(^\text{30}\) and the Description of the Procedure for Drawing Up and Legitimation of Formal Vocational Education Programmes\(^\text{31}\), the Description of the Procedure for Drawing up and Legitimation of the Programmes of Training on Occupational Safety and Health was amended. The programme of training on occupational safety and health approved till 12 January 2013 may be used till 31 December 2013 and the training programmes for foremen of maintenance of potentially dangerous equipment, managers of the work with potentially dangerous equipment and workers working with such equipment – till 31 December 2014. In 2012, 19 training programmes for foremen of maintenance of potentially dangerous equipment, managers of the work with potentially dangerous equipment and workers working with such equipment were updated.

\section*{2.4.3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY ON SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK FOR 2009–2012}

The Strategy on Safety and Health at Work for 2009–2012\(^\text{32}\) was implemented through realisation of the measures provided for in the plans for the measures of implementation of the strategy for 2009–2010 and 2011–2012. The strategy aims at seeking to reduce the number accidents at work by improving the legal and organisational system of occupational safety and health ensuring the quality of the work of workers and preservation of capacity for work. The criteria of evaluation of the achievement of the afore-mentioned aim are as follows: decrease in the number of fatal accidents at work per 100 thous. workers by 25 percent in 2012 as compared with the number of fatal accidents at work per 100 thous. workers in 2006 (from 8.4 to 6.3) and decrease in the number of serious accidents at work per 100 thous. workers by 25 percent in 2012 as compared with the number of serious accidents at work per 100 thous. workers in 2006 (from 17.8 to 13.4). According to the data of the State Labour Inspectorate, the number of accidents at work per 100 thous. workers in 2012 was as follows: fatal – 5.1, serious – 12.6. As compared with 2006, the number of fatal accidents at work per 100 thous. workers decreased by 39 percent, the number of serious accidents at work per 100 thous. workers decreased by 29 percent. The main aim of the strategy has been achieved.

\begin{itemize}
  \item Order No A1-8 of the Minister of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania of 9 January 2013 “On the Approval of the Description of the Procedure for Training Programmes on Occupational Safety and Health” (Official Gazette \textit{Valstybės žinios}, 2013, No 4-142).
\end{itemize}
3.1. SOCIAL INSURANCE: GOALS AND REFORMS

In Lithuania, the state social insurance makes the major part of the social security system. Upon restoration of independence, the Lithuanian social insurance system was created according to the model of the continental Europe pension scheme of Bismarck social security tradition, since creation of the social security system was aimed at providing persons incapable to work and persons without permanent revenues with the right to paid benefits on the basis of their contributions in line with the law instead of providing them with the "state maintenance". Social insurance, like the whole social security, is based on the fundamental principles of universality, solidarity and other principles. From the very beginning attempts were made to make the social insurance system adequately independent. This is evidenced by separation of social insurance budget from the State budget and designing the tripartite social insurance management system.

The key aim of the social insurance system is to guarantee revenues for the insured in the event of the loss of working capacity as a result of a disease, maternity and/or paternity, old age, disability (lost working capacity) or in other cases specified by the Law on the State Social Insurance. The social insurance system operates on the basis of pay-as-you-go principle.

The financial sustainability of social insurance benefits is one of essential issues in making decisions on further social insurance development. Financial sustainability may be described as long-term abilities to perform obligation, i.e. ability to maintain the adequate level of consumption of beneficiaries of benefits and the insured by means of benefits for a long period of time in case of the established insured events. The forecasted ageing population, interests of separate groups of the society, different ideologies or various social policy measures applied in other countries promoted and promote politicians, representatives of financial institutions, researchers, residents and other groups or persons concerned to constantly raise the issue of the financial system of social insurance, explore the possibilities of the system to best perform the obligations. The more especially as the European Union strategy “Europe 2020” emphasises that economic recovery and further growth are impossible without ensuring sustainable financial system.

It is to be noted that in the history of independent Lithuania there were several crises of the social insurance system when the social insurance system was unable to perform the assumed obligations. Inability to perform obligations would arise by reason of adverse effects of macroeconomic factors or assuming of excessive obligations (political
risk aspect). Therefore, the year 2012, just like several previous years, may be called the years of constant saving and challenges, since the consequences of the economic financial hardship which had an impact on the budget of the State Social Insurance Fund which, in turn, subsequently determined the amount of deficit of the budget, are still felt. It is to be noted that given the positive changes in the economic indicators, since 2012 higher insured income of the current year have been approved; which subsequently resulted in the respective increase in the paid benefits of such insurance. Nevertheless, the state social insurance benefits are paid to the insured in a timely manner, since the issues concerning ensuring financial sustainability during the current period are regularly dealt with. In the light of the above, the social insurance system is the field with the highest demand for reforms and particular actions.

It is to be noted that the expenditure of the budget of State Social Insurance Fund (hereinafter referred to as “Sodra”) has exceeded income already for 5 years. This implies that certain part of pensions and other benefits were annually paid from the borrowed funds. The financial burden of Sodra consists not only of short-term or long-term loans, but also of the administration costs thereof. In 2013, the amount of LTL 634 million was planned only for interest and loan administration fee. Thus, at the end of 2012, there were adopted amendments to the laws governing social insurance providing for that, with a view to of performing obligations towards the insurance, interest of the loans taken after 1 January 2014 shall be covered from the funds of the State budget. Furthermore, it has been provided for that since 1 January 2014 the expenditure of maintenance of the Lithuanian Labour Exchange and units thereof shall be transferred to the State budget. The State Social Insurance Fund Board was granted more rights and vested more functions, since there was created a possibility to hire independent experts and experts in the respective area when drawing up conclusions for the Government of the Republic of Lithuania and the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania. The draft budget of Sodra and the set of consolidated annual financial statements of the Fund shall be presented to the Council of the State Social Insurance Fund and only then they shall be negotiated with the institutions concerned.

There was established legal regulation providing for that although health insurance remains one of the types of social insurance, it shall be implemented in accordance with the procedure prescribed in the Republic of Lithuania Law on Health Insurance and since 1 January 2013 it shall not be included in the account of the budget of Sodra any longer. Furthermore, the state social insurance contributions and expenditure according to separate types of the state social insurance less Sodra operating costs and non-recoverable amounts and doubtful recoverable amounts shall be provided in additional tables alongside with the set of reports on implementation of the budget of Sodra on an annual basis.

In pursuance of implementation of the provisions set out in the Republic of Lithuania Law on Intelligence, on 1 January 2013 the officers of the State Security Department and the officers of the Second Investigation Department under the Ministry of National Defence were included into the State social insurance system. Thus, the scope of the state social insurance system was extended. This implies that contributions to the budget of Sodra are paid for such persons and at the same time such persons have a possibility to receive benefits from Sodra budget guaranteed by the insurance in case of the insured events.

Till 31 July 2012 the relief for employers employing persons with no previous working experience, i.e., in case of labour market access for the first time, was applied. The above measure is meant not only for youth, but also for everyone who has no working experience. For the employers employing a person under employment contract for the first time, Sodra contributions were reduced from 31 percent to 7.7 percent, it was exempted from pension social insurance contributions, but was obliged to pay contributions for maternity, disease, unemployment, accidents at work. Since 1 August 2012, a new form of assistance was offered for the employers employing young people for the first time, namely, compensation of a part of the wage. The employer shall pay all Sodra contributions for such employee including pension insurance contributions, but a fixed part of the employee's wage shall be compensated for the em-

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ployer. Such assistance system provides people with a possibility to accumulate the record of the pension insurance. Compensation of a part of the wage for the employers shall be provided according to the measure “Support for the First Job” financed from the funds of the EU funds. It is to be believed that all the afore-mentioned solutions will have a positive impact on the social insurance system which will become more homogeneous and solidary and the social insurance model will become more transparent and sustainable.

It is to be noted that on 5 March 2013 the Constitutional Court proclaimed the decision on compliance of certain Articles of the Temporary Law on Recalculation and Payment of Social Benefits[^35] with the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter referred to as the “Temporary Law”) the provisions of which expired on 31 December 2011. The Constitutional Court stated that the provisions of the Temporary Law in accordance with which there were created assumptions for reducing the granted maternity (paternity) benefits by applying lower rate of the insured income of the current year approved by the Government (LTL 1,170 instead of LTL 1,488) and the fact that the Temporary Law does not provide for compensation of the afore-mentioned reduced benefits do not contradict the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania. Nevertheless, in the above decision the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Lithuania noted that legal regulation creating preconditions for reducing the granted maternity (paternity) benefits by 10 percent (from 100 percent to 90 percent till the child turns one year; during the second year of raising the child – from 85 percent to 75 percent) since 1 July 2010, and additionally reducing the above benefits (which had already been reduced by 10 percent) exceeding certain maximum amounts (the maximum compensated salary reduced from 5 insured income to 4 insured income) contradict the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, since reduction of such benefits was uneven, some benefits were additionally reduced. Thus, such legal regulation was not in compliance with the requirements concerning proportionality arising out the constitutional principle of the rule of law.

The majority of services provided to residents by Sodra were transferred into the electronic environment. Since 2012 the owners of smart phones may use electronic services of Sodra. Since 2012 the customers are provided with a possibility to file an application of complaint through the Electronic Resident Service System (EGAS) and through the e-Servicing System for the Insurers (EDAS). Since 2012 on the website at www.sodra.lt the customers have a possibility to register for a consultation on the issues concerning pension at the waiting-rooms of the territorial units of the State Social Insurance Fund Board in advance. In pursuance of ensuring high quality customer service by phone and standardised communication with customers by phone, since October 2012 there operates the Phone Consultation Division, i.e. one short phone number 1883 which operates in the whole Lithuania and after calling up the customers may receive all relevant information on the state social insurance. Centralised provision of Sodra services is aimed at ensuring high quality customer service over the phone and expectations to increase the number of answered calls and proper customer service. The network of collection of social insurance contributions has been extended, since policyholders may pay such contributions not only through banks, but also through other credit institutions or, for example, in Perlas terminals and, with a view to improving the customer service, the common account of Sodra was opened.

From now on everyone willing to familiarise with the statistical data of Sodra may do this on the special website at http://atvira.sodra.lt. This aims at comfortable access to all information of interest in one portal which would help to find answers to the questions at stake, better perceive the activities and results of the system. Here one may find detailed information on social insurance, allocation of Sodra funds, the pensions and benefits for which the major part of funds is spent, the types of insurance that are detrimental, the policyholders that pay the greatest part of contributions. Today in the portal one may familiarise himself/herself with the statistics of social insurance of 3-5 years. In the future it will be supplemented with the data of earlier and later periods. It is planned that the data will be updated till the 20th day of each month on a periodical basis. In the portal different data is shown not only in a graphic manner, but also in ordinary tables necessary for an in-depth analysis. It is expected that the above portal will serve as a useful instrument for everyone who is interested, but most useful for public finance specialists, analysts, academic community, politicians and journalists.

3.2. IMPROVING COLLECTION OF THE STATE SOCIAL INSURANCE FUND BUDGET

During the first quarter of 2013 employers paid a significantly higher amount of contributions to the budget of Sodra. Consequently, the deficit of Sodra budget was lower than the budget deficit of the previous year.

Over the period of January-March 2013, the income of Sodra amounted to LTL 2,142.1 million (excluding health insurance contributions), i.e. 7.1 percent or LTL 142.7 million more than the amount received in the same period of 2012. In the first quarter of 2013, social insurance contributions by insurers and insured persons amounted to 94.1 percent of the revenues of Sodra budget and amounted to LTL 2,015.5 million. Compared with the same period in the preceding year, the amount of the afore-mentioned contributions increased by 7 percent or LTL 132.3 million. From the beginning of January to the end of March the number of notices of employment given to Sodra was 8.4 thous. times higher than the number of notices of dismissal. Over January-March 2013 the number of days not worked due to unpaid leave was equal to 1,178.1 thous., i.e. 2.4 percent or 29.6 thous. days lower than during the same period in 2012.

During the first quarter of 2013 the calculated Sodra budget expenditure (excluding transfers to the Compulsory Health Insurance Fund) amounted to LTL 2,811.1 million, i.e. were 2.6 percent higher than in the same period of the preceding year. 72.5 percent of the above funds were allocated for payment of pensions, 11.8 percent – for disease and maternity social insurance benefits, 3.3 percent – for unemployment social insurance benefits.

At the end of the first quarter of 2013 the funds borrowed and not repaid by Sodra amounted to LTL 10,253.1 million, whereas on 1 May 2013 the above amount was equal to LTL 10,343.5 million. During the year 2012, the short-term loans amounting to LTL 1,560 million and the long-term loans amounting to LTL 1,776.6 million were taken. Furthermore, in 2012 the amount of LTL 1,219.6 million was repaid within the time limits for repayment of loans. In 2012, the expenditure exceeded the income by the amount of LTL 1,857.7 million.

In 2012, the revenues of Sodra budget amounted to LTL 11,612.8 million; as compared with 2011, the calculated revenues increased by the amount of LTL 503.3 million. In 2012, the calculated expenditure of Sodra budget amounted to LTL 13,470.6 million; as compared with 2011, the expenditure increased by the amount of LTL 362.7 million.

In 2012, the pension social insurance expenditure amounted to LTL 8,182.8 million or made 60.8 percent of all expenditure of Sodra. The calculated funds transferred to pension funds amounted to LTL 286.7 million, i.e. LTL 4.1 million or 1.4 percent less than planned and LTL 72.2 million or 20.1 percent less than in 2011, since the rate of the contributions transferred to pension funds decreased from 2.0 percent to 1.5 percent. In 2012, the funds transferred to pension funds make 2.1 percent of all expenditure of Sodra.

In 2012, Sodra administration expenses from maintenance of buildings, wages to delivery of pensions etc. amounted to 1.53 percent of all budget expenses. The cost of Sodra for one resident of the country amounts less than 20 cents per day.

During the first quarter of 2013, the deficit of Sodra budget amounted to LTL 669 million, i.e. was LTL 5.5 million lower than planned and LTL 70.2 million lower than in the same period of the last year. A decrease in the deficit of Sodra budget remains a priority of the 16th Government of the Republic of Lithuania, thus in the near future it is planned to develop legal regulation, legitimise the national pension and the new pension calculation method. Attempts have been made to increase the scope of social insurance, ensure that all persons engaged in activities and receiving income were obliged to pay the state social insurance contributions and at the same time to seek that several benefits were not paid for the same insured event, e.g. work incapacity pension and social insurance benefit for occupational accident, and use social insurance funds in a more efficient manner establishing that unemployment social insurance funds were used only for partial financing of unemployment social insurance benefits and active employment measures.
When dealing with the issues concerning public finances ambitious and long-term objectives must be set taking care of the national wellbeing and the welfare of every person, making every effort to increase the budget revenues and not simply to balance the budget by reducing public expenditure. The tax policy must be changed not by making single decisions, but by dealing with the tax issues in a complex manner. The common complex tax review trend is reduction of taxation of income derived from work. This has not only direct impact on the majority of population of the country, but also has a long-term effect. In Lithuania, as compared with other tax areas, labour is subject to high taxes, but low tax revenues to the budget do not directly imply low tax rates. The state may collect little revenue due to poor tax administration, tax evasion, extensive shadow economy and prevalent tax exemptions; therefore, tax environment must be optimal and as stable as possible.

The deficit of Sodra is only a reflection of the problem: the national pension system is distorted by excessive re-allocation of funds and the state social insurance which is disproportionate to the common wages. In 2012, the average pension amounted to LTL 815.6, whereas the net wage amounted to LTL 1,730.4. In Lithuania, the part of social insurance and health insurance contribution makes 40 percent of the total wage. Due to demographic changes and the speeding up ageing population processes the solution of the issues of Sodra cannot be postponed to the future.
3.3. INNOVATIONS IN THE PENSION SYSTEM

3.3.1. AMENDMENTS TO LAWS ON STATE SOCIAL INSURANCE PENSIONS

On 11 August 2012, amendments to the Republic of Lithuania Law on State Social Insurance Pensions (hereinafter referred to as the “Law on Pensions”) came into force. The amendments ensure equal application of conditions in payment of pensions both to the citizens of the Republic of Lithuania residing abroad and the citizens of third countries residing in a third country who paid the compulsory state pension insurance contributions to the State Social Insurance Fund budget for the established period. Before the said amendments came into force, the state social insurance pensions were paid only to the citizens of the Republic of Lithuania residing in foreign countries with which the Republic of Lithuania has not concluded international treaties and where the provisions of the European Union regulations on the coordination of social security systems concerning payment of pensions are not applied and the state social insurance pensions were not paid to the persons who have no citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania although their length of service is the same and they received the same income and reside in the same foreign countries.

The amendments to the Law on Pensions which came into force on 1 January 2013 provide for a different pension calculation method for the persons who retire for the first time and the ones who worked after granting the pension and request for granting the pension anew. A person is provided with a possibility to choose that the additional part of the pension was calculated with regard to the inured income received since 1 January 1994 and the whole length of service acquired at any time. On the other hand, if a person requests so, additional part of pension may be calculated with regard to the income received till 1994. In such case, additional part of the pension shall be calculated according to the formula consisting of two separate parts.

Today almost 600 thous. residents of the country receive old-age pension. According to the data of the Department of Statistics, in 2012, 167.7 thous. residents aged 60-64 resided in the country. The average state social insurance old-age pension of the residents with the compulsory 30-year length of service amounts to LTL 843.2.

3.3.2. PENSION ACCUMULATION IN PRIVATE PENSION FUNDS

On 1 January 2013 amendments to the Republic of Lithuania Law on the Pension System Reform whereby the scheme of financing the pension accumulation system was changed by establishing an additional contribution to the pension fund paid from personal funds (1 percent since 2014, 2 percent since 2016) and transferring an additional incentive contribution from the State budget for such persons to their pension account (1 percent from the average monthly gross earnings of the domestic employees of four quarters of the year before the last year published by the Lithuanian Department of Statistics, 2 percent – since 2016), came into force. The part of the state social insurance contribution transferred to pension funds would be equal to 2 percent of the participant’s insured income. Since 2020, a proposal to increase the contribution transferred from the State Social Insurance Fund budget up to 3.5 percent was put forward. As the conditions of participation in the pension accumulation system have changed, during the transition period (from 1 April 2013 to 30 November 2013) the persons who have already accumulated pensions in the system (and signed contracts till 2013) have a possibility to choose how to further accumulate their pensions. The following three options are available:

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38 Law Amending Articles 1, 2, 3, 4, 7 and 8 of the Republic of Lithuania Law on the Pension System Reform adopted on 14 November 2012 by the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania (Official Gazette Valstybės žinios, 2012, No 136-6969).
Option I: to suspend transfer of the state social contributions to the pension funds and since 2014 remain only within the state social insurance system. The person will have such possibility since 1 January 2014 and later on will be entitled to renew participation in the accumulation system again (in the event of renewing the participation, just like till now only the established part of the social insurance contribution will be transferred);

Option II: to further accumulate funds by making an additional contribution from own funds and receiving additional contribution from the state budget (if a consent to pay an additional contribution is present to the pension accumulation company, later on such consent cannot be declined);

Option III: to participate in the pension accumulation system under the previous conditions, i.e. through transferring only the social insurance contributions of the established amount to the pension funds.

The new procedure (i.e. the second option) shall be applied to all new participants of the accumulation system who will sign agreements since 1 January 2013. They shall take part in the accumulation system under the new conditions; they shall have no possibilities to suspend participation.

According to the data of the Register of Pension Accumulation Agreements dated 20 May 2013, 93,983 pension accumulation participants who furnished pension accumulation companies with consents to pay an additional pension contribution to the pension fund from their own funds were registered. In total, 114,213 participants will pay a contribution to the pension fund from their own funds. According to the data of the Register of Pension Accumulation Agreements available on 20 May 2013, 2,797 participants of the pension accumulation system who furnished pension accumulation companies with notices on suspension of the transfer of pension contributions to the pension fund were registered.

In 2012, the accumulative contribution amounting to 2.5 percent of personal income subject to payment of the state social insurance contribution was transferred to the pension fund accounts of pension accumulation participants. In 2013, the approved rate of the accumulative contribution shall be equal to 2.5 percent of personal insured income. As the person participating in the pension accumulation system accumulates part of his/her social insurance contributions in private pension fund, during the period of participation in the pension accumulation system the additional part of the social insurance pension depending on the amount of the contributions paid from the State Social Insurance Fund budget shall decrease.

1,085,289 persons participate in the pension accumulation system which started operating in 2004 (till 20 May 2013). In 2012, 18,631 persons signed pension accumulation agreements and in 2013 (till 20 May 2013) 20,230 persons signed pension accumulation agreements. They may accumulate funds necessary for pension accumulation in 30 second pillar pension funds which are managed by 9 management enterprises (7 investment management enterprises and 2 life insurance companies). In 2012, 3,240 agreements on pension benefits were concluded and till 31 March 2013 – 998 agreements on pension benefits were concluded.
3.4. STATE PENSIONS, SOCIAL ASSISTANCE BENEFITS AND SUPPORT TO PARTICIPANTS AND VICTIMS OF THE RESISTANCE AGAINST OCCUPATION OF 1940–1990

3.4.1. STATE PENSIONS AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE BENEFITS

On 30 June 2012, the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania adopted laws repealing the provisions of the laws governing payment of state pensions contradicting the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania (6 February 2012 decision of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Lithuania). Therefore, since 1 September 2012 the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania restored the total amount of the state pensions and the state social insurance pensions granted to the same person valid before 1 January 2010, i.e. 1.5 average wage (instead of 1.3 average wage) and repealed the provision concerning additional reduction of pensions for the beneficiaries receiving insured income.

Since 1 January 2013 in implementation of the Plan for Implementation of the Measures of the Guidelines for the Reform of the System of Social Insurance and Pensions, the administration of payment of the state pensions for officers and servicemen to former officers of the Prison Department, the Customs of the Republic of Lithuania and the Prosecutor’s Office of the Republic of Lithuania, annuities for former sportsmen and compensation benefits to creative workers of theatres and concert organisations was assigned to the administration institutions of the State Social Insurance Fund. Furthermore, attempts have been made to facilitate administration of such benefits, since payment thereof is in one or another way related to the state social insurance pensions paid to beneficiaries thereof (the total amount of state pensions and state social insurance pensions cannot exceed certain established amount paid for one person; a difference of the compensation benefit and pension shall be paid to beneficiaries of compensation benefits who also receive the state insurance pension of lower amount) or insured income (annuities for former sportsmen shall be paid only if they do not have insured income in the area other than physical education and sports; no bonus payment to pension shall be paid to employed beneficiaries of the state pensions for officers and servicemen). Today, the data necessary for payment of benefits is disposed by the institution paying such benefits, namely the administration institution of the State Social Insurance Fund.

In order to avoid external risk factors promoting the growth of the deficit of the state budget of the Republic of Lithuania and ensuring payment of periodical benefits from the state budget to the persons for whom such benefits are the only means of subsistence in a timely manner, on 20 December 2012, payment of reduced state pensions (first and second degree pensions of the Republic of Lithuania, state pensions to victims, scientists, officers and servicemen, judges) has been extended for one more year. The state pensions shall be recalculated till 31 December 2013 in accordance with the procedure prescribed in the law.

The provisions of the Temporary Law on Recalculation and Payment of Social Benefits of the Republic of Lithuania shall be further applied to the state social assistance benefits, i.e. target compensations for nursing and attendance (assistance) expenses (15 percent lower target compensations shall be paid) till 31 December 2013.

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In 2012, the amount slightly over LTL 814 million (including the amount higher than LTL 493 million for payment of compensations for nursing and attendance (assistance) expenses) was used for payment of state social assistance benefits. In 2012, the average number of beneficiaries of state social assistance benefits was equal to 144,841.

### 3.4.2. SUPPORT TO PARTICIPANTS AND VICTIMS OF THE RESISTANCE AGAINST OCCUPATION OF 1940–1990

In 2012, the payment of compensations to independence defenders aggrieved due to the events of 11–13 January 1991 and during the following aggression of the USSR and their families for heating, hot water, cold water and waste water, gas, solid and liquid fuel, electricity, wired telephone charges and other services was further continued. The beneficiaries of the compensations are families of killed independence defenders, the independence defenders who have been recognised with full or partial incapacity for work (until 1 July 2005 – the disabled persons) due to the USSR aggression carried out on 11–13 January 1991 and during the following events, as well as independence defenders, aggrieved in the events of 11–13 January 1991 and during the following aggression of the USSR and who were severely or seriously injured.

As the data submitted by municipality administrations says, each year the state budget allocates LTL 0.5 million to cover expenses related to the mentioned above charge benefits. In 2012, the average monthly number of persons (families), who had aggrieved due to the events on 11–13 January 1991 and during the following aggression of the USSR, and who used the state support, amounted to 350. In 2012, aggrieved families have LTL 1.4 thousand compensated to cover heating expenses.

In 2012, 44 compensations were paid to the persons who suffered damages when liquidating the outcomes of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant accident and 2 compensations for persons injured in the Soviet army.

Lump-sum benefits are granted not only to aggrieved persons, but also to families of participants of the occupation resistance, killed in the fight for Lithuania’s freedom and independence or during the exile years following the imprisonment. Volunteer soldiers are buried by using state funds (a benefit in the amount of 20 basic social benefits (LTL 2,600) is allocated). Over 2012, administrations of municipalities allocated 79 benefits for diseased/killed soldiers volunteers. The law governing allocation of this support sets out the persons entitled to the lump-sum support and the conditions for allocation of the support. The amount of the support is related to the circumstances of death of the resistance participant. The above legal act also stipulates that the amounts of lump-sum benefits are indexed each year in line with the procedure established by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania with regard to the inflation of the current year. In 2008, the average annual inflation rate amounted to 10.9 percent, 2009 – 4.5 percent, 2010 – 1.3 percent, in 2011 – 4.1 percent, and the amounts of these benefits increased respectively. The amounts of these benefits increased by 44 percent from the effective date of the law, i.e. from 1998 to 2013.

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4.1. CASH SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Cash social assistance is one of the measures affecting the reduction of poverty and social exclusion by mitigating the consequences of scarcity to the most vulnerable groups of the population and improving the financial situation of the families raising children. The cash social assistance is guaranteed by the State and consequently provided with regard to the national social and economic development and financial capacity of the State.

This chapter covers changes in the system of cash social assistance provided for families with children and poor residents which occurred in 2012 and the first half of 2012 and tendencies emerging from the 1st of January 2012 while implementing the reform of cash social assistance for poor residents. It presents statistical information on benefits for children, social assistance for pupils and cash social assistance for poor residents.

4.1.1. BENEFITS FOR FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

With regard to the financial resources of the state, the conditions of provision and amounts of state benefits for children remained the same in 2012.

In 2012, pursuant to the Republic of Lithuania Law on Benefits for Children46, the following benefits were granted to persons raising children or guardians of children from the state budget: a lump sum child benefit for a newborn child or adopting a child, amounting to 11 base social benefits (hereinafter referred to as the “BSB”) (LTL 1,430); a child benefit, equal to 0.75 BSB (LTL 97.5) or 0.4 BSB (LTL 52) (the amount depends on the age of the child); a guardianship (curatorship) benefit, amounting to 4 BSB (LTL 520); a targeted guardianship (curatorship) benefit supplement in the amount of 4 BSB (LTL 520); a lump sum settlement benefit amounting to 75 BSB (LTL 9,750); a lump sum benefit for a pregnant woman amounting to 2 BSB (LTL 260); a benefit for a child of a serviceman in mandatory service equal to 1.5 BSB (LTL 195).

In 2012, a child benefit has been further paid with regard to family income: if the average cohabitants’ income per person per month of the previous calendar year does not exceed the rate of 1.5 of the state supported income (hereinafter referred to as the “SSI”) (LTL 525), a child benefit in the amount of 0.75 BSB (LTL 97.5) shall be paid to children from birth to 2 years of age, a child benefit in the amount of 0.4 BSB (LTL 52) shall be paid to children from 2 to 7 years of age, and until 18 years of age in large families. A benefit shall be paid to children of large families until every child attains 18 years of age; however, if underage children of such family continue studying, a benefit cannot be paid longer than till they attain 24 years of age.

Irrespectively of the form of guardianship (curatorship), for a child who is placed under guardianship (curatorship) in a family, a social family or child care institution, during the period of guardianship the child shall be paid a monthly guardianship (curatorship) benefit in the amount of 4 BSB (LTL 520) and in order to ensure the guardianship (curatorship) of the child placed under guardianship (curatorship) in a social family a targeted guardianship (curatorship) benefit supplement in the amount of 4 BSB (LTL 520) shall be paid. Upon the expiration of the child's guardianship (curatorship), payment of a guardianship (curatorship) benefit in the amount of 4 BSB (LTL 520) shall be further paid if the child or orphan continues studying, but not longer than until the age of 24 years.

Upon expiration of guardianship (curatorship), a lump sum settlement benefit shall be paid to the persons who were under guardianship (curatorship) until the age of majority. The above benefit shall amount to 75 BSB (LTL 9,750).

4.1.2. CASH SOCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR POOR RESIDENTS

Implementation of the provisions of the Republic of Lithuania Law on Cash Social Assistance for Poor Residents involves application of the common scheme of cash social assistance on the basis of income and property evaluation.

Poor residents receive social benefits in order to ensure minimum funds to meet their basic physiological needs (food and clothing expenses) as well as compensations for heating and hot and drinking water expenses (hereinafter referred to as “compensations”) as partial reimbursement for dwelling maintenance. The right to cash social assistance is granted to persons who cannot earn a living due to objective reasons and have used all possibilities of receiving other sorts of income. Cash social assistance is provided taking into consideration not only the received income, but also owned 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.

Municipalities have the right to provide cash social assistance in non-cash form for poor residents who fail to perform their obligations cash, also inspect their living conditions, owned property and employment, draw up a report on inspection of domestic and living conditions and use it as the basis for making a decision on the entitlement to cash social assistance.

Furthermore, municipalities may allocate cash social assistance from own budget funds in other cases not enlisted in the law by the procedures established by the municipalities themselves. Moreover, the law grants the right to municipalities to decide to use up to 4 percent of their funds allocated for cash social assistance from the state budget to support disadvantaged residents.

In pursuance of accurateness and efficiency of provided cash social assistance as well as a more rational use of the state budget funds, reform of the cash social assistance system was commenced on 1 January 2012. The main aim of the reform is to provide cash social assistance for poor residents through implementation of the following two models: as the state function (assigned by the state to municipalities) and as the independent function of municipalities in five pilot municipalities. During the afore-mentioned period the five pilot municipalities (Akmenė, Panevėžys, Rad-
viliškis, Raseiniai and Šilalė Districts) provided cash social assistance through implementation of the independent function of municipalities which is financed from the municipal budget funds.

Provision of cash social assistance in the pilot municipalities has been successful, the set objective, namely to make the cash social assistance more accurate and transparent, has been achieved. This has been determined by publicity and active participation of the community, inter-institutional cooperation, more thorough and detailed analysis of individual cases, positive attitude of the society to the carried out reform and rational allocation of funds.

In pursuance of reducing the scope of illegal work and the cases of non-accounted wages in the area of agriculture, creating more favourable conditions for increasing the amount of receivable income at own effort ensuring that such persons would not lose their right to cash social assistance, on 1 April 2013 the Republic of Lithuania Law on Provisions of Agricultural and Forestry Services under a Service Receipt⁴⁹ and the Law Amending and Supplementing Article 17 of the Law on Cash Social Assistance for Poor Residents of the Republic of Lithuania⁵⁰ came into force. In case of allocation of cash social assistance, the part of income received in provision of agriculture and forestry services exceeding the amount of LTL 6,000 during the current calendar year shall be included in the income received by cohabitants or single resident.

In pursuance of greater accurateness and efficiency of provided cash social assistance, increasing integration of poor residents into the labour market, reducing the possibilities to misuse the assistance and ensuring social justice, on 16 May 2013 the Law Amending and Supplementing Articles 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17, 21, 23, 24 of the Law on Cash Social Assistance for Poor Residents of the Republic of Lithuania was adopted⁵¹. The main aim of the amendments is to improve the current legal regulation of the provision of cash social assistance, grant more rights to municipal administrations by making decisions on provision of cash social assistance and intensify the implementation of the programs of renovation (modernisation) of multi-apartment buildings.

In order to promote integration of cash social assistance beneficiaries into the labour market, social benefit equal to 50 percent of the received benefit is being paid to the persons who were registered in the territorial labour exchange for the period not shorter than 12 months excluding the period during which they participated in active labour market policy measures and performed public works and decline the restricting condition allowing granting an additional benefit only for cohabitants raising children. Nevertheless, provision of cash social assistance for able-bodied persons of working age registered in the labour exchange who refuse a job offered to them or violate the requirements of the labour exchange has been tightened.

In order to reduce long-term dependence on cash social assistance, the period of receipt of social benefit, except for social benefit for children, was shortened up to 12 months after expiry of which the benefit is gradually reduced for unemployed able-bodied persons of working age and their families.

In order to reduce the possibilities for misuse of cash social assistance and that the persons having cash funds of which they may dispose would not apply for cash social assistance, separate property value standards for movable property and cash funds was established.

In order to intensify the renovation of non-energy efficient multi-apartment buildings, the conditions of granting compensations for heating of a dwelling expenses have been tightened for the persons who refuse to participate in consideration and decision-making on implementation of the project of renovation (modernisation) of a multi-apartment building supported by the State and/or municipality. For the owners of the apartments in a multi-apartment building who apply for such compensations, the compensated part of expenses for the dwelling heating of the forth-

⁵¹ Law Amending and Supplementing Articles 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17, 21, 23, 24 of the Law on Monetary Social Assistance for Poor Residents of the Republic of Lithuania (Official Gazette Valstybės žinios, 2013).
coming season shall be reduced by 50 percent and since the next heating season no compensation for heating of the
dwelling expenses shall be granted till implementation of the project of renovation (modernisation) of the multi-
apartment building, but not longer than 3 heating seasons.

Furthermore, the law even more extended the discretion of municipal administrations in delivery of a decision on
provision of cash social assistance. Having evaluated the living conditions, the municipal administration shall be enti-
tled to do the following: grant a social benefit when persons meet the requirements set out in the law, but their income
exceed the SSI not more than 20 percent; allocate a compensation for heating of the dwelling expenses if they declared
their place of residence in the dwelling which is not registered as residential premises or separate residential room
where the percentage of the ownership right of the co-owners have not been established; not to reduce the amount
of the social benefit if during the period of provision of the social benefit the Lithuanian territorial labour exchange
or state employment agency of another country did not offer any job and not offered to participate in active labour
market policy measures; made a decision to suspend provision of cash social assistance for independently working
persons who during the assistance provision period indicate lower income from the carried out activities than the
average minimum monthly wage and, in this case, a social benefit shall be allocated only to children; not to provide
compensations or suspend provision thereof if cohabitants or a single resident declares the place of residence in the
dwelling or lease it, but actually does not live in it etc.

Amendments to the provisions concerning provision of cash social assistance poor residents which came into
force on 1 June 2013 strengthen the role of the self-government in provision of assistance to poor residents, create
conditions for provision of such assistance in a more effective and socially just manner, reduce possibilities to misuse
cash social assistance and ensure social and financial benefit.

### 4.1.3. SOCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR PUPILS

In order to ensure assistance for families raising school-age children and develop healthy eating habits of a child
at school, following the Law on Social Assistance for Pupils\(^52\), pupils from low-income families shall be entitled to
**free meals for pupils and assistance for purchase of school supplies** at the beginning of a school year. The right to decide
on the type (types) of free meals (lunch, provision of meals at summer day camps organised at schools, breakfast or
afternoon meals) to be provided for pupil in own established schools shall be granted to the founder of the school\(^53\).

In order to ensure that all pupils from low-income families are provided with free lunch, free breakfast or free
afternoon meal are granted only in exceptional cases, after evaluation of family’s living conditions. Up to 2 percent
of the funds allocated for social assistance from the state budget may be used for this purpose. Pupils shall be provided
with free meals at the school that they attend, irrespective of their place of residence.

Assistance for the acquisition of school supplies is provided in cash, except for the cases where a pupil is
raised in a family at social risk. The amount of LTL 156 of this type of assistance is allocated per pupil. It is
subject to the place of residence, irrespective of the school a pupil attends.

### 4.1.4. OTHER TYPES OF CASH SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Regardless of the family income and owned property, a **funeral grant** in the amount of 8 BSB (LTL 1,040) is paid
to person taking care of the funeral in case of death of permanent resident of Lithuania; to alien who reside in Lith-
uania and who has been issued a temporary residence permit for the purpose of highly qualified employment in the

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\(^{52}\) Law on Social Assistance for Pupils of the Republic of Lithuania (Official Gazette *Valstybės žinios*, 2006, No 73-2755; 2008, No 63-2382).

\(^{53}\) Resolution No 1770 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of 23 December 2009 “On the Approval of the Description of the
Procedure for Free Meals for Pupils at School” (Official Gazette *Valstybės žinios*, 2009, No 149-6027).
Republic of Lithuania; to person residing in Lithuania who has been granted refugee status in accordance with the procedure laid down by laws; to person to whom this Law must apply under the EU regulations on the coordination of social security systems; and in case of birth of a stillborn baby of the persons mentioned above\textsuperscript{54}.

4.1.5. CHANGES IN THE SCOPE OF FINANCING CASH SOCIAL ASSISTANCE AND THE NUMBER OF RECEPIENTS THEREOF

In 2012, expenses for provision of cash social assistance for people raising children, poor residents and in case of death of a resident amounted to LTL 1,138.5 million and, as compared with 2011, decreased by 0.9 percent (from LTL 1,148.9 million to LTL 1,138.5 million); in 2012, the expenses for administration of such assistance amounted to LTL 29.7 and, as compared with 2011, decreased by 23.1 percent (from LTL 38.6 million to LTL 29.7 million).

Table 4.1.5-1 and Figure 4.1.5-1 set out data on beneficiaries of cash social assistance and expenses in 2011 and 2012 and apportionment of expenses for cash social assistance except for expenses for administration of cash social assistance in 2012.

### Beneficiaries of cash social assistance and expenses in 2011 and 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seq. No</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Beneficiaries, thous. people</td>
<td>Expenses, LTL million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In total</td>
<td>(1+2+3+4)</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>1,048.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Benefits per persons raising and/or fostering children including</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>1.1.</td>
<td>Lump sum child benefit</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>46.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2.</td>
<td>Lump sum benefit for a pregnant woman</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
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<td>1.3.</td>
<td>Child benefit</td>
<td>117.3</td>
<td>92.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4.</td>
<td>Benefit for a child of a serviceman in mandatory service</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>0.002</td>
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<td>1.5.</td>
<td>Guardianship (curatorship) benefit</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>69.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.6.</td>
<td>Lump sum settlement benefit</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7.</td>
<td>Targeted guardianship (curatorship) benefit supplement</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Benefits and other types of assistance for poor residents including</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.</td>
<td>Social benefit</td>
<td>221.1</td>
<td>612.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.</td>
<td>Compensations for heating of a dwelling, hot and drinking water expenses</td>
<td>220.9</td>
<td>138.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.</td>
<td>Cash social assistance granted on the decision of a municipality</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.</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>1.2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.</td>
<td>Cash social assistance from municipal budgets</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.</td>
<td>Free meals for pupils</td>
<td>142.4</td>
<td>92.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7.</td>
<td>Assistance for the acquisition of school supplies</td>
<td>137.4</td>
<td>21.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Assistance for independence defenders aggrieved due to the events of 11-13 January 1991 and during the following aggression of the USSR and their families</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Funeral grant</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>42.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour

Table 4.1.5-1

\textsuperscript{54} Republic of Lithuania Law on Assistance in the Case of Death (Official Gazette \textit{Valstybės žinios}, 1993, No 73-1371; 2011, No 77-3722).
In 2012, the major part of expenses for social assistance (68.6 percent) included the state budget funds for social benefits, compensations for heating of a dwelling and water expenses, payment of the credit taken for renovation (modernisation) of a multi-dwelling building and interest thereof for the persons entitled to a compensation for heating of the dwelling expenses which shall be provided after evaluating the income and property of such families. Benefits for persons raising and/or fostering children made 18.7 percent of all funds allocated for cash social assistance.

In 2012, expenses for cash social assistance for poor residents, as compared with 2011, increased by 0.05 percent (from LTL 882.7 million to LTL 883.1 million).

On average, in 2012 221.9 thous. persons (7.4 percent of the whole population of Lithuania) received social benefit on a monthly basis. As compared with 2011, the average number of persons receiving social benefit increased by 0.36 percent (from 221.1 to 221.9 thous. persons), whereas expenses for payment of social benefit decreased by 2.1 percent (from LTL 612.3 million to LTL 599.5 million) per month.

As compared with 2011, in 2012 the average amount of social benefit per month for one resident fell by 2.5 percent (from LTL 230.8 to LTL 225.1).

During January-April 2013, the amount of LTL 197.9 million was spent for payment of social benefit. As compared with January-April 2012, the expenses for payment of social benefit decreased by 3.8 percent (from LTL 205.8 million to LTL 197.9 million). During the period of January-April 2013, 222.1 thous. persons received a social benefit (i.e. 7.5
percent of the Lithuanian population). As compared with January-April 2012, the number of beneficiaries of social benefit fell by 3.8 percent (from 230.8 thous. persons to 222.1 thous. persons).

In 2012, the amount spent for provision of compensations for heating of the dwelling expenses and water expenses was 22.2 percent higher than in 2011: expenses increased from LTL 138.7 million to LTL 169.5 million. On average, 198.8 thous. persons (6.6 percent of the whole population of Lithuania) received compensations for heating of the dwelling expenses per month in 2012. In 2012, as compared with 2011, the number of persons who received monthly compensations for heating of the dwelling expenses, on average, fell by 10 percent (from 220.9 thous. persons to 198.8 thous. persons). In 2012, the average amount of the compensation for heating of the dwelling expenses supplying heat in a centralised manner for one person amounted to LTL 103 per month (in 2011 – LTL 71), heating of the dwelling by other types of energy and fuel – LTL 142 (in 2011 – LTL 115).

During the first quarter of 2013, the funds spent for granting compensations for heating of a dwelling and water expenses was 7.2 percent higher than in the first quarter of 2012: expenses increased from LTL 81 million to LTL 86.8 million. On average, in the first quarter of 2013 202.6 thous. persons (6.8 percent of all residents of Lithuania) received monthly compensations for heating of a dwelling expenses. In the first quarter of 2013, as compared with the first quarter of 2012, the number of persons who received monthly compensations for heating of a dwelling expenses, on average, increased by 1.9 percent (from 198.8 thous. persons to 202.6 thous. persons). In one month of the first quarter of 2013, the average amount of the compensation for heating of the dwelling expenses supplying heat in a centralised manner for one person amounted to LTL 103 per month (in the first quarter of 2012 – LTL 121), heating of the dwelling by other types of energy and fuel – LTL 127 (in the first quarter of 2012 – LTL 128).

In 2012, in the municipalities which since 1 January 2012 have been performing an independent function of municipalities, the percentage of beneficiaries of social benefits of all residents of such municipalities made 8.3 percent, whereas in 2011 – 9.6 percent. In 2012, as compared with 2011, the number of beneficiaries of a social benefit fell in 4 of 5 municipalities (Akmenė, Panevėžys, Raseiniai and Šilalė Districts), whereas expenses for payment of social benefit decreased in all 5 municipalities in 2012; as compared with 2011, the number of beneficiaries of social benefit decreased by 13.6 percent (from 18 thous. persons to 15.5 thous. persons) and expenses for payment of social benefit decreased by 20.1 percent (from LTL 47.7 million to LTL 38.1 million).

During the first quarter of 2012, the percentage of beneficiaries of social benefit of the total number of residents of such municipalities was equal to 10.7 percent, whereas in the first quarter of 2013 – 8.9 percent.

In the first quarter of 2013, as compared with the first quarter of 2012, the number of beneficiaries of social benefit in the pilot municipalities decreased by 16.9 percent (from 17.8 thous. persons to 14.8 thous. persons), whereas expenses for payment of social benefit fell by 23.7 percent (from LTL 11.3 million to LTL 8.6 million).

In 2012, as compared with 2011, expenses for social assistance for pupils (free meals for pupils and assistance for the acquisition of school supplies) fell by 10.6 percent (from LTL 114.2 million to LTL 102.1 million).

In 2012, around 128.5 thous. pupils from poor families (33.2 percent of all pupils) received social assistance for pupils including 128.5 thous. pupils (33.2 percent of all pupils) who received free meals at school and 118.3 thous. pupils (30.6 percent of all pupils) who received assistance for the acquisition of school supplies.

Due to improving economic situation, declining unemployment level in the country (in 2012 – 13.2 percent; in 2011 – 15.4 percent), decreasing total number of pupils at school, during 2012 the number of children from low-income families receiving free meals at school fell by 9.8 percent (from 142.4 thous. pupils to 128.5 thous. pupils), but the number is still rather high as compared with the pre-crisis period, i.e. 38 percent higher than in 2008 (93 thous. pupils). 28 municipalities and the Ministry of Education and Science organised provision of free breakfast, free lunch for pupils was organized in all own established schools.

In 2012, as compared with 2011, the number of beneficiaries of assistance for the acquisition of school supplies decreased by 13.9 percent (from 137.4 thous. to 118.3 thous. pupils). This resulted in a decrease in expenses for such
assistance: in 2012, as compared with 2011, expenses decreased by 13.6 percent (from LTL 21.4 million to LTL 18.5 million).

In 2012, as compared with 2011, the amount of funds allocated for one pupil per day increased because of rising prices of food products. Nevertheless, taking into consideration the decreased number of beneficiaries of free meals and assistance for the acquisition of school supplies, expenses for social assistance for pupils decreased.

During the first quarter of 2012, as compared with the first quarter of 2012, the number of pupils who received free meals on a monthly basis fell by 14 percent (from 138.3 thous. to 119 thous.). Taking into account the lower number of children receiving free meals, the average number of days of providing free meals per month, which is 2.8 days lower than planned, and not considering the growing prices of meals, in the first quarter of 2013, as compared with the same period of 2012, expenses for free meals for children decreased by 24 percent (from LTL 28.5 million to LTL 21.6 million).

4.1.6. FORECASTED CHANGES RELATED TO CASH SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

In the near future, the most important task remains the protection of residents, in particular socially vulnerable groups, from the negative factors of economic changes seeking to avoid, eliminate or mitigate deprivation.

With regard to the financial resources of the State, it has been planned to put forward proposals concerning improvement of payment of a child benefit through gradual declining of family income evaluation.

The system of cash social assistance provision was reformed in 1 January 2012; it strengthened municipal and community authorities with regard to the provision of social assistance by assigning the provision of cash social assistance to the independent municipal function in five pilot municipalities, and it will be further improved. It is planned since 2014 to assign provision of social benefits to all municipalities as the independent function of municipalities. In 2013, upon evaluation of provision of cash social assistance as the independent function of municipalities, proposals concerning even provision of cash social assistance in all municipalities since 2015 shall be put forward.

By promoting guardianship (curatorship) of a child in a family or social family as the best forms of guardianship (curatorship) meeting the child’s interests, ensuring provision of meals for pupils meeting the healthy eating requirements, since 2014 it is planned to legitimise provision of social assistance for pupils placed under guardianship (curatorship) in families and social families and increase the amounts of the funds allocated for purchase of products for free meals.
4.2. SOCIAL WORK

The Programme of the Sixteenth Government provides for improvement of availability and quality of social services. It puts emphasis on the necessity to assist families not only to raise children, but also to take care of elder family members fostered by them.

As the population is ageing, human life expectancy is rising, the demand for integrated nursing and social services is particularly increasing. Nursing as the health care service is a particularly important part of assistance for elderly people. Institutional social care does not satisfy the public needs any longer; therefore, in addition to organisation of classic (institutional) social care form, it is necessary to develop other social services in the community which would be not less attractive to elderly or disable people.

In 2012, implementation of the Integral Development Assistance Programme, financed from the funds of the European Social Fund (hereinafter referred to as the “ESF”) aimed at high quality integral assistance (nursing and social services) for disabled persons, elderly people and consultancy support for family members taking care of such persons was commenced. During the period of 2013–2015, 21 municipalities will implement pilot projects. The pilot projects aim at recruiting and training specialists of mobile groups, include health care specialists into the social assistance process, provide mobile groups with vehicles, provide consultancy services to family members taking care of disabled or elderly close relatives, and promote informal assistance. The amount of LTL 20.7 million is to be allocated for the programme.

In 2010, Lithuania ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol (hereinafter referred to as the “Convention”). The states which ratified the Convention including Lithuania recognise equal rights of persons with disabilities to live in the community, equal opportunities with others to choose; also states which ratified the Convention undertake effective and appropriate measures to enable (empower) people with disabilities to fully exercise these rights.

At the end of 2012, there were approved the Guidelines for Deinstitutionalization of the Social Care Homes of Disabled Children Deprived of Parental Care and Adult Disabled Persons. The afore-mentioned guidelines provide for the trends of transition from institutional social care to the services of assistance to a child and family in the community till 2030. Deinstitutionalization aims at forming consistent and coordinated system assistance and services which would create possibilities for each disabled child deprived of parental care, disabled person to receive individual personalised services and required assistance, be involved in community life and participate in it without experiencing social exclusion; for each disabled child deprived of parental care to grow in safe environment which would be advantageous for his development in his biological family and where there is no his biological family – in a family of guardians, in special cases, under the conditions which would be as close to family conditions as possible.

Pursuant to the approved guidelines, it is planned to create a programme of such deinstitutionalization and the plan for implementation thereof till the end of 2013. Experts in different areas, non-governmental organisations working in the areas of child rights and the rights of persons with disabilities shall be included in the interdepartmental working group.

In 2013, licensing of social care institutions was started. In pursuance of preparing for licensing, in 2012 the Rules Concerning Licensing of Social Care Establishments were approved, the rates of the state fee for the issue-specifica-
tion of a licence to provide social care were set, the new version of social care standards setting the requirements for various social care institutions, social families were approved.

Licensing of social care institutions and social families falls within the responsibility of the Department of Supervision of Social Services under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. The Department installed the electronic licencing measure, namely the Record of Social Care Licences by virtue of which social care institutions, social families have been provided a possibility to obtain licences online.

It was established that since 1 January 2015 institutions which have not been issued with a licence to provide social care will not be entitled to render such service. Validity of the issued licence may be suspended or cancelled if the institution renders social care which is not in compliance with the social care standards and fails to remedy the violations within the established time limit. Information on issue of a licence, suspension of validity or cancellation thereof shall be published and made available to everyone. It is expected that mandatory licensing of social care institutions will even more promote improvement of the quality of social services, increase transparency of activities and responsibility of social care institutions.

The quality of social care is closely related to the competences and skills of the persons providing such social care. In 2012, the Programme for the Development of Competences of Employees of Social Services Institutions was approved. In the course of implementation of the programme, the qualification of the employees of social services institutions will be improved, practical skills will be strengthened, supervision (consulting on professional relationship) will be carried out etc. In addition to usual forms of education, it is planned that implementation of the aforementioned programme will include new methods of development of competences. It is planned to provisionally select 15 social services institutions in which pilot projects will be carried out and around 400 employees will undergo training. Training will be delivered to the teams of the institution (from social employee assistant to manager including specialists in other areas) after analysing the needs for development of competences of the institution's employees and gaps. Priority will be given to social services institutions which provide regional social services for disabled children and children deprived of parental care and which will be deinstitutionalised in the future. Implementation of the programme will include finding out of the employees' motivation to change the nature of their activities moving to provision of social services in the community and the required knowledge and skills will be provided. The programme will be implemented during the period of 2013-2015 from the funds of the European Social Fund (LTL 5.1 million). It is planned that in total approximately 4.5 thous. participants, namely employees of social services institutions, will take part in the training.

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4.3. ACTIVITIES OF SOCIAL CARE INSTITUTIONS

In 2012, the number of social care institutions the owner's rights and duties of which are implemented by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (hereinafter referred to as the “state care home”) has increased. On 1 April 2012, provision of social care for persons with disabilities was commenced in the Division of Social Care of Persons with Disabilities of the Refugee Reception Centre (40 places). After reorganisation of the State Research Institute Centre for Innovative Medicine into two institutions, namely the State Research Institute Centre for Innovative Medicine and the Centre for Gerontology and Rehabilitation (155 places), the owner's rights and duties of the latter were assigned to the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. Thus, today there operate 40 state care homes: 6 child care homes, 1 child and mother care home, 3 social care home for children and youth with disabilities, 3 social care homes for elderly people and 27 social care homes for adults with disabilities (mostly, persons with mental disabilities).

In pursuance of ensuring better living conditions for social care beneficiaries, the scheduled number of the state care homes has been slightly reduced: in 2013, as compared with 2012, the scheduled number of child care homes was reduced by 6.6 percent, the number of social care homes for children and youth with disabilities – by 4.6 percent, the number of social care homes for elderly people and adults with disabilities – nearly by 2 percent.

Changes in the scheduled number of places and actual number of residents in 2012–2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scheduled number of places</th>
<th>Actual number of residents at the beginning of the year</th>
<th>Scheduled number of places</th>
<th>Actual number of residents at the beginning of the year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>6222</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>6128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>650</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>454</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care homes for elderly people, adults with disabilities</td>
<td>Care homes for children and youth with disabilities</td>
<td>Child care homes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The need for social care of elderly people, adults with disabilities in the state care homes slightly decreased: at the beginning of 2013, 110 persons waited in the queue to the afore-mentioned care homes, whereas during the same period in 2012 – 123 persons.

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Pursuant to the Description of the Procedure for Provision of Short-term Social Care in Social Care Institutions\textsuperscript{62} approved in 2012, there may be equipped places for provision of short-term social care in the state social care homes which are not included in the approved scheduled number of places. In such places short-term social care may be provided on the resolution of the municipality or by private agreement between the institution and the person (guardian, curator thereof). Thus, conditions for receiving short-term social care services, use them for certain period of time (for example, if a family member cannot take care of the person who needs continuous care by reason of a disease, business trip or other reasons) in a more prompt manner were created. Currently, in five social care institutions a total of 35 additional places were equipped for provision of short-term social care.

Upon termination of activities of the Administration Office of Social Care Institutions\textsuperscript{63}, since 1 November 2012 referral of children to the state care homes has been coordinated by the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, referral of adults – by the Department for the Affairs of the Disabled under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. The strategy and tactics of activity of the state care homes shall be coordinated by the specialists of the Social Care Institutions Division and the Children Division of the Ministry by providing the main trends and implementations thereof. Organisation of qualification improvement and certification of social workers was assigned to the Department of Supervision of Social Services under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour.


4.4. RELEVANT ISSUES OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

4.4.1. NON-DISCRIMINATION

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 activities, as well as freely move in the EU.

The Lithuanian residents have been actively enjoying the rights of movement of persons and free movement of workers in the EU and using the opportunity to practically without constraint become employed in any European Union Member State.

Currently the Ministry of Social Security and Labour coordinates Inter-institutional Action Plan for Promotion of Non-discrimination for 2012–2014 (hereinafter referred to as the “Plan”) approved by Resolution No 1281 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of 2 November 2011. The purpose of this Plan is 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, to raise public awareness of manifestations of discrimination in Lithuania and its negative impact on opportunities for certain groups of society to actively participate in public 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.

4.4.2. SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF THE DISABLED

Social integration of disabled people is organised in accordance with the principles of equal rights, equal opportunities, discrimination prevention, of guaranteeing self-sufficiency and freedom of choice, accessibility, compensation for disability, decentralisation and destigmatisation.

In 2012, 75.1 thous. persons in our country received state social insurance disability pensions 142.7 thous. persons – work incapacity pensions, 42.3 thous. persons – social insurance pensions, i.e. in total, disability pensions are paid to 260.1 thous. residents. The numbers of males and females receiving disability pensions only slightly differ: 48 percent males and 52 percent females. The number of disabled children was equal to 15.5 thous.

It should be noted that in 2009 the number of disabled persons who were recognised as disabled for the first time started decreasing, i.e. in 2002, the number of persons of working age who were recognised as disabled for the first time was equal to 20.2 thous., in 2005 – 22.3 thous., in 2007 – 26.6 thous., in 2008 – 27.2 thous., and in 2009 – 22.8 thous. In 2012, there were 14.3 thous. of such persons.

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.


4.4.2.1. Implementation of the Programme for Social Integration of the Disabled

On 5 February 2013, there was approved the new Plan of Implementing Measures for 2013-2015 of the National Programme for Social Integration of the Disabled for 2013-2019\(^{65}\) aimed at ensuring protection of the rights and fundamental freedoms of the disabled with different disabilities without discrimination on the grounds of their disability and creation of favourable conditions for improvement of social integration process was approved.

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State budget funds for implementation of the programmes and measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of the programme, measure</th>
<th>Amount used in 2012, LTL thous.</th>
<th>Amount allocated in 2013, LTL thous.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programme “Social Integration of the Disabled”</td>
<td>25,020.2 including 129.7 for property</td>
<td>25,005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Developing accessibility of services for the disabled, enhancing self-sufficiency of the disabled and promoting their employment opportunities including:</td>
<td>19,557.8</td>
<td>19,727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1. Implementation of the projects of social rehabilitation services for the disabled in the community</td>
<td>14,194.5</td>
<td>14,937.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2. Implementation projects for the development of mobility and self-sufficient living skills of people with physical disabilities</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3. Implementation of the projects of financing the publishing and circulation of periodical and informational publications for the disabled</td>
<td>882</td>
<td>882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4. Implementation of the projects of supporting the activities of associations of the disabled</td>
<td>4,085.3</td>
<td>3,620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5. Supporting of the activities of vocational rehabilitation methodical centres</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>137.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Improvement of the information environment for the disabled including:</td>
<td>825.2</td>
<td>650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1. Implementation of the plan of measures of provision of services of the Lithuanian body language translators</td>
<td>795.2 including 129.7 for property</td>
<td>620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2. Administration and maintenance of UNRIIS database</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Adaptation of housing and surroundings thereof for persons with disabilities</td>
<td>2,884.5</td>
<td>2,828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptation of housing and surroundings thereof for disabled people</td>
<td>2,884.5</td>
<td>2,448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspection of the projects published in the information system “Infostatyba” and participation in the work of commissions in acceptance of the construction works important to the disabled</td>
<td>380</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Provision of financial support to the disabled studying in higher education schools</td>
<td>1,713.8</td>
<td>1,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Payment of benefits amounting to 20 percent of the BSB to the disabled raising children for payment of public utilities, electricity or telephone expenses or purchase of fuel</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour

Table 4.4.2–1

Financing of the projects meant for social integration of the disabled selected by means of tender:

1. Projects of social rehabilitation services for the disabled in the community. In 2012, 408 projects of social rehabilitation services for the disabled in the community selected by means of tender were financed in 60 municipalities and implemented by the organisations acting in the field of social integration of the disabled. Associations of the disabled implemented 258 projects, public institutions – 123 projects, religious communities and societies – 12 projects, rural and urban population communities – 13 projects, charity and support foundation – 2 projects. In total, the amount of LTL 15,597 thous. from the state and municipal budgets was used for implementation of the aforementioned projects including the used amount of LTL 14,194.5 thous. from the state budget (the amount of LTL 13,617.5 thous. used for financing the projects, the amount of LTL 557 thous. used for administration of the projects selected by the municipal administrations) and the amount of LTL 1,403.1 thous. – from the municipality budgets. In 2012, 45,000 disabled people, 17 percent of persons with severe disability level, received benefit from social integration projects.

2. Projects of supporting the activities of associations of the disabled. In 2012, 25 projects of supporting the activities of associations of the disabled selected by means of tender were implemented by umbrella associations of the disabled. The amount of LTL 4,085.3 thous. was used for implementation of the projects.
3. Projects of financing the publishing and circulation of periodical and informational publications for the disabled. In 2012, 11 projects of financing the publishing and circulation of periodical and informational publications for the disabled selected by means of tender were financed and implemented by 7 associations of the disabled and 4 public institutions. The amount of LTL 882 thous. was used for implementation of the projects. 9 periodical publications and 2 informational publications were published and circulated.

4. Projects for the development of mobility and self-sufficient living skills of people with physical disabilities. In 2012, 2 projects for the development of mobility and self-sufficient living skills of people with physical disabilities meant for teaching people who recently have become blind mobility and self-sufficiency and teaching persons with movement disability to drive and selected by means of tender were financed. The amount of LTL 146 thous. was used for implementation of the projects.

4.4.2.2. Provision of Technical Aids for Residents

In 2012, the implementation of the measure “Acquisition and Provision of Technical Aids for Disabled People” of the Programme for Social Integration of the Disabled continued. The measure is implemented not only by providing the disabled with technical aids (hereinafter referred to as the “TA”), but also by repairing them. Fulfilment of these functions is assigned to the Centre of Technical Aid for Disabled People under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (hereinafter referred to as the Centre). The purpose of the Centre is to ensure the implementation of measures for social integration of the disabled, activities and projects aimed at improving medical, social and vocational rehabilitation of disabled people, and to guarantee the provision of TA for residents to satisfy special needs.

People in Lithuania are able to obtain from the Centre TA bought in a centralised manner and tailored to the person’s needs, or to receive reimbursement in the established amount for TA acquired by them in accordance with the Description of the Procedure for Provision of the Disabled with Technical Aids and Reimbursement for the Expenses of Acquisition of the Aids.

In 2012, the appropriations for implementation of the programme “Provision of Technical Aids for Residents” amounted to LTL 7,038 thous. More than 34 thous. residents were provided with technical aids including 32,583 persons who were provided with movement technical aids, 1,063 persons who were provided with sight technical aids, 287 persons who were provided with hearing technical aids. In 2012, the overall TA satisfaction level was 90 percent. In 2013, the approved appropriations planned for the above programme amount to LTL 7,038 thous.

4.4.2.3. Provision of Financial Aids for Disabled Students

Pursuant to the Description of the Procedure for Provision of Financial Aids to Disabled Students of Higher Education Institutions approved by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter referred to as the “Description of the Procedure”), students with severe or moderate disability level or whose capacity for work has been rated 45 percent or lower who study according to non-university, first or second cycle or university integrated study programmes and have no debts and no administrative sanctions were imposed on them, may receive financial assistance.

In 2012, the amount of LTL 1,718 thous. was approved for implementation of the afore-mentioned measure, the amount of LTL 1,713.8 thous., i.e. even 99.8 percent of the funds approved for implementation of the measure, was

used. Following the Description of the Procedure for Provision of Financial Aids for the Disabled Studying in Higher Schools, 1,033 disabled students studying in 39 higher education schools including 932 (90.2 percent) disabled persons studying in 26 state higher education schools and 101 disabled persons (9.8 percent) studying in not state higher education schools were supported. 1,033 disabled persons were paid benefits for satisfaction of special needs, 464 disabled were paid target benefits for partial compensation of study expenses.

4.4.2.4. Adaptation of Housing for People with Disabilities

An entrance to the dwelling may be tailored to the needs of the disabled and tailoring works may be carried out inside the dwelling. The works of adaptation of housing are organised by municipalities or the applicants themselves. The housing adaptation expenses are reimbursed from the state and municipal budgets in parts: 80 percent from the state budget and 20 percent from the municipal budget for persons with very clear and clear movement and self-service dysfunctions; 50 percent from the state budget and 50 percent from the municipal budget for persons with average movement and self-service dysfunctions. The Department controls that the funds were used in a target manner (entities implementing the measures are 58 municipalities, supervision of housing adaptation is carried out by representatives of 4 associations of the disabled). The maximum amount of housing adaptation expenses is equal to 185 BSB (LTL 24,050).

In 2012, 251 dwellings were tailored to the needs of the disabled: the amount of LTL 2,509.19 thous. from the state budget and the amount of LTL 946.56 thous. from the municipal budgets was used.

4.4.2.5. Vocational Rehabilitation Programme

One of the essential provisions while shaping social integration policy for the disabled in Lithuania is the involvement of the disabled and social life. 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 implementation of the Vocational Rehabilitation Programme and provision of vocational rehabilitation services continued in 2012. Vocational rehabilitation services have been currently provided in 13 establishments.

In 2012, the Vocational Rehabilitation Programme was completed by 626 persons; 339 of them found employment. The amount of 10,091.7 thous. (the EU support) was used for provision of vocational rehabilitation services.

The persons participating in the vocational rehabilitation programme are granted and paid vocational rehabilitation benefit. The benefit is granted and paid irrespective of other income from the state budget. In 2012, the amount of LTL 2,350.1 was used for payment of vocational rehabilitation benefits.

Vocational rehabilitation services are provided in accordance with the Description of the Criteria for Establishing the Need for Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the Rules Concerning Provision and Financing of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (hereinafter referred to as the “Order”). Pursuant to the new edition of the Order, a person may participate in the vocational rehabilitation programme if the level of his capacity for work is 0–45 percent. Persons with mind disability level or 50–55 percent capacity for work are referred to formal vocational training programmes. The procedure for determination of the need for vocational rehabilitation has been amended: a person willing to participate in a vocational rehabilitation programme must file a written request to the territorial labour exchange. Having evaluated the vocational criteria and personal motivation and determination to return to professional life, the territorial labour exchange makes a decision on referral to the Disability and Working Capacity Assessment.

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Office under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour hereinafter referred to as the “DWCAO”) for the purposes of establishing the need for vocational rehabilitation services. With regard to the conclusion of the need put forward by the DWCAO, the territorial labour exchanges makes a decision on participation of the person in the vocational rehabilitation programme.

In 2013, the amount of LTL 3.5 million was allocated for the measure of provision of vocational rehabilitation services; the amount of LTL 2.5 million was used for payment of vocational rehabilitation benefits.

4.4.3. ACTION PLAN FOR THE RETURN OF POLITICAL PRISONERS AND EXILES AS WELL AS THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS TO LITHUANIA FOR 2013–2015

In pursuance of further provision of the state support for political prisoners and exiles as well as their family members (hereinafter referred to as the “returning persons”) returning to Lithuania, the Action Plan for the Return of Political Prisoners and Exiles as well as Their Family Members to Lithuania for 2013–2015 (hereinafter referred to as the “Plan”)

The Plan aims at ensuring that all returning persons were provided with possibilities to receive the established compensation for a part of the rental or leasing of housing for the housing rented under the market conditions till acquisition of housing by ownership right in Lithuania by themselves or integration into the life of the country. The aim is sought through granting the state support for relocation and social integration to the returning persons. While implementing social integration measures the 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 for the citizens of the Republic of Lithuania permanently residing in other countries willing to return to Lithuania is provided, financial support is granted for the summer holiday camps of the school-age children of the returning persons who attend Vilnius Lithuanian Home Gymnasium by improving the domestic conditions of this gymnasium and organising cultural events, financial support for organisations of exiles in Lithuania and the Lithuanian communities in the former USSR territory and maintenance expenses of the temporary accommodation facility for returning exiles. It has been recommended to grant a compensation for a part of the rental or leasing of housing for the housing rented under the market conditions since 2014, i.e. after adoption of the Republic of Lithuania Law on State Support to Acquire or Rent Housing and the legislation implementing the law.

4.4.4. SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF FOREIGNERS GRANTED ASYLUM

More than 300 refugees the majority of whom are women and children, have been currently residing in Lithuania. Social integration of foreigners, who have been granted asylum in Lithuania, asylum seekers, into the local community is the most sensitive element of the Lithuanian asylum system. Refugees’ psychological problems and insufficient knowledge of the community into which persons are integrated constitute major obstacles to successful integration.

State support measures adopted directly for the integration of foreigners granted asylum are implemented by the Refugees Reception Centre located in Rukla. Integration is carried out at the Refugees Reception Centre and in the territories of Lithuanian municipalities

In 2012, the Refugees Reception Centre provided support for 166 foreigners: mainly from Russia, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Belarus, Vietnam, Georgia, Eritrea. In order to contribute to ensuring the principle of solidarity and fair

sharing of responsibility between the European Union Member States and with regard to the proposal of the European Commission and the Republic of Malta for accession to the project of the European Refugee Fund for intra-EU relocation of foreigners from third countries who require international protection from Malta and co-financed from the European Refugee Fund (hereinafter referred to as the "Relocation Project"), in December 2012, 4 asylum seekers were relocated from the Republic of Malta to the Republic of Lithuania (one asylum seeker was born in the Republic of Lithuania).

Furthermore, there were organised seminars on social integration for training the employees of municipalities and non-governmental organisations, other institutions and bodies working in the area of foreigners granted asylum, different cultural exchange events promoting knowledge of other cultures.

4.4.5. IMPLEMENTATION OF ECONOMIC MIGRATION POLICY IN LITHUANIA

In 2012, in implementation of the measures of the strategy “Global Lithuania” coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour published an electronic publication “Life and Work in Lithuania” (Gyvenimas ir darbas Lietuvoje) providing information on work, starting of business, taxes, social security, health protection, subsidised housing, education, youth policy, issues concerning citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania, identity documents as well as legal assistance and other issues which are relevant to the nationals who emigrated from Lithuania and are planning or at least considering the possibility to return to Lithuania in a structured manner.

In 2012, the Ministry also organised a public tender for online provision of psychological consultations for the persons who emigrated from Lithuania and signed a contract for provision of services in 2012 with the company which won the public tender, namely, the Public Institution Gera būsena, with a possibility to extend the contract for 2 years (in 2013, the above contract was extended for 2 years). The afore-mentioned measure aims at ensuring that persons who emigrated from Lithuania had a possibility to receive free of charge anonymous psychological assistance online (mainly through free of charge application Skype or by e-mail). The consultations rendered by professional psychologists to emigrants facing different social or psychological problems helps to avoid more serious mental disorders, strengthens their emotional condition and all this assists in seeking for the main aim of the strategy “Global Lithuania”, i.e. not to lose connections with the residents who emigrated from Lithuania.
4.5. STATE SUPPORT FOR THE ACQUISITION OR RENTAL OF HOUSING

The legislation in force stipulates two forms of support for natural entities and persons with permanent place of residence in the Republic of Lithuania:

- **State support for the acquisition of housing**: subsidising part of housing loan, covering housing loan interest and loan insurance premiums or part thereof. Provision of support for the acquisition of housing aims at ensuring that families and persons meeting the requirements set out in the legislation (not exceeding the maximum amounts of income and property established by the Government) could acquire a dwelling in the market by themselves;

- **State support for the rental of housing**: renting social housing by low income families and persons. Provision of state support for the social housing involves increasing of the municipal subsidised housing stock and aims at ensuring that low income persons who have no dwelling and have no possibility to acquire own dwelling could rent social housing from municipality.

State support for the acquisition or rental of housing is financed from the appropriations foreseen in the state budget for implementation of the Special Programme for Financing of State Support for the Acquisition of Residential Houses and Apartments and from the programme income.

According to the data available to the Lithuanian Department of Statistics, in 2009, 61 individuals (families) were granted state supported housing loans (the received loans amounted to LTL 5,926.0 thous.), in 2010 – 23 (the received loans amounted to LTL 2,189.0 thous.), in 2011 – 80 (the received loans amounted to LTL 7,355.0 thous.), in 2012 – 60 (the received loans amounted to LTL 5,202.3 thous.). Accordingly, the following subsidies were granted to individuals (families): in 2009 – LTL 619.0 thous., in 2010 – LTL 300.0 thous., in 2011 – LTL 806.0 thous., in 2012 – LTL 594.3 thous. In 2012, the highest number of individuals (families) took advantage of the state supported housing loans in Vilnius City Municipality (29 percent), Marijampolė Municipality (12 percent), Šiauliai City Municipality (9 percent).

According to the data of the Lithuanian Department of Statistics, in 2012, 31,584 individuals (families) entitled to subsidised housing and included in the lists drawn up in municipalities requested to rent subsidised housing, i.e. 4 percent more than in 2011.

**Waiting lists for the social housing (families and individuals) as on 31 December 2012**

![Waiting lists for the social housing (families and individuals) as on 31 December 2012](image)

*Data of the Lithuanian Department of Statistics*
The growing demand for social housing is influenced by new families established in the labour market and insufficient income of individuals (families) for acquisition of own housing. The highest number of individuals (families) willing to rent social housing was in the municipalities of the cities Vilnius (20 percent), Kaunas (12 percent) and Klaipėda (8 percent).

The findings of the analysis of the demand for social housing and meeting this demand for 2004-2012 conducted by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour suggest the conclusion that every year municipalities provide social housing for around 850 families and individuals (only around 3 percent of the demand is satisfied); however, regardless of the indicators of meeting the demand for social housing, the number of families and individuals entitled to social housing has been increasing every year by 1,680 families and individuals: in 2012, as compared with 2004, the demand for social housing jumped by 3.4 times. In such case, low income families and individuals may be provided with a possibility to rent municipal social housing only 20-30 years after filing the request for rental of social housing.

Upon analysis and evaluation of the functioning of the system of support for the acquisition or rental of housing it was decided 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. In the light of the above, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour drafted the Republic of Lithuania Law on Support for Acquisition or Rental of Housing which was published in the subsystem of registration of draft legislation of the information system of the legislation of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania. The above draft law governs a new form of provision of support for acquisition or rental of housing, namely compensation of a part of rental or lease payments, and sets forth that families and persons entitled to social housing and renting housing from natural or legal entities under market conditions become entitled to a compensation of a part of rental or lease payments. Compensation of a part of rental payment not only will increase the possibilities for providing families and individuals with housing, but also will create a possibility to rent a dwelling meeting their needs.

The objectives of the draft Law on Support for Acquisition or Rental of Housing of the Republic of Lithuania are as follows:

- to continuously support the possibilities of the families and individuals entitled to social housing to have a proper dwelling;
- to establish (supplement) the forms of development of the municipal housing stock and provision of support for acquisition or rental of housing and sources of financing;
- to establish the conditions of compensation of a part of housing rental or lease payments;
- to promote cooperation between the public sector and the private sector in the area of the construction and rental of housing;
- to reduce the number of families and persons who are ejected from the dwellings rented from municipalities by force and create conditions for more rational management and use of municipal (state) residential premises and disposal thereof;
- to ensure that support for acquisition or rental of housing was granted only to the families and individuals whose property and income are lower than the rates established by the Government.

Currently, the draft Republic of Lithuania Law on Support for Acquisition or Rental of Housing is being specified according to the conclusions received from the institutions concerned and will be presented to the Ministry of Justice for coordination. Upon evaluation of the remarks and proposals put forward by the Ministry of Justice, the draft law will be presented to the Government for consideration.
5.1. ROLE OF COMMUNITIES AND DIRECTIONS OF DEVELOPMENT OF VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES

5.1.1. PROGRAMME FOR SELF-GOVERNMENT OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES

In 2012, implementation of the Programme for Self-Government of Local Communities70 (hereinafter referred to as the “Programme”) aimed at promoting communities in the whole Lithuania to actively participate in making decisions on the use of funds for satisfying the public needs of local communities was commenced for the first time. In 2012, the amount of LTL 8 million was allocated from the state budget for implementation of the Programme. The funds were apportioned among municipalities according to the data on the number of employed persons paying the income tax on individuals in the municipalities provided by the State Tax Inspectorate.

The municipalities which participated in implementation of the Programme had till 1 April 2012 drawn up and approved the descriptions of the procedure for the allocation and use of funds for the implementation of decisions of local communities taking into consideration the provisions of the Description of the Implementation of the Programme of Self-Government of Local Communities71. Then funds were transferred to municipalities according to the tripartite treaties signed among the Ministry, the Department of Supervision of Social Services and municipal administrations. According to the data presented in the reports of municipalities, out of the amount of LTL 8 million which was allocated for implementation of the Programme, in 2012 the amount of LTL 7,924.4 thous. was spent: LTL 5,384.6 thous. (67.95 percent) was used for current issues and LTL 2,539.8 thous. (32.05 percent) - for acquisition of long-term property.

The amount of LTL 75.6 thous. (0.95 percent) of the funds of the Programme was not used. 21 municipality used 100 percent of the transferred funds, 36 municipalities – more than 99 percent.


In 2012, 551 elderships participated in implementation of the Programme for Self-Government of Local Communities, 1,992 decisions on financed activities were made by Local Community Councils (hereinafter referred to as the “LCC”). The greatest amount of funds was used for meeting public needs of local communities, i.e. improvement of public spaces and environment quality in local communities: decoration and preservation of urban and rural places, upkeep of resorts, parks, production of information stands, clearing of graveyards, and repair of wayside shrines. Furthermore, local communities purchased aids most necessary for management and clearing of the environment.

The second major area of decisions made by LCC was cultural and educational activities, i.e. educational and cultural events, festivals helping to bring the community members for giving publicity to the community outside the community. In pursuance of creating more favourable youth employment possibilities, LCC made a lot of decisions on setting up of playgrounds, basketball grounds, acquisition of different sport facilities, financing of the activities of youth sport teams and community children and youth camps.

In the light of conclusions and findings laid down in the reports of executors (municipalities) of the programme of the accounting period of 2012, it may be stated that the main objectives targeted at self-sufficiency and promotion of self-government of local communities by creating possibilities for local communities to deal with the relevant issues, satisfaction of the needs of local communities, enhancing the focus and mutual trust of communities and raising of responsibility of the community members for the issues dealt in the community by themselves have been achieved. According to the executors of the programme, the programme proved to be useful and created favourable conditions for cooperation among representatives of different organisations and institutions operating in local communities.

Conclusions of the report of the internal audit carried out during the period from 3 September 2012 to 13 October 2012 were positive, but the report had also set out recommendations for improvement of the implementation of the programme.

In November-December 2012, a questionnaire survey of representatives of executors of the programme (municipal administrations, elderships and LCC) was organised. Findings of the survey were presented and considered in the conference meant for consideration of the programme organised on 12 December 2012.

Representatives from 56 municipalities participated in the survey. 510 persons (41 representative of municipal administrations, elders and LCC) sent their answers to the questions of the questionnaire. Although the data of the findings of the questionnaire shows that the programme proved to be useful and delivered goods results, participants of the questionnaire survey specified a lot of difficulties faced by the executors of the programme and decision-makers. Participants of the survey indicated a lot of problems to be taken into consideration by organisers and executors of the programme in the future:

- there arose problems in setting up of LCC due to insufficient involvement of communities and unwillingness of people to participate in the activities of LCC due to lack of time or motivation;
- in the cities which have no elderships it was not only difficult to set up LCC, but this also required much acumen, not foreseen additional organisational procedures and other not standard solutions;
- certain communities and elderships did not have detailed analysis of the situation in their territory; thus, when making decisions their possibilities for using funds for different issues were particularly limited;
- complexity of public procurement procedures, insufficient financing of the programme and apportionment of funds on a quarterly basis (due to the latter problem it was difficult to conduct procurement of more expensive goods or services);
- lack of experience in discussing, negotiating, deciding on the community needs, priorities, independent decision-making, etc.;

The respondents also put forward a lot of recommendations for presenters and executors of the programme including the following major recommendations:
• to specify proportions of the composition of the LCC;
• to create a possibility for saving funds so that one or two years later, it were possible to manage larger scope and more complex projects in a particular location;
• municipalities could have a possibility to allocate the programme funds not on a quarterly basis, but with regard to actually evaluated needs;
• to create a possibility for local community organisations and other institutions and organisations to implement decisions on the use of funds by themselves;
• to plan activities of the programme to be financed in advance rather than at the beginning of the financial year;
• to simplify settlement of accounts and reduce the number of reports.

The Programme for Self-Government of Local Communities for 2013-2015 was approved by the Order of the Minister of Social Security and Labour of 25 February 2013. The Description of Implementation of the Programme was approved on 7 March. The organisers of the description took into account the experience of implementation of the programme in 2012, summarised evaluations of the municipalities, elders and communities and recommendations of the internal audit of the Ministry. The general aims and objectives of the programme remained the same and the amount of LTL 8 million was allocated from the state budget for implementation of the programme in 2013. In 2013, just like in 2012, all municipalities of the country participated in the programme and signed the agreements.

5.1.2. PROGRAMME FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITIES

The Programme for Social Development of Communities is closely related to the afore-mentioned programme and is targeted at strengthening of community organisations and enhancing of their role. In the course of implementation of the Programme for Social Development of Communities for 2011-2013 approved in 2011, attempts have been made to implement the policy of development of non-governmental organisations and promote development of community organisations in social area.

The measures of the programme aim at creating conditions for long-term development of community activities, financing activities of the most promising community organisations, dissemination of know-how, strengthening of partnership among non-governmental organisations, communities and public sector, and promotion of entrepreneurship of non-governmental organisations and communities.

In 2012, financing of the website at www.bendruomenes.lt meant for communication of community organisations created a possibility for ten new community organisations to create their own websites. Communication among communities infused confidence to representatives of the community organisations. The representatives shared their advice about possibilities for social activities in the community, sources of financing available to community organisations, search for foreign partners and other issues.

In 2012, according to the measure “Projects of Community Organisations for Maintenance and Development of Social Activities of Such Organisations”, 46 projects were financed. A majority of the projects included exchange of know-how and information. It is gratifying that more and more community organisations dare to engage in provision of services necessary for the community. Unfortunately, municipalities usually provide only project funding for such activities of communities, and rarely sign contracts for provision of services. Nevertheless, community organisations closely working with people residing in their territory and engaging volunteers still find new forms of activities in the financed projects, for example, visiting elderly people at home, housework assistance service for disabled persons or single old age people which have no close people who could take care of them etc.

In 2012, 5 community forums were organised on the initiative of the ministry or in cooperation with different district communities or other organisations. The situation of the activities of community organisations of a particular district and financing thereof was presented and considered almost in all forums, improvement of the cooperation between community organisations and local self-government institutions was discussed, and objectives of the aim of “Enhancing the Role of Communities and Non-Governmental Organisations” of the National Progress Programme for 2014-2020 and preliminary trends of implementation of the programme were presented. In 2013, it is planned to organise 6 community forums where discussions would focus on social entrepreneurship and which would generate ideas of services realised by communities and other non-governmental organisations.

In 2012, 165 participants from Alytus, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Šiauliai, Vilnius and Utena Districts participated in a training of representatives of community organisations on the issues of the organisation of promotion of social entrepreneurship and acquisition of competences in the course of social activities. Majority of trainees were women (144), and there were only 21 men. Only one fifth of the participants were young people.

A lot of particular examples of the Lithuanian and foreign social business were presented to participants during the training and the participants had promised to start realising them in their communities. Possibilities for youth employment and entrepreneurship, in particular in rural territories, were analysed. As regards social services, an example of entrepreneurship in Antanava community and examples promoting entrepreneurship in Sweden were communities organise in groups, thus, reducing the organisational work expenditure, were presented. The training encouraged majority of participants to consider possibilities for provision of social and cultural services acceptable to the community and at the same time the possibilities for generation of funds.

Three projects of associations of community organisations financed in 2012, were meant for strengthening of partnership, cooperation, and mutual communication of community organisations as well as publicity of activities of organisations.

All measures of the programme of the development of community organisations implemented in 2012, improved cooperation among such organisations, diversified the contents of the experience exchange activities, strengthened competences of the financed organisations and their partners and leaders of the organisations to seek for economic independence and start providing particular social services necessary for the community.

In 2013, financing (LTL 64,800) was allocated for the same three associations of community organisations the activities of which were directed at strengthening of the skills of the members or organisations to represent the interests of residents and other institutional needs of the organisations.
5.2 CHILD RIGHTS PROTECTION, CHILD GUARDIANSHIP (FOSTER CARE) AND ADOPTION

5.2.1. REORGANISATION OF THE SYSTEM OF CHILD RIGHTS PROTECTION INSTITUTIONS

With a view to forming a coherent and coordinated system of child rights protection institutions which ensure proper protection of child rights and legal interests as well as representation thereof, the Seimas passed the resolution\(^73\) thereby approving the Concept of Reorganisation of Child Rights Protection Institutions (hereinafter referred to as the “Conception”).

In order to achieve the aim of the Concept, the functions related to child well-being and child rights protection performed by state and municipal institutions will be redistributed; administration of these functions will be improved and the function of child rights protection will remain a state function (assigned by the state to municipalities).

The system of child rights protection institutions will be reorganised in the following directions: the objectives, functions and role of ministries and other state institutions related to child rights protection in the system of state institutions will be clearly defined; concrete boundaries of responsibility will be established; the functions of management and control of the child rights protection system will be enhanced; the competence of municipal institutions will be reviewed and the structure of child rights protection offices will be improved; the key functions performed by child rights protection offices will be laid down in legal acts.

In the course of implementation of the Conception at the end of 2012 the Government approved the Plan of Measures Implementing the Concept of Reorganisation of the System of Child Rights Protection Institutions. Measures envisaged in the plan of measures propose to improve legal regulation of child rights protection by strengthening coordination of the activities of institutions which ensure child well-being or by: reconsidering the functions performed by the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Agency under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and child rights protection offices of municipality administrations; improving legal regulation of child guardianship (foster care) and adoption; promoting availability and diversity of social services in the area of child rights protection. Furthermore, efforts will be exerted in order to ensure consolidation of human resources of child rights protection institutions of municipality administrations by reducing the workload of specialists.

To this end, appropriations from the state budget for establishment of additional positions of civil servants in child rights protection offices of municipality administrations have been increased allocating additional funds for the provision of hardware and other equipment in these offices.

5.2.2. VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

Although physical and emotional safety of a child falls within responsibility of his/her family, every year different institutions provide data suggesting that hundreds of children experience violence and abuse in the family and outside the family. Emotional and psychological violence against children is perceived as follows: downgrading, debasement, humiliation, libel, menace, intimidation, isolation, fooling or other behaviour models other than physical contact, actions restricting the freedom of movement, causing or creating conditions for causing harm to a child’s physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, moral or social health and development. In 2012, the number of recorded cases of psychological violence was much higher in the city (369 cases of psychological violence) than in the countryside (223).

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Violence experienced in adolescence may induce socially unacceptable behaviour of the child who is a victim of violence; thus, it is particularly important to carry out preventive work and provide qualified assistance to children who have been subjected to violence. According to the data of the end of 2012, children aged 10–14 mainly experienced physical and psychological violence and minor children (in particular, till 3 years) mainly experienced psychological violence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age groups</th>
<th>Number of cases of possible violence against children</th>
<th>Sexual abuse</th>
<th>Physical violence</th>
<th>Psychological violence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0–3 years</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4–6 years</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7–9 years</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–14 years</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15–17 years</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service*

Analysis of the data on distribution of violence according to genders suggests that violence against boys was slightly greater than violence against girls: respectively, 777 and 566.

More detailed analysis of the type of violence and place of experiencing violence against children suggests that the number of cases of sexual abuse against children in the city and in the countryside was almost equal (in the city – 38 cases, in the countryside – 46 cases), children living in cities experienced much more physical violence (in the city – 370 children, in the countryside – 297 children); furthermore, in 2012, a growing number of cases of psychological violence against children in cities was recorded (in the city – 369, in the countryside – 223).

Physical violence against children was generally caused by close adult people – 369 cases (in total, 667 cases of physical violence); furthermore, children experienced psychological violence which was mainly caused by close adults (504 cases) (out of 592 cases of psychological violence) and sexual abuse caused by adult strangers and underage strangers (Table 2):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of violence</th>
<th>Perpetrators of violence</th>
<th>Adult strangers</th>
<th>Underage strangers</th>
<th>Close adult persons</th>
<th>Close underage persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual abuse</td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical violence</td>
<td></td>
<td>124</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological violence</td>
<td></td>
<td>65</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service*

In cases of violence against children in domestic environment by the persons children know, it is particularly important to organise proper and necessary assistance in a timely manner, since the sooner the child who experienced violence receives assistance and protection, the more efficient assistance in coping with traumas and ensuring safety will be provided to him.
5.2.2.1. Assistance to Child as a Victim of Violence

In implementation of the measure of the National Programme for Prevention of Violence against Children and for Assistance to Children for 2011–2015, in 2012 there was organised a tender of organisation of complex services to children as victims of violence and victims of indirect domestic violence (witnesses), their family members implemented by 5 non-governmental organisations. In 2012, the qualified experts who worked in implementation of the project provided complex assistance to 758 children as victims of violence (339 boys as victims of direct violence and 347 girls as victims of direct violence and 30 boys and 42 girls as victims of indirect violence), 112 children more than in 2011 and 125 children more than in 2010, and for 483 families with children.

In 2012, the majority of children (357) were victims of psychological violence. 310 children experienced physical violence. The minor part of children experienced sexual abuse, i.e. 68 children. 75 children were victims of indirect violence.

5.2.2.2. Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation

The Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania ratified the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse on 6 November 2012. On 9 April 2013, Lithuania officially delivered documents of ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (hereinafter referred to as the “Lanzarote Convention”) to the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union. Pursuant to Article 45 of the Lanzarote Convention, this Convention shall enter into force on the first day of the month following the expiration of a period of three months after the date of lodgement thereof; on 1 August 2013, by 16–17 July 2012 minutes of the meeting No 49 the Government of the Republic of Lithuania approved the inter-institutional action plan of the Convention.

The aims of the above Lanzarote Convention are as follows:

1) prevent and combat sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children;
2) protect the rights of child victims of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse;
3) promote national and international co-operation against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children.

The Lanzarote Convention sets out the main preventive measures, specialised authorities and measures of co-ordination, protective measures and assistance to victims, intervention programmes or measures. The Convention also governs the conception of sexual abuse against children, their sexual exploitation, child pornography and entering into relationship with children for sexual purposes. The Convention serves as one of the measures of promotion of co-operation on the international level, exchange of information with a view to preventing sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. Articles 18–23 of the Lanzarote Convention more widely define the actions of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

The Ministry of Social Security and Labour currently implements the European Economic Area (EEA) Financial Mechanism Programme for 2009–2014 “Risk Group Children and Youth”. Upon implementation of the afore-mentioned programme, there will be established a help centre, i.e. a centre for children who suffered from sexual abuse, according to the model of Iceland, Barnahus. Lithuania is planning to cooperate with the experts of the Icelandic Agency for Child Protection “Barnahus” with a view to teaching the Lithuanian specialists to work with children who experienced sexual exploitation. In Lithuania, the possibility to receive necessary complex assistance (psychological, medical, legal, social etc.) is not guaranteed to every child who experienced sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.
After establishing the above centre in Lithuania, children who are victims of sexual exploitation will be provided with a possibility to receive qualified and efficient complex assistance (individual, group, family psychological assistance); furthermore, the activities of the centre would contribute to implementation of the provisions provided for in the Lanzarote Convention.

5.2.3. CHILD GUARDIANSHIP

According to the data of the Lithuanian Department of Statistics, at the beginning of 2012 in Lithuania there were raised 560.4 thous. children. About two percent of them are deprived of parental care. Despite intensifying work with social risk families and provided assistance to the children in such families, many children are still separated from their parents. Alternative guardianship must be ensured for such children. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child establishes that his/her guardianship (foster care) in family environment best meets the child’s interests. Often possibilities for placing a child in a family of foster parents are limited.

On 31 December 2012, 10,542 children were deprived of parental care. The number of such children decreases every year: at the end of 2010 the number of such children was equal to 11,130, and in 2011 – 10,813. Such tendency may be linked to the annually decreasing number of children residing in Lithuania which since 2010 changed slightly more than by 75 thous. At the end of 2012, just like in 2010 and 2011, mostly senior school-age children and adolescents were placed under guardianship (foster care) of all 10,542 children placed under guardianship (foster care). 4,151 children placed under guardianship (foster care) were 10–14 year old and 3,171 youngsters – 15–17 year old. Children aged 4–6 made the minor part of children placed under guardianship (foster care).

Forms of child guardianship: child guardianship in a family, social family and institution. In Lithuania, there are established 3 forms of guardianship: in a family, social family and institution. The aim of the State is to place as fewer children deprived of parental care in child care institutions as possible. The Guidelines for Deinstitutionalization have been approved by the order of the Minister of Social Security and Labour75. Although more than half of the children placed under guardianship are raised in families of foster parents, a majority of them are linked by blood relationships. Nevertheless, during the accounting year a greater part of children deprived of parental care still were placed in a child care institution.

Guardianship in a family. On 31 December 2012, 6,105 children were placed under guardianship in a family. In 2012, 2,923 boys and 3,182 girls were placed under guardianship in families. Three fourths of such children were aged 10–17. At the end of 2012, 6,105 children were placed under guardianship in 4,746 families. The main reason motivating to foster is blood relationships with the child. At the end of 2012, in 1,875 cases the guardianship was established in 1,467 families of foster parents who are not relatives.

Guardianship in a social family. In 2012, in 27 municipalities of the country there operated 48 social families. 407 children including 42 children with disabilities were placed under guardianship in social families. In 2012, 48 children were placed under guardianship in social families.

Guardianship in an institution. At the end of 2012, 4,030 children were placed under guardianship in child care institutions. In 2012, guardianship (foster care) of children was established 1,205 times including guardianship (foster care) for 623 boys and 582 girls.

Thus, despite the fact that the state has implemented different social programmes meant for strengthening work with social risk families, more and more families of foster parents are attracted and services are provided to them, child guardianship in an institution is still a sore problem.

Search for foster parents and adoptive parents, their preparation, provision of assistance to foster parents and adoptive parents

As the number of children growing in child care institutions and children deprived of parental care has not decreased in the country, major attention should be paid to notification of the society and encouraging families to make a decision to raise a child deprived of parental care. In 2012, in Lithuania preparation of foster parents and adoptive parents (curators) was carried out by 25 institutions. This number has not changed since 2010. All 60 municipalities have signed agreements on preparation of foster parents and adoptive parents with the institutions preparing foster parents / adoptive parents; trainings were organised for 46 groups of future adoptive parents and foster parents (curators). 229 families of foster parents (336 persons) and 89 families of adoptive parents (167 persons) took part in the trainings.

Furthermore, in 2012 all institutions providing training and consultation for foster parents and adoptive parents organised trainings for present adoptive parents and foster parents according to the continuous programme for adoptive parents and foster parents (curators). 547 persons participated in the continuous trainings for adoptive parents and foster parents (curators). According to the programme for training and consulting of foster parents and adoptive parents, 95 specialists have been trained since 2007. In 2012, in the institutions of training and consulting of foster parents and adoptive parents there were 54 such specialists including 53 certified specialists.

5.2.4. SOCIAL RISK FAMILIES

On 31 December 2012, a total of 10,389 social risk families raising 21,303 underage children were included in the register of social risk families with children of the municipalities of the Republic of Lithuania. In 2012, 1,766 social risk families with 3,140 children were included in the register.

Improvement and strengthening of social work in municipalities could result in a decrease in the number social risk families with children. Rendered proper services create conditions for such children to grow in their biological families. Today, with regard to the great workload of social workers, it is necessary to increase the number of social workers working with social risk families, improve their qualification and enhance their professional qualification. Moreover, it is very important to develop the range of social and psychological services in all municipalities, in particular, in rural areas.

5.2.5. ADOPTION

On 31 December 2012, 1,878 children were included in the register of children subject to adoption. The majority of children subject to adoption are of senior children aged 10-14, on the threshold of adolescence or already stepping to adolescence, growing in care institutions together with their brothers and sisters. As a rule, such children are characterised by different development disorders: language and communication, attention, memory, behaviour and emotional, intellectual disorders, poorer learning skills.

With regard to the interest of children, 1,477 children of 1,878 children included in the register of children subject to adoption cannot be offered for adoption. The most often reasons of the above are as follows: disagreement to be adopted by the child himself/herself, close relationships with biological family and relatives of the child, senior age and difficult health condition.

The majority of persons included in the list are citizens of the Republic of Lithuania, permanently residing in Lithuania, spouses aged 34–39 without children, living in a city, earning higher than average income and willing to adopt a child up to 2 year old, giving priority to girls with curable health disorders.
The majority of spouses included in the list of the citizens of the Republic of Lithuania permanently residing abroad and foreigners are citizens of Italy and Sweden who are over 40 years, without own children and willing to adopt one child up to 9 years of any gender.

Since 1 April 2012, foreigners (only spouses) permanently residing abroad are entitled to apply (are included in the list of the citizens of the Republic of Lithuania permanently residing abroad and foreigners) only for adoption of children with special needs in accordance with the Description of the Pre-Trial Procedure of Adoption of Children with Special Needs Subject to Adoption. The citizens of the Republic of Lithuania (spouses) and spouses one of which is a citizen of the Republic of Lithuania permanently residing abroad will be entitled to adopt children like till now, i.e. without any restrictions.

In 2012, the Lithuanian families have adopted more children deprived of parental care than foreigners for the first time. In 2012, 92 pairs of spouses and 6 single persons (women) permanently residing in the Republic of Lithuania adopted 112 children deprived of parental care (mainly children up to 3 year old). In 2012, as compared with the previous year, more Lithuanian families adopted more than 2 children and children with health disorders. Furthermore, more and more foster children of child care institutions are adopted.

70 citizens of the Republic of Lithuania permanently residing abroad and families of foreign citizens adopted 98 children deprived of parental care who nearly everyone, like in previous years, had special needs. They were adopted by families of the Italian, Swedish and USA citizens.

5.2.6. ACTIVITIES OF THE CHILDREN’S MAINTENANCE FUND

Article 38 of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania provides for that “the right and duty of parents is to bring up their children to be honest people and faithful citizens and to support them until they come of age”. On 1 January 2002, there came into force Article 3.204 of the Civil Code of the Republic of Lithuania setting forth 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 the period lasting longer than one month. In implementation of the above provision of the Civil Code and taking into consideration the afore-mentioned circumstances, in 2006 there was adopted the Republic of Lithuania Law on Children’s Maintenance Fund which came into force on 1 January 2008. The law aims at ensuring the child’s right to social security and guaranteeing the obligation of the state to provide the child with maintenance of the established amount subject to the grounds set out in the afore-mentioned law. Pursuant to the above law, children receiving no maintenance from their parents may receive a benefit amounting up to 1.5 MSLs (currently – LTL 195) per month. Besides, the state becomes entitled to request that the persons obliged to maintain the child repaid the paid out funds of child maintenance to the state. The Children’s Maintenance Fund (hereinafter referred to as the “Fund”) operating since 1 January 2008 was established in accordance with Article 27 paragraph 4 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which sets forth 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.

During the period of 2008–2012, there were received 40,343 new applications for payment from the Children’s Maintenance Fund. During the first year of operation (2008) the Fund received 17,970 requests for payment, in 2009 7,570, in 2010 5,039, in 2011 4,665, in 2012 more than 5099. Approximately 21,000 children received payments from the Fund on a regular basis.


77 Civil Code of the Republic of Lithuania (Official Gazette Valstybės žinios, 2000, No 74-2262; 2000, No 77, 80, 82).

In 2012, the debtors for whom payments from the Children's Maintenance Fund were made repaid to the administration of the Fund the amount of LTL 1,134.8 thous. and paid the interest in the amount of LTL 54.5 thous. which belongs to the administration of the Fund according to Article 11 paragraph 1 of the Law on Children's Maintenance Fund.

In order to recover the payments made by the Children's Maintenance Fund, the administration of the Fund initiates pre-trial investigations into criminal liability of the debtor for avoidance to pay child maintenance funds according to the judgement delivered by the court or contract of maintenance of the child (children) approved by the court. In 2012, a total of 562 requests for initiating a pre-trial investigation were drawn up and filed to law enforcement authorities and 286 pre-trial investigations were initiated in 2012. In 2012, a total of 434 pre-trial investigations were initiated. 70 pre-trial investigations were accomplished and the cases were referred for adjudication before court, 20 pre-trial investigations were accomplished by delivering a criminal order. The administration of the Fund received 33 court judgements of conviction.

In 2012, 763 judgement concerning recovery of the payments made from the Children's Maintenance Fund from the debtors (hereinafter referred to as the “judgements”) the copies of which were sent to the debtors were drawn up. In 2012, 181 debtors were notified of the delivered judgements and consequences thereof through publication in the Official Gazette Valstybės žinios. In 2012, a total of 722 judgements were delivered to bailiffs for enforcement.
5.3. 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. Youth policy is inter-institutional, covering many areas listed in Article 4 of the Law on Youth Policy Framework of the Republic of Lithuania\(^79\); therefore, in order to ensure effective implementation of youth policy, inter-institutional and inter-sectorial cooperation is of major importance.

For the years 2012–2016 the Government of the Republic of Lithuania\(^80\) approved the following priority measures in the area of youth policy:

1. to provide measures and actions for increasing youth employment and promotion of entrepreneurship;
2. to define the youth work and the principles of performance thereof, improve the activities and functions of the institutions engaged in the area of youth;
3. to enhance youth unemployment prevention: develop and improve vocational orientation and counselling, familiarise youngsters with the contemporary society social and economic development trends and employment possibilities.

In pursuance of implementation of the afore-mentioned measures, the Employment Promotion Strategy for 2014–2020, the Plan of Measures for 2014–2016 of the National Youth Policy Development Programme for 2011–2019 are being drawn up and it has been planned to improve legal regulation of youth policy (i.e. the draft Law Amending the Law on Youth Policy Framework is being drawn up).

Implementation of the National Youth Policy Development Programme for 2011–2019\(^81\) is important on the national level. The National Youth Policy Development Programme for 2011–2019 approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania sets out the priorities, objectives, directions of activity of the youth policy, aims of the state and society for 2011–2019. This strategic youth policy instrument, focused on the creation of favourable conditions, respecting the needs of youth, for an active young citizen, lays down the provisions directly targeted at the development of youth policy, seeking to create the conditions for a young person to become an active and motivated citizen, capable of creating a valuable life. In 2012–2013, the Plan of Measures 2011–2013 for the Implementation of the National Youth Policy Development Programme for 2011–2019\(^82\) is being implemented (currently, the Plan of Measures for 2014–2016 is being drafted). The new plan of measures shall set out the measures for increasing the accessibility of subsidised housing for young people, support for activities and initiatives of youth non-governmental organisations, development of open work with youth, strengthening of youth policy in regions, acquisition of youth mobility experience, improvement of the programmes for summer resting for youth, monitoring of youth situation, promotion of healthy lifestyle, reconciliation of family and work commitments. In order to ensure youth policy coordination, there will be provided measures helping to promote cooperation between youth and public organisations, more active involvement of youth in civil and political life etc.

In the light of the recommendations of the European Commission, it is planned to establish the system of employment guarantees for youth which would ensure that any youngster who has not yet attained 25 years and is able and willing to work received a job or a possibility for continuous education through apprenticeship or placement for the purposes of acquisition of professional skills in the workplace within four months after completion of formal education or becoming unemployed.


5.3.1. NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY IN 2012–2013

The process of shaping and implementation of youth policy in 2012–2013 sought to create favourable conditions for youth to become an active part of society and promote youth socialisation processes. Among the key priorities of youth policy were the following: solving youth employment problems and informing youth on relevant issues; promoting youth participation in projects on both national and regional levels; seeking to involve young people with fewer opportunities.

In 2012, one of the major measures of the Plan of Measures for 2011–2013 of the National Youth Policy Development Programme for 2011–2019 is development of youth work. Youth work comprises social, informational, educational, cultural or any other kind of activities implemented together with young people or their groups, based on their needs, seeking to involve and integrate a young person in social environment and empower him to consciously and actively participate in private and social life.

In 2012 and at the beginning of 2013 the following legislation aimed at regulation of work with youth was approved: the Description of the Activities of Open Youth Centres and the Description of the Activities of Youth Workers.

As a result of implementation of the measure of the National Youth Policy Development Programme for 2011–2019, namely development of the activities of open youth centres and spaces, in 2012–2013, the activity programmes aimed at ensuring successful functioning of open youth centres and spaces and involving young people in acceptable and meaningful activities in a youth-friendly environment were financed under the tenders for financing activity programmes of open youth centres and the tenders for financing activity programmes of open youth spaces.

### Financing of programmes of open youth centres and open youth spaces in 2010–2013

![Bar chart showing the number of financed open youth centres and spaces and funds allocated from 2010 to 2013.](image)

**Data of the Department of Youth Affairs**

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In 2012, with a view to strengthening youth organisations and encouraging young people to participate in social life as well as be active and aware Lithuanian citizens, national and regional youth structures and youth organisations were reinforced: 37 programmes and projects targeted at the strengthening of youth organisations were financed. In 2012, 35,511 young persons participated in the implemented programmes and projects. In general, 9.2 percent of young persons participated in the measures meant for youth.

It is important to note that at the beginning of 2013 there was approved the National Programme for Voluntary Activities of Youth\(^{85}\) aimed at creating conditions for young people to participate in voluntary activities and acquire personal, social, professional competences and work experience, thus, assisting them to choose a profession, reintegrate into the formal education system and/or prepare for influx into the labour market. The afore-mentioned programme will allow and help the youth who have less possibilities to participate in public and civil life; thus, acquiring skills which are necessary for the labour market.

Furthermore, there was approved the Programme for Intensive Long-Term Assistance for Young People Who Are Not in Education, Employment or Training\(^{86}\) aimed at promoting integration of socially excluded youth into the labour market and/or education system providing services of social rehabilitation and preparation for employment in the labour market with regard to the experience of non-governmental organisations. In the course of implementation of the programme there will be created and implemented the system of long-term intensive assistance of social rehabilitation and preparation for employment in the labour market encouraging integration into the labour market and/or education system, helping to increase the self-esteem and responsibility of youngsters, restore, develop and maintain social and independent life skills. Efforts will be made to increase accessibility of services for youth in their residential environment and inclusion of socially excluded youth in provision of mobile services for young people; improve the quality of the rendered services, develop specialists’ competences in the area of youth work; organise and maintain cooperation among the state, local municipal authorities, non-governmental organisations and business entities in organising of the integration of youth into the labour market and/or education system.

5.2.2. EUROPEAN UNION PROGRAMME “YOUTH IN ACTION”

The objectives of the European Union (hereinafter referred to as the “EU”) programme “Youth in Action” are the following: to promote young people’s active citizenship in general and their European citizenship in particular; to develop solidarity and promote tolerance among young people; to foster mutual understanding between young people in different countries; to contribute to developing the quality of support systems for youth activities; and to promote European cooperation in the youth field.

As compared with other initiatives on the national level, the EU programme “Youth in Action” has a considerable added value and is perceived by young people as one of the essential funding sources for youth projects. In 2012, while implementing the Youth in Action programme, 167 projects were funded, which were targeted at promoting young people’s active citizenship, developing solidarity and promoting tolerance among young people, involving young people with fewer opportunities in order to avoid social exclusion. 4,708 young people directly participated in the Youth in Action programme in 2012.


The information portal of a network coordinated by the Lithuanian Youth Council (www.eurodesk.lt), which provides information about the situation of young people in Europe, youth activities, problems and their solutions has been further developed. In 2012, the portal was visited by more than 500 thous. unique visitors.

### 5.3.3. SHORT-TERM PRIORITIES AT THE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS

Development of open youth centres and spaces, increasing of youth employment in regions as well as development and strengthening of regional youth policy have been planned. Efforts have been put to promote creativeness and innovation of youth. Support for the activities of community organisations and non-governmental organisations (including youth organisations and organisations working with youth) should be provided through regional measures by dealing with local economic, social issues, investments to the public spaces, residential environment sport and other community infrastructure in cities, towns and rural locations which is particularly important for social, physical and cultural progress of youth. Emphasis has been put on youth work, inter-sectorial nature of youth policy and cooperation has been strengthened.

In pursuance of creating conditions for meaningful youth employment, development of open youth centres and spaces has been continued, it has been foreseen that every municipality must have at least one open youth centre or space. It is to be noted that in the course of implementation of the programme of mechanisms of Norway and the European Economic Area (hereinafter referred to as the “EEA”) titled “Risk Group Children and Youth” funds and support are allocated for development of open youth centres and spaces in municipalities. The EEA funds will be used for development of the activities of open youth centres, renovation of the premises of already exiting open youth centres and establishment of new centres. When establishing children day centres and open youth spaces the EEA fund will be used for development of activities and infrastructure.
In pursuance of strengthening the implementation and coordination of regional youth policy, the legislation governing this will be reviewed. Efforts have been made to reinforce cooperation with the municipal coordinators of youth affairs. Today, the main functions of the municipal coordinators of youth affairs are set out in the Model Job Description of Municipal Coordinator of Youth Affairs\(^7\). It is also sought to improve implementation of the regional youth policy by defining particular provisions in the draft Law Amending the Law on Youth Policy Framework, seeking to ensure that the above job would be only for performance of youth policy in the municipality. It has been planned to ensure better cooperation and consistent representation of youth interests in municipalities. Meanwhile, in 2013–2014 it has been planned to improve the job description of the municipal coordinators of youth affairs, monitoring and coordination of activities, and provision of methodological assistance.

5.3.4. PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION IN THE AREA OF YOUTH POLICY

During the period of the presidency the main priority of Lithuania in the field of youth will be *youth not in education, employment or training* (NEETs). In continuation of the work started by Ireland, it is planned to draw up the Council conclusions namely on enhancing the social inclusion of young NEETs in the Youth Working Party during the Lithuanian Presidency period.

During the second half of 2013, the following issues will be highlighted:

1) enhancing the social inclusion of young people, with particular emphasis on young people not in employment, education and training (NEETs),

2) promoting cross-sectoral cooperation as the underlying principle of integral youth policy,

3) exchanging good practices on social inclusion of young people,

4) promoting cooperation in the youth policy field between young people from European Union and Eastern Europe and Caucasus countries.

During the Presidency period it is planned to organise two large events in the area of youth policy:

1. On 9–12 September 2013, the EU Youth Conference and Meeting of Directors General during which such issues as social inclusion of the group of youth NEET, creation of possibilities for youth to actively participate in the labour market, education and training systems and social life within the context of the EU strategy for 2020 were discussed.

2. On 22–25 October 2013, the first Youth Forum within the context of the Third Summit of Eastern Partnership Countries during which such issues as youth work and recognition of non-formal learning and importance thereof to social inclusion, in particular, on the local level will be considered. Furthermore, there will be presented youth work and non-formal learning in the processes of the European and Eastern Partnership and possible development thereof.

5.4. FAMILY POLICY

Family policy includes very different aspects of social policy. First of all, it is related to reconciliation of family and work commitments which covers not only pre-school education development and the issues concerning flexibility of employment relationships and benefits for parents raising children, but also is related to care of elderly people and other issues which are considered in other chapters of the present Social Report on one or another aspect.

Currently the Ministry implements the measure of the Plan of Measures for the Implementation of the National Demographic (Population) Policy Strategy in the Area of Family Welfare 2011–2013, namely, “Financing of the Projects of Non-Governmental Organisations Working in the Area of Family Welfare”. Implementation of the afore-mentioned projects aims at promoting establishment of an independent and viable family based on mutual assistance and responsibility of family members. Financing of the projects is of continuous nature, i.e. for 2012–2013. In 2012, more than 500 persons worked with implementation of the projects. 12 non-governmental organisations (hereinafter referred to as the “NGO”) carried out activities in Vilnius, 6 – in Kaunas, 1 – in Šiauliai, 1 – in Naujoji Akmenė, 1 – in Klaipėda, 1 – in Alytus. In 2012, there were organised more than 2 thous. different profile events in which participated around 13 thous. persons.

In 2013, the amount of LTL 450 thous. was allocated for financing the NGO projects from the state budget. 22 organisations also had other sources of financing for the projects. The total amount of funding was around LTL 470 thous. In 2013, the same financing as in 2012 was allocated for the continued activities of 22 NGOs.

As regards other activities carried out in implementation of the mentioned plan of measures in the area of family welfare 2011–2013, building of mobile teams of specialists, i.e. Social Assistance Services, should be mentioned. Furthermore, the respective ministries carried out such activities as business promotion, pre-school education development, informal education, development of psychological and social services for families and other activities.

A festival of families in Vazgaikiemis has become a tradition. This event is attended by several thousand families as well as representatives of community organisations. Family festivals help to keep a favourable public attitude towards family, children raising, attention of the state to the issues which are relevant to family, mutual family assistance, alliance, sharing best practice of families. In 2013, at the festival organised on the 1st of June, the Children's Defence Day, efforts were made to address the importance of foster care and adoption and possibilities for foster care and adoption and promote potential foster parents and adoptive parents to assume such meaningful obligations.

Reducing of domestic violence is still a relevant complex social policy issue. In 2012, implementation of the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence was continued and the legislation implementing the law was drafted.

In 2012, in all municipalities of Lithuania specialised assistance centres (hereinafter referred to as the "SAC") started providing specialised complex assistance to the victims of domestic violence. After having received a report of victim of domestic violence from police officers the above centres contact the victim and provide her/him with specialised complex (i.e. legal, psychological, medical etc.) assistance.

There was announced a tender for the development of the SAC activities in which there were selected nine applicants representing non-governmental organisations which in cooperation with partners render assistance in sixteen specialised assistance centres in all municipalities of Lithuania.

In 2012, the amount of LTL 579.6 thous., in 2013 – LTL 920 thous., was allocated from the state budget for performance of the functions of the SAC specialised complex assistance. During the first year of implementation of the law the SAC received from police information on 1.5 thous. cases of violence and offered assistance to the victims of violence. During the first quarter of 2013, 1,194 victims of domestic violence were registers including 808 cases of violence (68 percent) reported by the police and 386 cases (32 percent) when persons themselves applied for assistance.
In pursuance of providing complex assistance to women who are victims of violence, rendering assistance to perpetrators of violence, conducting prevention of violence against women and supporting the activities of NGOs, in 2012 the Ministry organised a tender for selection of projects where financing was allocated for 27 projects of the NGOs (the allocated amount was LTL 700 thous.).

In support of the NGO projects, the following activities were financed: assistance to the victim of violence (help in overcoming a crisis, information and consultation on the type and place of assistance which may be received by the victim of violence, mediation and representation in other institutions, provided psychological, legal assistance), assistance in restoring interpersonal relationships with the closest people, educational and other activities aimed at abandonment of the violent behaviour by the perpetrators of violence. Women organisations implemented public education measures (conferences, seminars, round table discussions, information campaigns), involved volunteers, organised trainings and engagements for them, participants of the trainings were familiarised with the ways of assistance for women who experienced violence and the basics of consultation of victims.

The Law on Protection against Domestic Violence provided for drafting of the long-term state programme for provision of assistance and financing. In the light of the above, the relevant aims and objectives of the National Strategy on Combating Violence against Women (efficient prevention of domestic violence, provision of complex assistance to victims of violence, aspects of legal regulation etc.) have been transposed to the draft National Programme for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Provision of Assistance to Victims for 2013-2020 (hereinafter referred to as the "Programme") drawn up by the working group set up by the Minister of Social Security and Labour.

The strategic goal of the above Programme is reducing the level of domestic violence on the state level through violence prevention, provision of complex assistance to victims of domestic violence and their family members and ensuring of cooperation among state institutions, NGOs, other organisations, institutions and society.

Ageing population

In Lithuania, like in other European Union countries and a majority of countries throughout the globe there takes place the population ageing process. This is a long-term demographic trend which asserts in the growing number of elderly population having various social and economic consequences which must be taken into consideration when planning the national development, taking advantage of the possibilities provided by such changes and meeting with the raised challenges.

The situation in Lithuania is illustrated by the numbers published by the Department of Statistics in September 2012: at the beginning of 2012 in Lithuania there lived 543.3 thous. 65 year old and older people or 18.1 percent of all population of the country. As compared with 2001, their number increased by 58.7 thous. (12.1 percent) and during this period the total number of residents decreased by 479.2 thous. (13.7 percent). The number of 80 year old and older persons particularly increased. At the beginning of 2012, there were 137.9 thous. residents of such age or 57.9 thous. (72.4 percent) more than in 2001, they made 25.4 percent (in 2001 – 16.5 percent) of all elderly people (65 year old and older people).

As compared with all residents, a majority of 65 year old and older people lived in Ignalina District (25.8 percent), Anykščiai District (25.2 percent) and Lazdijai District (24.0 percent), the minor part of 65 year old and older people – in Visaginas District (11.7 percent), Neringa District (13.4 percent), Vilnius District (13.4 percent) and Klaipėda District (14.7 percent) municipalities. During the recent eleven years the percentage of 65 year old and older people (as compared with the total population) increased in all municipalities (least – Kalvarija, Alytus and Vilnius Districts).

At the beginning of 2012, on average, 97 elderly people fell per 100 children (at the beginning of 2001 – 57) in the country. In every second municipality the number of 65 year old and older people exceeded the number of children younger than 18 years.
The number of 65 year old and older women was equal to 360 thous., men – 183.3 thous, i.e. the number of women of such age was 2 times higher than the number of men of such age.

At the beginning of 2012, in 350.9 thous. (64.6 percent) of 65 year old and elder people lived in the city and 192.4 thous. (35.4 percent) – in the countryside. They made one sixth of all residents in the city (17.5 percent) and one fifth of the residents (19.3 percent) in the countryside.

In pursuance of considering the challenges in relation to the ageing population on the global of the whole European Union, putting forward proposals for possible ways of overcoming thereof, better realising the contribution of elderly people to the public development and promoting solidarity of generations, by the decision of the European Parliament and the Council the year 2012 has been announced the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations. In Lithuania the National Programme on the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations was implemented. The aims of the Programme: to bring the problems associated with demographic ageing and intergenerational solidarity to the attention of the public and to concentrate the efforts of all stakeholders on improving the status of the elderly people and strengthening intergenerational solidarity. More than one thousand events (meetings, exhibitions, conferences etc.) meant for different aspects of active ageing and solidarity between generations took place, a seminar on participation of elderly people in the labour market was organised. The European Year helped to make non-governmental organisations more concentrated: more than 400 representatives of elderly people and youth organisations who considered cooperation possibilities participated in the European Seniorforce Day which took place in October.

In cooperation with educational institutions, non-governmental organisations, there was conducted the analysis of the environment (legal, social, cultural, educational), which determines the participation of elderly people in the labour market and various services provided to elderly people. The conclusions of the above analysis state that, with regard to demographic, social, cultural environment changes, it is necessary to draft a new strategic document for dealing with the issues of ageing population in Lithuania. The goal of the new strategic document should be contribution to the progress in all areas in relation to ageing population. When drawing up the said strategic document it is important to evaluate the achieved progress, take into account the best practice accumulated during the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations, take advantage of review and evaluation of the conclusions put forward in the Regional Implementation Strategy on the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

When drafting the new strategic document it is important to consider that successful social development of a person during his whole life is of significance in dealing with the issue of ageing population. Successful solution of the issue of ageing population is possible only in case of close cooperation among all participants of the process: the elderly people themselves, central and local government, social partners, non-governmental organisations, education communities etc.

In order to make gender equality a reality, already the third National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2010–201488 (hereinafter referred to as the “Programme”) and the Plan of Implementing Measures89 is being consistently implemented. In 2012, 49 measures of the Programme aiming at gender equality in the areas of employment, education and science, decision-making, cooperation at the European Union and international level, national defence, health care, environmental protection, development of the mechanisms and methods of implementation of equal opportunities for women and men have been implemented.

All ministries are responsible for the implementation of the Programme. A majority of measures are of continuous nature, achievement of impact requires longer period; thus, general extensive comparative evaluation of the results and impact of implementation of the Programme will be conducted in 2014.

In 2012, motivation improvement trainings were organised for women and men returning back to the labour market after child care leave, seminars for employers on becoming a family-friendly workplace were arranged. Specialist consultations on the business starting condition and development of business were provided to the persons willing to establish their own business. Projects for development of small business in the rural areas were supported. Discussions on the role of social partners in seeking for gender equality in the labour market were organised for the parties concerned. Recommendations for evaluation of equal opportunities for women and men researchers were drawn up for education and science institutions. In 2012, the qualification of public servants and employees working under employment contracts in the area of gender equality was improved, statistical information according to gender is drawn up and published, other specific measures for implementation of gender equality in all areas are implemented.

Implementation of the Programme is coordinated by the Commission on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men\(^{90}\). During the second quarter of 2012 and the first quarter of 2013 three sittings of the Commission on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men were held in order to consider the implementation of the measures of the Programme and other issues.

### 6.1.1. ACHIEVED CHANGES

In 2012, the employment rate of women aged 15–64 was equal to 61.9 percent and, as compared with 2011, increased by 1.7 percentage points. Employment rate of men was equal to 62.5 percent and increased by 2.1 percentage points. In 2012, unemployment rate of women was lower than unemployment rate of men and made 11.5 percent (men – 15.1 percent). As compared with 2011, the unemployment rate of women fell down by 1.4 percentage points (men – 2.6 percentage points). According to the indicators of gap in employment rate of women and men, Lithuania ranks first in the EU.

Following the data laid down in the European Commission’s (hereinafter referred to as the “EC”) Report on Progress on Equality between Women and Men in 2012\(^{91}\), the gender pay gap in Lithuania consistently decreases: from 22.6 percent in 2007 to 11.9 percent in 2011 m. (since 2010 it fell down by 2.7 percentage points). In Lithuania, gender pay gap is lower than the EU average gender pay gap which in 2011 was equal to 16.2 percent. The greatest gap was in Estonia (27.3 percent), Germany (22.2 percent) and Austria (23.7 percent); the lowest gap was in Slovenia (2.3 percent), Poland (4.5 percent), Italy (5.8 percent).

In 2012, there were 8 percent of women who were the managers of the largest business enterprises (the EU average – 3 percent).\(^{92}\) According to the number of women as the members of the management boards of the largest companies (18 percent) Lithuania outruns the EU average (16 percent).\(^{93}\) As compared with 2010, in Lithuania the number of women in the management boards increased by 4.7 percentage points.

More women were elected to the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania: in 2012, 33 women and 106 men were elected to the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania\(^{94}\). The percentage of women elected to the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania increased by 6 percent: from 18 percent in 2008 to 24 percent in 2012.\(^{95}\)

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\(^{94}\) Data of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania

\(^{95}\) Data of the Lithuanian Department of Statistics
6.2. PREPARATION FOR THE LITHUANIAN PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EU IN THE AREA OF EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN

The priority of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU in the area of equality between women and men is increasing the effectiveness of institutional mechanisms with a view to achieving de facto gender equality in a more rapid manner, thus, contributing to implementation of the objectives set out in the “Europe 2020” Strategy. Lithuania will also continue negotiations on the proposal of the Commission on the draft of the so-called directive on gender balance. The Trio Presidency, namely Ireland, Lithuania and the Republic of Greece (hereinafter referred to as the “TRIO”) give priority to the economic gender equality aspects as established in the TRIO Programme.

On 30 April 2013 in Dublin the Minister of Social Security and Labour and the ministers of Ireland and Greece responsible for gender equality signed the TRIO Declaration on Equality between Women and Men. The declaration is a political document aimed at ensuring the importance and visibility of the issues concerning equality between women and men and specifying the priorities and particular actions of the TRIO Presidency in the area of gender equality.

The TRIO Declaration establishes the following activities of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU:

1. Lithuania will prepare Council Conclusions addressing the changes of institutional mechanisms in the EU Member States since 2006 including changes determined by the economic crisis and the impact of reforms stipulated by such changes on institutional mechanisms. The conclusions of the Council will present evaluation of the indicators of the critical area of Beijing Platform for Action “Institutional Mechanisms” established in the conclusions of the Council during the Finish Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2006 and compliance with the conclusions. The Member States will be offered actions to raise the effectiveness of the institutional mechanisms in order to achieve progress in the area of equality between women and men in a more rapid manner; thus, contributing to implementation of the objectives of the strategy “Europe 2020”.

2. On 13 September 2013, in Vilnius, in the premises of the European Institute for Gender Equality, a high level conference which provisionally is titled “Effectiveness of Institutional Mechanisms for de facto Gender Equality as a Contribution to reaching Europe 2020 targets”.

3. On 11-12 September 2013 the meeting of the High-Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming and a meeting of the representatives of the TRIO (IE, LT, GR) and the European Commission will be held in Vilnius.

4. Negotiations over the proposal of the European Commission on the so-called directive on gender balance which started during the period of the Irish Presidency will be continued. During the Lithuanian Presidency efforts will be made in seeking for progress in negotiations, looking for compromise solutions acceptable to the Member States.

In April 2013 the Minister of Social Security and Labour presented the priorities of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU and the future activities to the European Parliament Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality (EP FEMM) which visited Lithuania with a view to finding out how to ensure women’s rights and deal with the issues concerning gender equality.

97 http://www.socmin.lt/get_file.php?file=YjlhYTBHJTJCWVYoXU1UwOGxmb ZiR3cyYWZrcDNHeiV2S25xZHBlR3JaWThwdnpHek5hchH-BqcUdlVnhKZOlpwcGpRazU2V2E1NIV5SmR3Ylpo0bmFKs1N5RzNKbTV5WGIXZUhsYSuQljZnSjlabXNobW5tQ2Z5YWtQLd4bkd1Ylpw-cHbaUE5aczFxzd21alpsV1pcE9YbVltTV241ZyU2RA==
6.3. FULFILMENT OF THE EU AND INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS

During the period in question two meetings of the High Level Working Group on Gender Mainstreaming were held. The first meeting\textsuperscript{98} focused on the continuity of the Beijing Platform for Action: Ireland and Lithuania presented the priority topics of their future presidencies in the area of equality between women and men. The results of the Danish Presidency were presented (approved conclusions of the Council: concerning equality in education and women and environment protection). The representative of the EC considered the Report on Progress on Equality between Women and Men. During the second meeting\textsuperscript{99} the continuity of implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action also was addressed: indicators of the area “Women and Media”, areas “Institutional Mechanisms” and “Women and Economy”. During the meeting the most recent information on the changes in the area of equality between women and men in the Member States was shared, implementation of the European Pact for Gender Equality in the programmes of the Irish, Lithuanian and Greek Presidencies, strategic approach towards promotion of gender equality and gender mainstreaming on the national and EU levels, the PROGRESS programme, have been discussed.

During the period of 2012–2013, two meetings of the Advisory Committees on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men of the European Commission were held, during which the opinion on gender equality gaps in payment of pensions “How to Reduce the Gap in Pensions of Women and Men” drafted by the EC, priorities and activities of the TRIO Presidency were presented, a report on the European Year of Citizenship (2013) was delivered etc.

During the meetings of the Working Group on Social Issues of the Council negotiations over the draft Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on Improving the Gender Balance among Non-Executive Directors of Companies Listed on Stock Exchanges and Related Measures were conducted. The draft conclusions of the Council “Women and Media” were negotiated.

In the 57\textsuperscript{th} Session of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) meant for the negotiation of the programmes and measures being implemented, with a view to reducing violence against women and girls and ensuring prevention of such violence, a report on the actions of Lithuania in this area was delivered by the Chancellor of the Ministry.

In 2012, a representative of Lithuania was elected to the Commission for Gender Equality of the Council of Europe (hereinafter referred to as the “CoE”). During the period of 2012–2013, two meetings of the Commission (in November and April) were held. During the meetings the priorities of the future Strategy for Gender Equality of the Council of Europe, the study and draft recommendations “Women’s Access to Justice”, coordination of cooperation with other CoE institutions responsible for gender equality (national contact representatives of the Commission for Gender Equality and rapporteurs of all other committees on gender equality) were negotiated.

In 2012–2013, a lot of events for different aspects of equality between women and men were held. For example, on 29-30 April 2013 in Dublin a conference for consideration of the issues concerning employment and business of women was organized (the Minister and the accompanying delegation participated in the conference). In November 2012 the Cypriot Presidency of the Council of the EU organised a tripartite conference for dealing with the issues concerning gender pay gap (the Vice-Minister Audrius Bitinas participated in it). The issues regarding employment of women and reconciliation of family and work commitments were discussed in the meeting of the ministers in charge of gender equality which took place in Warsaw in September 2012, in the round table discussion organised by the Women’s Congress of Poland. The examples of the good practice of Lithuania in delivering trainings on equality between women and men were presented to the representatives of the EU Member States and independent experts in the seminar on exchange of good practice in the area of equality of women and men held in Lisbon, Portugal.

\textsuperscript{98} Meeting of the High Level Working Group on Gender Mainstreaming. Nicosia, Cyprus, 18-19 September 2012

\textsuperscript{99} Meeting of the High Level Working Group on Gender Mainstreaming. Dublin, Ireland, 10-11 January 2013
7.1. SUPPORT FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION STRUCTURAL FUNDS

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

The support allocated to Lithuania from the European Union (hereinafter referred to as the “EU”) Structural Funds provides possibilities for achievement of the national long-term goal, namely, ensuring continuous growth of the national economy and reduction of economic development disparities between the Lithuanian average and the EU average. To this end, efforts have been made to improve the indicators of growth of the gross domestic product (GDP) in the Lithuanian economy and create more new better jobs.

In implementation of the Priority 1 “High Quality Employment and Social Inclusion” (hereinafter referred to as the “Priority 1”) of the Operational Programme for the Development of Human Resources for 2007–2013 (hereinafter referred to as the “OPDHR”) administered by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter referred to as the “Ministry”), the following tasks were sought:

- task 1 – to improve adaptability of workers and enterprises to the needs of the market;
- task 2 – to promote employment and participation of people in the labour market
- task 3 – enhance social inclusion.

To achieve the above tasks, 20 measures are being implemented including 4 (new) measures the implementation of which was commenced in 2012–2013: “Subsidies for Entrepreneurship Promotion”, “Support for the First Job”, “Reconciliation of Family and Work Commitments: Development of Integral Assistance” and “Development of Competences of Employees of Social Services Institutions”.

7.1.1.1. Increase of Youth Employment

Recently, i.e. since 2011, in Lithuania the employment rate has constantly increased and in 2012 it was equal to 68.7 percent (in a group of persons aged 20–64); nevertheless, unemployment remained high and in 2012 the unemployment rate in Lithuania was equal to 13.2 percent. In recent years, the youth unemployment rate was one of the highest in the EU. In 2012, the youth unemployment rate in Lithuania was 26.4 percent (among persons aged 15–24). During the period of 2014–2020, the National Progress Programme (hereinafter referred to as the “NPP”) aims at achieving that in 2020 this indicator did not exceed 16 percent.

In the NPP youth is distinguished as a separate social group and horizontal principle; therefore, in 2012–2013 the funds of the European Social Fund (hereinafter referred to as the “ESF”) were allocated for the programmes for increase of employment of residents, in particular, youth employment.

In pursuance of increasing youth employment, in 2012 there was amended Annex to the OPDHR redistributing funds among the measures of Priority 1 and allocating them for implementation of the measure “Integration of Job-seekers into the Labour Market”. The projects under this measure are successfully implemented by the Lithuanian Labour Exchange under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (hereinafter referred to as the “Lithuanian Labour Exchange”).

On 1 August 2012, implementation of the project “Increase of Youth Employment” aimed at helping youth without work experience to acquire missing skills directly in the workplace and integrate into the labour market was commenced. This is a continuation of the project “Be Active in the Labour Market” which was accomplished at the beginning of 2012 and delivered good results of implementation of which more than 6 thous. young unemployed below 29 years of age were employed and the achieved employment efficiency was even 83 percent. The implemented supported employment measures (support for acquisition of working skills and employment through subsidies) encourage employers to employ youth without work experience. Till 1 May 2013, over 5 thous. young unemployed were involved in the project. The project the value of which amounts to LTL 20 million will be carried out till 31 August 2013.

Youth below 29 years of age also participate in other projects implemented by the Lithuanian Labour Exchange, for example, the problem of unskilled youth is dealt with through implementation of the project commenced in 2011 “Promotion of Integration into the Labour Market” during which it is planned to engage 8.5 thous. unemployed including at least 6,000 young unemployed below 29 years of age in the vocational training.

Till 1 May 2013 already nearly 4,400 young unemployed were included in the training where they acquired or would acquire professions in demand in the labour market. More than LTL 50 million of the EU funds will be allocated for vocational training of the unemployed under the above project. Implementation of this project is planned till 30 November 2013.

The afore-mentioned projects are not the last projects of the EU structural assistance period 2007–2013 meant for integration of jobseekers into the labour market. In July 2013 there will be commenced implementation of a new project amounting to LTL 31.5 million the priority groups under which, in addition to youth, will be long-term unemployed persons and persons facing long-term unemployment. By implementation of the project 6,450 persons will participate in the measures of support for acquisition of working skills, employment through subsidies. It has been planned that upon completion of the project activities, 50 percent of participants will be employed within the period of 6 months.

It is to be noted that by 6 May 2013 minutes of the meeting No 30 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania there were approved regulations on allocation of additional funds (more than LTL 60.5 thous.) from the ESF funds for Priority 1 of the OPDHR including LTL 51.56 million which will be used for active labour market policy measures in which will participate youth below 29 years of age, long-term unemployed persons and persons subject to long-term unemployment. In 2014, using the funds from the above EU funds 8.3 thous. unemployed will participate in the measures of support for acquisition of working skills, employment through subsidies, vocational training.
Youth employment is promoted in several directions.

In 2013, there was approved new Measure 100 “Promotion and Employment and Motivation of Youth” of Priority 1 of the OPDHR.

The afore-mentioned measure aims at motivating socially vulnerable young people to integrate into the labour market and/or formal education system: provision of personal, social, professional competences and creation of conditions for development of their social employment and professional activity. Inclusion of young people into voluntary activities will create conditions not only for promoting their citizenship, enhancing their active participation in public activities will create possibilities for self-expression and at the same time provide with additional possibilities to acquire knowledge, skills facilitating and accelerating integration into the labour market and it is expected that it will open wide paths for employment. The amount of LTL 8 million was allocated for implementation of the measure. The projects under the above measure will be implemented by the Department of Youth Affairs under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and the Lithuanian Labour Exchange.

At the end of 2012, the new measure “Support for the First Job” was launched with the task to increase youth employment by creating additional financial incentives for employers to employ youth. In implementation of the measure support is granted for compensation of a part of wage of the persons aged 16–29 who was employed for the first time and have never worked under employment contract for the period lasting not longer than 12 calendar months. For the employer employing such young person a part of wages paid to the youngster will be compensated. The funds amounting to LTL 32 million from the EU funds have been provided for the above initiative. Over 1,100 enterprises employing more than 6,500 youngsters starting their work activities filed applications for compensation of a part of wages as of the date of the call for proposals.

In pursuance of promoting entrepreneurship and self-employment, in the activities of the Entrepreneurship Promotion Fund major focus has been made on young persons, unemployed, disabled, elderly people. As regards the use of funds of the above fund, better financing conditions for very small and small enterprises, natural entities to start their business and social enterprises to develop their own business have been created. Since 2010, 3.5 thous. persons including 2,150 youth till 29 years, older than 50 years, unemployed, disabled participated in the trainings on entrepreneurship organised by the Entrepreneurship Promotion Fund.

Since 2010 474 loans were granted including 152 loans granted to the persons belonging to the priority group, namely youth below 29 years of age. 941 new jobs were created from the beginning of implementation of the measure (2010) and youth till 29 years created 400 new jobs.

During the period from 1 June 2012 to 1 May 2013, 180 persons participated in the trainings, 104 loans were granted, and 749 new jobs were created.
7.1.1.2. Other Measures of Priority 1 of the OPDHR

With a view to creating and developing high quality integral assistance (social care and nursing) in the houses for the disabled, elderly people and consulting assistance to family members taking care of their close people, in 2012 implementation of the new measure “Reconciliation of Work and Family Commitments: Development of Integral Assistance” was commenced.

In May 2013, there was commenced implementation of pilot projects in 20 municipalities: Anykščiai, Biržai, Kaunas, Kėdainiai, Pasvalys, Radižiai, Šiauliai, Šilutė, Tauragė, Telšiai, Trakai, Ukmergė, Vilnius Counties, Alytus, Klaipėda, Šiauliai, Visaginas, Vilnius Cities and Elektrėnai Municipalities. The total value of the projects is over LTL 17.45 million from the ESF.

In the course of implementation of the projects, high quality services in social care and nursing houses will receive 760 disabled and elderly persons and consulting assistance – 810 families taking care of such people. 67 mobile teams will be set up, 299 nurses, assistant nurses and rehabilitation specialists will be employed and in cooperation with social workers, their assistants they will provide integral assistance (social care and nursing services) for disabled and elderly people. Training for social care and nursing employees will be conducted, technical equipment and transport for provision of integral assistance will be purchased.

In order to ensure the quality of the services of rehabilitation and reintegration into society and accessibility to persons addicted to psychoactive substances, at the end of 2013 implementation of the new measure “Psychological and Social Rehabilitation of Persons who Suffer from Addiction to Psychoactive Substances” will be started. The executor of the measure implemented by means of state project planning will be the Drug, Tobacco and Alcohol Control Department which will coordinate provision of psychological rehabilitation services to persons addicted to psychoactive substances.

The funds of the ESF amounting to LTL 10 million were allocated for implementation of this measure which are to be used for financing the following main areas of activity: 1) psychological and social rehabilitation of persons suffered from addiction to psychoactive substances by providing short-term social care services; 2) supplementing of psychological and social rehabilitation database and updating of the monitoring system, training of employees in relation to installation and use of the updated monitoring system.

The Ministry has also continued implementation of other measures under the OPDHR.

In September 2012, there was announced the second call for proposals according to the measure “Development of Human Resources in Enterprises” of Priority 1 of the OPDHR. With regard to the available funds, there was made a decision on allocation of financing for 63 projects (amounting to LTL 37.1 million). It is planned to assume more obligations and finance another 21 projects.

The afore-mentioned measure aims at improvement of the qualification, knowledge and skills of employees and managers in enterprises, raising employees’ competences to adapt to the requirements of the enterprise and changes in the labour market.

In March 2013, there was announced the second call for proposals according to the measure “Reduction of Discrimination and Prevention of Social Problems in the Labour Market” of Priority 1 of the OPDHR. The amount of LTL 3.8 million was planned for financing the projects. The projects of the three following areas of activity are to be financed:

- prevention of trafficking in human beings;
- prevention of addition to psychoactive substances;
- promotion of equal opportunities for women and men.
In pursuance of developing social partnership skills of employers, employer organisations and associations thereof, trade unions and alliances thereof, improving collective employment relationships, promoting signing of collective agreements, notifying and educating trade union members and society of the development of social dialogue, in July 2013 there will be announced the second call for proposals under the measure “Promotion of Social Dialogue” under Priority 1 of the OPDHR.

The amount of up to LTL 6 million will be allocated for financing the projects under the above call from the European Social Fund. It will be meant not for associated structures, but for individual employers: enterprises, institutions, organisation seeking to develop social dialogue, sign collective agreements, and establish Safety and Health Committees.

This is of particular importance in regions: there the role of social dialogue and competences are less developed as on the national level. Therefore, priority will be given to the projects strengthening the skills of social partners and cooperation on regional and sectorial levels. The planned applicants of the second call for proposals will be as follows: employers and trade unions representing their employees.

The managers and employees of enterprises, institutions, organisations as well as managers, members and employees of trade unions will participate in trainings on drawing up of collective agreements, tactics of negotiations, conflicts and crisis management, illegal work prevention, introduction of flexible and innovative forms of work, ensuring gender equality at work, occupational safety and health, improvement of work conditions and other issues in relation to improvement of social dialogue skills. There will be conducted actions of promotion of introduction of partnership principles for sharing experience or tapping thereof from foreign partners, round table discussions will be held.

This is the first call of such type in this programming period meant for employers and trade unions representing their employees.

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

The aim of Priority 2 “Quality and Accessibility of Public Services: Health Care, Education and Social Infrastructure” of the Operational Programme for the Promotion of Cohesion (hereinafter referred to as the “OPPC”) is to ensure the accessibility and high quality of the key public health care and education services provided by institutions implementing state employment policy as well as of social services and services for the disabled.

Supported measures and funds allocated for implementation thereof

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supported measures and funds allocated for implementation thereof</th>
<th>Amount allocated from the EU funds, LTL million</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development of the infrastructure of non-institutional social services</td>
<td>153.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of the infrastructure of institutional social services</td>
<td>129.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modernisation of the infrastructure of territorial labour exchanges of the Lithuanian Labour Exchange (implementation of the measure accomplished)</td>
<td>77.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of institutions providing services to the disabled</td>
<td>80.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour
During the reporting period 188 infrastructure development projects under the measures of Priority 2 of the OPPC administered by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour were under implementation (the total amount of funds of the European Regional Development Fund (hereinafter referred to as the “ERDF”) provided for in the contracts for financing and administration of the projects was equal to LTL 426.2 million). The measures under Priority 2 of the OPPC being implemented are intended for the following target groups: adult disabled people, children with disabilities and mental disorders, elderly people, social risk families, social risk adult people, children deprived of parental care, persons with oncologic diseases and their relative, employers and jobseekers and persons seeking for professional career.

The funds of the ERDF allocated for the measures “Development of the Infrastructure of Non-Institutional Social Services”, “Development of the Infrastructure of Institutional Social Services” and “Development of Institutions Providing Services to the Disabled” contributed to improvement of the quality of public services and development thereof in the whole Lithuania. Even 207 objects of provision of social services are being modernised or constructed in the country. It is planned that after completion of implementation of the projects, around 524 thous. persons will receive services; the services will become more accessible and will meet the needs of the beneficiaries to a greater extent.

On 1 May 2013, in implementation of the measures under tasks 3 and 4 of Priority 2, a total of 63 projects were accomplished, 79 objects were constructed, renovated, 1,875 places of provision of services for beneficiaries were created, 308 new jobs were created in the whole country. The number of the projects to be implemented till the end of the reporting period is 126.

### Projects by target groups as on 1 May 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target group</th>
<th>Number of projects</th>
<th>Amount allocated from the EU funds, LTL million</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults with disabilities</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>114.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families at social risk</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>37.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elderly persons</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled children</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults at social risk</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children deprived of parental care</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>29.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutions providing mixed social services</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>133.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employers and jobseekers and persons seeking for professional career</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>73.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour

In 2013, it is planned to start implementing the projects under the activity “The Development of the Infrastructure of Sign-Language Translation Centres” of the measure “Development of Institutions Providing Services to the Disabled, Including Vocational Rehabilitation Services” (the funds amounting up to LTL 5.68 million including LTL 4.77 million from the ERDF were provided for performance of the activity). In the second quarter of 2013, financing was allocated for reconstruction of Šiauliai Sign-Language Translation Office, the projects of reconstruction of Kaunas and Panevėžys Sign-Language Translation Centres were included in the list of state projects. It is planned to equip all reconstructed premises with the necessary equipment and furniture. It is planned that arrangement of the infrastructure of the afore-mentioned centres will result in creation of 16 new jobs, improvement of the quality and expediency of translation services and intensity of communication with the deaf, improvement of the conditions for improvement of the qualification of sign-language translators and ensuring of information confidentiality in communication with the deaf and hearing-impaired persons. It is planned that the above three renovated centres will provide translation services to over 1,300 persons with hearing disabilities per year. The issue of implementation of the project concerning one more centre, namely Klaipėda Sign-Language Translation Centre, remains outstanding. During the reporting period intensive searches for premises which would be suitable for establishment of the centre were conducted. In the near future, after solving the issue of the premises, the centre should file an application for financing from the EU Structural Funds.
7.2. OTHER EU SUPPORT

7.2.1. EUROPEAN GLOBALISATION ADJUSTMENT FUND

The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (hereinafter referred to as the EGF) is aimed at supporting workers dismissed as the result of essential structural changes in the world trade tendencies influenced by the globalisation and the financial and economic crises, when the dismissal of such workers causes significant damage to the regional or local economy. The key aim of the EGF is the development of an individual labour market measure encouraging workers to return back to the labour market as soon as possible.

At the end of 2011 the projects were accomplished, in 2012 the European Commission was provided with the final report and preparation for implementation of the EGF during the new financial framework of 2014–2020 started.

7.2.2. EUROPEAN REFUGEE FUND

The European Refugee Fund is one of the four parts of the General Programme “Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows”. The programme is aimed at gradual introduction of the integrated management of the external borders of the EU and implementation of general asylum and immigration policy directions. Four funds have been established on the bases of the mentioned programme: the External Borders Fund; the European Return Fund; the European Fund for Integration of Third-Country Nationals (hereinafter referred to as the “EIF”); the European Refugee Fund (hereinafter referred to as the “ERF”).

The aim of the ERF is to support and promote efforts of Member States to accept refugees and asylum seekers and to bear responsibility for consequences of their acceptance in line with legal acts of the Communities governing these matters by co-financing the activities specified in Decision No 573/2007/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 May 2007.

Having regard to the strategic guidelines of the European Commission (hereinafter referred to as the “EC”), the Ministry has been implementing two priorities supported by the ERF:

Priority 1: The implementation of principles and measures specified in the Community acquis in the field of asylum, including those related to the integration objectives;

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 practical cooperation with other Member States.

The following activities are financed from the ERF in the course of the implementation of the above priorities: improvement of reception conditions and asylum procedures; integration of foreigners granted asylum in the Republic of Lithuania; abilities of Member States to develop, monitor and assess their asylum policy on their path to practical cooperation between Member States.

Today 8 projects under the ERF Programme for 2011, the total value of which is LTL 2.33 million, have been accomplished, and 5 projects under the ERF Programme for 2012, the total value of which is LTL 2.32 million, have been launched. Project activities under the ERF Programmes for 2011–2012 provide representatives of target groups with services of a social worker, children – with services of a social pedagogue, provision of medicine services is organised as well as the Lithuanian language and IT course are offered, meetings with specialists from hospitals, neighbourhoods and other institutions are arranged. In order to provide information about the country where a person seeks to be granted asylum, cognitive trips and social events together with the local community are organised. Foreigners granted asylum are provided with social, material support; legal, psychological consultations; consultations on issues
related to housing, funds for living and integration into the labour market; trainings on business establishment and management as well as on formation of skills and improvement of qualification are organised; practical employment support is provided. Reports on the country of origin using the information system were drawn up; evaluation of the implementation of the EU asylum legal framework was performed.

According to the ERF Programme for 2011 during the period 2012–2013 in the projects participated more than 200 foreigners granted with asylum and more than 300 asylum seekers.

7.2.3. EUROPEAN FUND FOR THE INTEGRATION OF THIRD-COUNTRY NATIONALS

The aim of the programme of the European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals (EIF) is to support the efforts made by Member States in enabling third-country nationals of different economic, social, religious, linguistic and ethnic backgrounds to fulfil the requirements for residence and to facilitate their integration into the European societies.

Three priorities are established in the programming documents of the EIF:

- Implementation of actions designed to put the “Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the European Union” into practice;
- Establishment and development of indicators and evaluation methodologies to assess progress, adjust policies and measures and to facilitate the co-ordination of comparative learning;
- Policy capacity building, co-ordination and intercultural competence building in Member States across different levels and departments of government.

The above-mentioned priorities are implemented by actions, part of which is dedicated directly for third-country nationals and the other part is designed for the strengthening of public as well as institutional and organisational capacities related to the integration of third-country nationals. For example, the Programme of the EIF supports projects which encourage third-country nationals to learn the Lithuanian language, provide knowledge on the Lithuanian history, culture and conditions of life as well as conditions of learning and employment in Lithuania. The EIF also supports projects aimed at performing studies and research related to the integration of third-country nationals and the assessment of the integration policy development as well as projects which promote cooperation and relations between competent authorities and organisations and the enhancement of intercultural competence.

The support under the programme of EIF is provided in accordance with a multi-annual (2007–2013) and annual programmes drafted by the Ministry and approved by the European Commission. A total amount of up to LTL 25.9 million (out of which LTL 19.6 million are allocated from the EU funds) is allocated for the multi-annual programme implemented through annual programmes. The total value of EIF 2011 annual programme, the implementation of which will be accomplished on 30 June 2013, amounts to LTL 3.45 million, and the value of EIF 2012 annual programme amounts to LTL 3.66 million. In the second half of 2013 there will be announced the call for proposals for the 2013 annual programme in the amount of LTL 3.08 million. During the period of implementation of the EIF multi-annual programme, 71 projects were financed so far. During the period of 2012–2013, more than 500 third-country nationals and more than 700 members of the society of Lithuania including schoolchildren, specialists of municipalities, migration and other institutions participated in the projects financed under EIF 2011 annual programme.
8.1. MEMBERSHIP IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

The present Social Report is made available to you at the extraordinary time during the period of membership of Lithuania in the European Union (hereinafter referred to as the “EU”): since 1 July 2013 our country will hold the Presidency of the Council of the EU for the first time and Lithuania is the first of the Baltic States that holds the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. This implies that the Ministry of Social Security and Labour has become a particular centre of the social affairs of Europe within its competence which to a large extent determines the direction towards which the EU policy in the above area will develop in the next half of the year. Although we will be able to evaluate the results, conclusions and possible lessons of the Lithuanian Presidency only in the next year (which means – in the report of the next year), preparation for this event should be done in a particularly responsible manner.

In December 2012, in cooperation with the partners of the Trio Presidency, i.e. Ireland (which held the Presidency during the first half of 2013), and Greece (which will hold the Presidency during the first half of 2014) there was introduced the common programme of the Trio Presidency (you may familiarise with the programme here). In the area of employment and social policy the afore-mentioned countries undertook to seek for implementation of a set of documents concerning employment presented by the Commission in 2012 (Employment Package) focusing on creation of high quality jobs, structural reforms of the labour markets and investments into the human capital. The Trio Presidency also undertook to continue investments aimed at dealing with the problem of unemployment the solution of which was commenced already during the period of the Cypriot Presidency (the second half of 2012).

First of all, this includes the Youth Employment Package which was introduced on 5 May 2012 by the European Commission (EC) and sets out the recommendations concerning the Youth Guarantee. According to the above initiative which on 28 February 2013 was approved by the EU Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO), since 2014 the Member States will be obliged to ensure that every youngster till 25 years who completed studies or lost job received a job, started or continued studies and underwent industrial apprenticeship or placement within the period of four months. To achieve the above goal, it was planned to allocate the amount of EUR 3 billion from the European Social Fund (ESF). The same amount also will be allocated from the budget of the funds meant namely for youth employment. The initiative “Youth Guarantee” helps to seek for the following three indicators referred to in the strategy “Europe 2020”: 75 percent of people aged 20–64 should have a job, the number of persons dropping school should be lower than 10 percent, at least 20 million people should get out of poverty and social exclusion. It was prepared to discuss on the possibilities for smooth implementation of the said document in the informal EPSCO Council in Vilnius, mainly addressing industrial apprenticeship established in the “Youth Guarantee”
Another initiative on which Lithuania is planned to focus during the period of its Presidency is “Social Investment Package” (SIP). The SIP introduced by the EC on 20 February 2013 consists of the Commission recommendation on investments into children and seven accompanying working documents putting forwards proposals to the Member States on more efficient use of the ESF financing and modernisation of social security systems not necessarily spending more funds for this. It is expected that the package will serve as an important instrument in accelerating the growth of integration referred to in the strategy “Europe 2020”. Pursuant to the SIP, Lithuania has prepared for discussions on the EC recommendations on investments into children.

Furthermore, during the period of preparation for the Presidency the decisions of the European Council (EC) were closely observed. On 14 December 2012, the EC reported on the plans to “deepen” and enhance the EU Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). One of theforeseen areas of the reforms is inclusion of the social dimension into the EMU. This implies that a growing role of the EU in the cooperation and supervision of the policy in the area of social affairs of the Member States is probable in the future. Currently, we are waiting for the plan of measures implementing the above goal from the EMU which, as expected, will be drawn up already before beginning of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU. Our country has planned to continue consultations on social dimensions in the EMU in the informal EPSCO Council in Vilnius.

Furthermore, while preparing for the Presidency Lithuania watched out the EC initiatives on the EU legislation. During the period of the Cypriot Presidency and the Irish Presidency the EPSCO Council agreed on the common attitude towards the directive (14020/12) on the minimum health and safety requirements regarding the exposure of workers to the risks arising from electromagnetic fields. The new directive will replace the directive of 2004 which has not come into force due to the problems in relation to implementation thereof. Furthermore, during the sitting on 6 December 2012 the ministers of the Member States responsible for employment and social affairs discussed the proposal (16540/1/12 REV 1 + 16540/1/12 ADD 1 REV 1) on the directive intended to improve implementation and enforcement of the 1996 directive on the posting of workers for the provision of services. Besides, the ministers also took stock of the progress of work on the proposal (11531/08) for an equal treatment directive aimed at outlawing discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation also in areas outside the labour market. Since in a majority of cases the process of creation and negotiation of the EU legislative and non-legislative initiatives is of continuous nature, during the period of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU drafting of all afore-mentioned directives may be repeatedly addressed if the member of the Trio Presidency Ireland will not have finished the approval works. Furthermore, our country has provided for continuation of other EC legislative initiatives including, first of all, the draft directive on improving the portability of supplementary pension rights.

The process of preparation by Lithuania for the Presidency was closely monitored and assessed on the EU level. In April and May 2013, the members of the European Parliament (EP) Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality and the Committee on Labour and Social Affairs visited Lithuania in the form of on-site visits. During the meetings with the Minister of the Social Security and Labour the Members of the European Parliament evaluated the progress of Lithuania’s preparation for the Presidency and emphasised the issues relevant to their committees. The Minister of Social Security and Labour was asked questions about preparation of our country to accelerate the adoption of the Equal Treatment Directive and implementation of the planned steps concerning “Youth Guarantee”. Furthermore, on 25 January 2013 in Vilnius there were organised high level training for the employees of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and the institutions subordinate to it during which the political adviser of the Secretariat General Marie-Louise Lindorfer, the representatives of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration of Denmark and the Ministry of Human Resources of Hungary shared their experience of the Presidency of the Council of the EU.

The works of preparation for the Presidency were also actively carried out on the technical level: in order to strengthen administrative skills during the Presidency period, specialised English language trainings for the employees of the Ministry and the institutions subordinate to it were organised; besides, there was compiled the so-called Presidency "LOBYNAS" (list) setting out particular persons and their functions in the Presidency, inter-institutional cooperation teams were set up.

During the Presidency period, organisation of high level meetings will require a major part of human resources. In addition to the afore-mentioned informal EPSCO Council in Vilnius (11–12 of July), the Ministry of Social Security and Labour within its competence has planned another 11 major events (information on all event is available on the website of the Ministry). In addition to the latter event, informal joint meetings of the committees on social securities and employment (18–19 of September) should be mentioned. The main function of the above committees is to carry out preparatory works for the activities of the EPSCO Council.

8.1.1. COORDINATION OF THE EU SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEMS

Since the Lithuania’s accession to the European Union the right to the social security of the Lithuanian citizens leaving to another EU Member State for the purposes of living or work has been governed by the EU Regulations on Coordination of social security systems (hereinafter referred to as the “Regulations”). Today the Member States of the EU are subject to Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 of the European Parliament and the Council of 29 April 2004\(^\text{106}\) and Regulation (EC) No 987/2009 of the European Parliament and the Council of 16 September 2009\(^\text{107}\). Information on the main principles of coordination of the social security systems, granting and calculation of social security benefits is available on the website of the European Commission\(^\text{108}\).

On 22 May 2012, the European Parliament and the Council adopted Regulation (EU) No 465/2012\(^\text{109}\) (hereinafter referred to as the “New Regulation”). The essential amendments to the New Regulation are related to certain provisions of the regulations concerning unemployment insurance benefits and determination of the applicable right.

The Regulations provide for transition to electronic exchange of information, i.e. the paper E-forms currently used by competent authorities must be replaced by electronic documents. In the light of the fact that the European Commission has failed to draft the specifications and technical requirements, the transitional period which was set till 1 May 2014, has been extended for unlimited period and competent authorities will be entitled to further use paper E-forms.

In November 2012, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour published the information brochure “Family Benefits in Lithuania and the European Union”\(^\text{110}\). The brochure laid down information on the peculiarities of payment of family benefits relevant to the persons migrating within the European Union.

In 2012, there were held several meetings of the national rapporteurs of the European Union Mutual Information System on Social Protection (hereinafter referred to as the “MISSOC”) during which the changes and reforms in the social support systems, the issues of social security financing, gender equality were considered, the issues of the European children social security and sufficiency of the financial support were discussed.

In July 2012 and January 2013, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour provided the most recent information of the national social security for MISSOC tables. Information on the social security of Lithuania as of 1 July 2012 was published on the website of MISSOC dated May 2013\(^\text{111}\). Information on social security of all countries as of 1 January 2012 will be published on MISSOC website a little bit later.

\(^{108}\) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=26
\(^{111}\) http://www.missoc.org/MISSOC/INFORMATIONBASE/COMPARATIVETABLES/MISSOCDATABASE/comparativeTableSearch.jsp
8.2. MEMBERSHIP IN OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Lithuania actively participates in the activities of such international organisations as the International Labour Organisation, the Council of Europe, the United Nations and etc.

8.2.1. MEMBERSHIP IN THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION

The new ILO Director-General Guy Ryder took office on 1 October 2012. Candidates for the position of ILO Director-General visited Lithuania, introduced their programme and sought for support of our country.112

The 9th European Regional Meeting of the ILO was held in Oslo, Norway, from 8 to 11 April 2013113 on the subject of How to tackle the consequences of the financial crisis. During the meeting there were arranged high level discussions and sessions on different policy shaping issues: economic growth; promotion of creation of quality jobs through effective social dialogue and collective bargaining; tackling youth employment crisis and challenges of the ageing society; promotion of international labour standards and policy coherence in Europe and the Central Asia. Also the Oslo Declaration114 was unanimously adopted by the meeting. At the opening of the event the President of the Republic of Lithuania D. Grybauskaitė introduced Lithuania’s experience in addressing crisis and highlighted three interrelated approaches: austerity, structural reform and stimulus.

During the regional meeting there was organised an informal discussion of ministers on the issues of youth employment crisis. During the above event the Minister of Social Security and Labour A. Pabedinskienė met with the ILO Director-General Guy Ryder and introduced the priorities of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU in the area of social security and labour.

At the beginning of April 2013 Lithuania became the coordinator of the Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia of the ILO, the above functions are performed by the Social Security and Labour Attaché, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Lithuania to the United Nations office and other international organisations in Geneva. The regional coordinators shape the positions of regional group, present and defend them during the meetings seeking for compromises among different interests of the groups.

The 102nd session of the annual International Labour Conference was held in Geneva from 5 to 20 June 2013 on the topics of which were as follows: employment and social protection in the new demographic context of the new demographic situation; sustainable development, decent work and green jobs; strategic objective of the social dialogue under the follow-up to the 2008 ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalisation. The continuous issues also were discussed during the conference.115

On 20 August 2013, the ILO Maritime Labour Convention (hereinafter referred to as the “Convention”) which includes nearly all maritime conventions adopted by the above organisation since 1920 will come into force. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour drafted the Republic of Lithuania Law on Ratification of the Maritime Labour Convention (No XIP-4569 EU) which currently is under consideration in the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania.

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113 www.ilo.org
8.2.2. MEMBERSHIP IN THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

The representatives of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour participate in the activities of the following Committees and Commissions of the Council of Europe (hereinafter referred to as the “CE”): the European Committee for Social Cohesion (hereinafter referred to as the “CDCS”), the Governmental Committee of the European Social Charter and the European Code of Social Security (hereinafter referred to as the “GC”), the Committee of Experts on the Rights of People with Disabilities (hereinafter referred to as the “CS-RDP”), the Committee of the Parties to the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (hereinafter referred to as the “T-ES”), and the Gender Equality Commission (hereinafter referred to as the “GEC”).

On 11–12 October 2012, in Istanbul the Vice Minister of Social Security and Labour A. Bitinas and the Director of the Department of International Affairs R. Skrebiškienė as the Chairwoman of the CDCS participated in the 2nd conference of the ministers of the CE responsible for social cohesion mainly focusing on creation of safe future for everyone: protecting and empowering the persons of vulnerable groups, in particular during crises, seeking for social stability through solidarity of generations. The Vice Minister delivered a speech on social stability through solidarity of generations; R. Skrebiškienė expressed the position of the CDCS on the need to look for solutions of the challenges raised by social cohesion, the roles of the CDCS in development of social responsibility.

During the sitting of the CDCS Bureau which was held in March 2013 there were considered possibilities on the ways of better promotion of implementation of the Social Cohesion Strategy. It was discussed how it would be possible in Lithuania and other countries to initiate the plan for consultation of residents on the right to social security.

In 2012, through participation in the activities of the GC, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour developed and submitted the 10th report of the CE on the implementation of Articles under the second group "Health, Social Security" of the European Social Charter (Revised; hereinafter referred to as the "Charter"). Today, the 11th report of the Republic of Lithuania on the implementation of Articles under the third group "Labour Law" of the Charter is being developed.

On 7–13 October 2012, in Strasbourg the Lithuanian representative participated in the 126th session of the GC where she successfully defended the remaining part of the 8th report of Lithuania on failure to comply with the requirements of Article 17(1) of the Charter. Lithuania was welcomed for prohibition of the physical punishment as domestic violence and encouraged to adopt the draft law establishing the general provisions concerning protection of children against violence. The next GC session meant for the Charter and the European Code of Social Security took place on 27–31 May 2013.

In 2012, the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania ratified the Convention of the Council of Europe on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (2007). The purposes of the Convention are as follows: prevent and combat sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children; protect the rights of child victims of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse; promote national and international co-operation against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children.

On 23–25 September 2012, in Saint Petersburg the delegation headed by the Minister of Social Security and Labour participated in the 9th conference of the ministers of the CE responsible for youth issues during which there were organised debates on the possibilities of young people to exercise their rights. The minister delivered a report on social integration of youth and presented the priorities of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU on the issues of youth.
The Ministry of Social Security and Labour, within the limits of its competence, participated in the activities of the United Nations.

On 10–11 July 2012, the delegation of Lithuania headed by the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs successfully defended the report of Lithuanian on implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Lithuania was commended for achievements in the area of gender equality, prohibition of domestic violence and encouraged to provide for proper measures, financing for implementation of the latter and promotion of tolerance.

On 12–14 September 2012, the 5th session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was held in New York which was attended by the director of the Social Inclusion Department of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour V. Toleikienė. During the Conference it was discussed on the importance of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for women and children; the members of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities were selected.


On 19 October 2012, the international seminar "Social Transformations in Today’s World" was held in Vilnius which aimed at the main goal of the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) - strengthening of relations between education and social policy. During the event a Declaration was adopted that sets out the areas which require our major attention and encourage to assume necessary actions.


116 http://www.socmin.lt/index.php?-217770732
8.3. BILATERAL COOPERATION

In 2012, the negotiations with the Republic of Moldova concerning the Treaty on Social Security (hereinafter referred to as the “Treaty”) and the administrative agreement on application of the Treaty were continued. The third (final) stage of negotiations was completed on 22–25 April 2013 in Kishinev after which the Treaty and the administrative agreement were drawn up for signing by performing necessary legal procedures provided for in the national legislation of the parties to the Treaty.

In 2012, the negotiations with the Russian Federation concerning the new version of the Agreement on Pensions were not continued due to the changed position of the Russian Federation on the issue which is relevant to both parties. In principle, the issue was related with compensation of damage caused during the occupation period to people (and their family members) who were injured or perished during the service in the Soviet army. In the opinion of the representatives of the Russian Federation, regulation of the above issue in the new version of the Agreement is not expedient and provision of pensions to the victims must be ensured by the legislation of both countries. The Russian Federation was encouraged to reconsider this issue.

In 2012, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour drafted an Agreement on Cooperation in the Area of Child Rights Protection between the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania and the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion of the Kingdom of Norway. The draft Agreement was presented to the Kingdom of Norway. The aim of this agreement is to solve the problems related to the minor children in the Kingdom of Norway who are the citizens of the Republic of Lithuania and whose individual and property rights protection, care, parental responsibility and other issues are related to Lithuania. Unfortunately, despite many enquiries of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Kingdom of Norway has failed to provide any response.

On 1 April 2013, an Agreement 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 2013 came into force; it was signed on 16 May 2012 in Vilnius. The aim of this Agreement is to avoid 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 or not included in any of the countries).